

Middle School Site Leadership Team Minutes

September 11th, 2008

In Attendance:

- Melinda Goedeke (7th Grade), Eric Wahl (7th Grade), Jerry Meschke (Administration), Tim Hodges (Administration), Jill Ehlen (6th Grade), Heidi Johnson (6,7,8th Grade), Sue Kurak (Parent), Lori Harjamaki (Parent), Katy Hopp (8th Grade), Mike Moeller (Music), Patty Gainyo (Parent), Mandy Jacobson (6th Grade), Gayle Fay (8th Grade), Linda Guinn (Parent), Holly Augustin (7th Grade), Jackie Federation (6th Grade)

Start of School Year

- Parents and staff reported the first day of school went well - students seemed relaxed and ready for a good start. It was suggested we look at changing the format of the 6th grade tours given by staff - the large number of students in the group created some congestion and made it hard for students to hear our student council members presenting information about our school. It might be helpful to have smaller groups, or a designated path for each group to follow. Sixth grade staff mentioned the long day once tours are over - it was suggested teams take a break and go outside (weather permitting) to help with the first day start.
- Staff recommended we have advisory for the first week and delay 'team' advisory until the following week. It was also suggested we delay the practice of fire drills until the second or third week of school.

Open House / Orientation

- Parents reported that orientation went well - moving to the gym made it very easy to get around to the different stations. Because both days of orientation was scheduled in the same week, some parents used the Open House to register their student.
- Open House was received with positive comments from both parents and staff. Some suggestions were:
 - Be sure to advertise that students should attend with their parents - some may have thought that students shouldn't come.
 - Open up the back doors of the middle school so parents can park in the Blue Heron parking lot or behind the school in the bus drop-off zone - then they don't have to walk all the way around to the front entry.
 - The 'Get the Lead Out' idea to give pencils to the students visiting encore classes seemed to have potential - it was suggested different items be given to students at each stop to generate more interest.
 - Parents on Team 802 appreciated the two separate presentations - allowing them to also attend other team presentations.
 - More communication of the times of Open House might be helpful - some staff were visiting with parents long after the event was over.
 - Should the Open House time be moved up a little from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.? Would a 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. time be difficult for working parents to attend?

Spirit Week

- Last year the middle school scaled back the 'celebration' of Spirit Week from every day to only Friday. The reasons for the change was the overall disruption created in the building with the variety of outfits students wore each day and the concern the dress up days had little to do with celebrating school spirit. This year Spirit Week is scheduled from September 29th - October 3rd.
- Middle School Student Council students presented a variety of reasons why Spirit Week should return to a five day event, primarily feeling the activities during the week would help create relationships with other students and draw out their hidden talents. Some teaching staff commented the distractions created by a few students who bend the rules don't warrant the benefits stated by the student council - and that certain activities such as Pajama Day and Wacky Day presented a number of questionable styles of attire.
- The middle school staff will discuss this issue at their meeting on Monday - with possible recommendations such as toning down the daily themes, having the student council taking an active role in promoting Spirit Week by visiting each advisory and discussing ways school spirit can be displayed as compared to dressing up in 'wacky' ways.

Middle School Goals

- The spring MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments) results were discussed with parents asking good questions about why the results vary from school to school and how can the data guide teachers in helping students make adequate yearly progress. We will continue to address Math, Reading and Science as a building goal as the year progresses.
- After the NMSA (National Middle School Association) study was completed last spring, the staff development committee looked at selecting two areas to work on this year:
 - Working more toward the integration of curriculum through the development of a building-wide theme; and
 - Continuing to build relationships among advisors, students, and parents through our advisory program (see attached ideas).

Enrollment Comparisons

- The Site Leadership Team was given current enrollment figures for the middle school, showing class size comparisons between grade levels. Class sizes in 6th grade have reached significant levels, ranging from 30 to 36 students with one class with 38 students. We currently have 540 students in 6th grade, 515 in 7th grade and 554 in 8th grade. A comparison of class sizes in core subjects, Art, Technology Education and Physical Education was handed out.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 2nd, 2:30 p.m. - R117