

PS261 SLT Meeting Minutes 1/8/16

In attendance:

- Principal/AP: Zipporah Mills
- Teachers: Jodie Park, Jamie Pandolf, Kristin Taylor, Susannah Weiss Ortiz
- Parent Coordinator: Heather Weston
- PTA Rep: Nora McCauley
- Parents: Kate Hazel-Busch, Amy Huggans, Curt Iiams, Wayne Isaak, Cindy Lobel, Kathleen Mulholland

1. Cindy Lobel called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

2.

3. DOE Survey

- Was confusing, particularly to the new SLT members; it contained issues that we had never been involved with
- Principal Mills suggested that it could serve as a template for things that we can start doing – may have raised things that we did not realize we could be doing
- Wayne provided information about 261 based upon DOE website
- We discussed rating listed on that website – although those currently a part of the school may not pay attention to it, prospective incoming parents often ask staff questions about issues raised
- Parent and staff surveys are not responded to at a high rate – that impacts the ratings on DOE website; we need to get a greater number of people to respond
- Discussion about again promoting survey responses at same time as parent/teacher conferences – those conferences are currently scheduled for March 3 but there is some discussion as to whether they will again be postponed.
- Last year, issue of surveys was not pressed as much as prior years but that may be related to Jerry Piper's departure

4. Parent Survey – Cindy

- We had about a 10% response rate
- Principal Mills raised the issue that we tend to have very low survey responses as a whole, despite the very involved parent body – we need to find a way to press the issue more; there was a further discussion about promoting responses to surveys at parent/teacher conferences

- Discussion regarding the “spring curriculum night” that was introduced last year – while a helpful event, there was not much communication about what it involved and there was a low turnout. Parents may not have realized that it involved meeting the teachers and learning about the curriculum for the next grade. Again, communication about it may have been problematic due to the departure of Jerry Piper and the lack of a parent coordinator at that time
- Workshops requested by parents who responded to survey
 1. Homework
 2. Fostering resilience and independence
 3. Discussions related to social issues at school
- Cindy brought up a discussion about Border Crossers, an organization in Manhattan that can help educators build environments where race, discrimination and invisibility are addressed – the money for such a program might come from the \$3,000 SLT budget or, perhaps the PTA
- If we consider Border Crossers, Principal Mills and others recommended meeting with person running it first to make sure that it meets with our school’s philosophy – there were some issues with the Box out Bullying program that might have been alleviated if we understood the person running the program first

5. Homework Workshops

- We discussed the possibility of having more homework/classroom type workshops on Families as Learning Partners days rather than celebration-type events
- We discussed the possibility of a “mini Town Hall” – ½ hour once a month
- Kristin raised the issue that this might be something first addressed with the teachers alone since they will be responsible for preparing for and running such events.
- Principal Mills mentioned that Tuesday afternoons are already carved out for some parent time; perhaps some workshops can be held during this time

6. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 am.

7. Action Items

- a. CEP
- b. Brainstorm possible activities based upon DOE surveys sent to SLT members
- c. Opt Out