

PRMS School Governance Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

SGC Members Present: Brenda Barto, Eva Beau, M.J. Chironna, Colleen Connors, Joe Giandurco, Ena Jain, Damon Lewis (co-chair), Jill Katkocin, Ana Schlager, Rafael Tejada

Team Members Absent: Marianna Carlisi, Karen Cruz, Linda Dragotta, Amy Jeffereis, Jennifer Montanari, Mayra Quispe

Next Meeting: May 8, 2019 @ 5:30 p.m.

Minutes from 4/1/19 meeting are approved except for the “number of students taking the anonymous survey” needs to be finalized by Mr. Giandurco. The minutes have been translated to Spanish by Ms. Schlager. After Mr. Giandurco finalizes the number of students, the minutes will be forwarded to the web master.

Parent/Student Handbook

- Mr. Giandurco reviewed the sections of the new PRMS parent handbook. He is going to make a few more edits then will email to SGC members by May 10 for final review.
- Dr. Lewis reviewed the Frequently Asked Questions parent/student handout. This was distributed to all parents/students at the 6th Grade Parent Orientation meeting.

Outcome from NPS SGC training session, School Community Building

- At the NPS SGC training session in April, SGC attendees brainstormed how to engage the Ponus community. Parent/Student Family Fun Nights sponsored by the houses and in collaboration with the PTA, SGC and Hispanic Parent Group were discussed. The themes of the family fun nights discussed were a Parents vs. Teachers softball game, painting night, talent show, lego night, board game night, multicultural celebration etc. Students in each house would be surveyed about which family fun night theme they would like to have.
- We decided it would be best to have a Spring 2020 school wide event with different areas run by the Houses. It would be an evening family event and we would invite food trucks to provide reasonably priced food and drinks. Also, we could start the planning in the Fall of 2019 with a joint meeting of the PTA, SGC and Hispanic Parent Group.

Budget Update

- Dr. Lewis and Mrs. Katkocin met with Kristen from Central Office to review the Ponus budget. It needs to be finalized and sent to central office by May 20th.
- We should look at the overall view of the budget in addition to the over/under of the initial budget. If we are over budget, we need to make cuts which could include professional development, supplies etc. before cutting staff.
- There was discussion about 6th grade teachers teaching one subject or still teaching a couple of subjects such as Social Studies and Science. Most likely we will not have the funds to hire more teachers.

- There was discussion about “how do we utilize positions/resources most effectively?” For example, would it be more effective to have teacher coaches switch back to teaching students?
- How do we differentiate teaching to students with different learning abilities and at varied levels?
- We have concrete supports for students who perform at low and high levels but the students in the middle need more resources.
- We did not fill the .5 SPED teacher position this year but will most likely be filling it for next year.
- SGC members discussed the pros and cons of the student-based budgeting vs. the old process of creating budgets.

Student Led Conferences

- The first ever student led conferences occurred this week and went well. All students participated. Ponus staff met with students who did not have a parent/guardian signed up for their conference.

NFT

- NFT is waiting for details of the new pilot schedule for the 2019-2020 school year. Dr. Lewis met with staff promptly after the announcement about the pilot schedule.

Hispanic Parent Group

- Parents have been confused about drop off areas in the morning. This will be clarified at their next meeting.
- The STEAM focus group directed by Dr. Myers and her staff went very well with Hispanic parents. There was a good turnout and all attendees had an opportunity to participate.

Other Business

- Mrs. Chironna briefly discussed communication about recruitment of SGC community members. She attended the NACTS SEL initiative meeting where the results of the November 2018 NACTS student survey were shared with many Norwalk community organizations. (The detailed results will be posted on the Norwalk ACTS website in May.) Mrs. Chironna shared information about the school governance council purpose, need for community members to participate on these councils and how they oversee each school’s school improvement plan and budget.
- Hallie Riggs from the Den for Grieving Kids was at this meeting and shared her interest in participating on the PRMS SGC. She also shared how her favorite part of the week is meeting with the Ponus students who participate in the Den’s support group at Ponus.
- The organization, Positive Directions, mentioned possible trainings about suicide at the Norwalk middle and high schools.