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OUR MISSION IS STUDENT SUCCESS...ACADEMIC, ARTISTIC, AND HUMANISTIC

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SBPT Minutes – March 11, 2010

Present: L. Kasdin, E. Lamb, B. Craddock, J. Tillotson, S. Woodhams, P. Kalenda, K. Walker, K. Nicastro, J. Markman, N. Branca, K. Larsen, E. Bond, E. Rebholz, P. Koch, J. Aspenleiter, E. Francesco

Excused: T. Hawkins, M. Gamzon

Guest: K. Bennett (parent)

1. January minutes approved
2. Agenda approved.
3. Arts Program for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders – Brad Craddock gave everyone a proposal that was developed by the arts teachers suggesting that our middle school, 5<sup>th</sup> period study hall become an arts class. Students would experience earlier exposure to their major and teachers would get to know their students beginning in middle school rather than high school. The intention is to strengthen our arts program. Brad said that the arts teachers have agreed to teach this “extra” class instead of an administrative assignment. Some questions were raised such as: Would this be a mandatory class or optional? How else are these study halls being utilized (tutoring, study skills)? Some teachers do provide academic support during this time, others do not. There are scheduling implications that would have to be considered as well. Contract issues would have to be worked out. It was suggested that we start with 8<sup>th</sup> graders first, to see how it goes. A subcommittee was formed to discuss this further. They will report back to us at the next SBPT meeting.
4. Final Exams – there will be some exams for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Some will occur in class, while some will occur during exam week. There will be science exams. There will not be an English exam due to the ELA. There will be math and language exams. This has already been stated in our handbook. All in all, middle school teachers felt that final exams were a good idea. 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade exams will occur as usual however, teachers of general science courses prefer NOT to have a blocked out exam so they will occur in class. There are no finals for AP science courses during exam week.
5. Homework percentage – Some departments would like to see the percent that homework would count increase, as many students choose not to complete homework. It was suggested that math and social studies consider raising the percentage to 20-25%. Other departments said no because students are copying homework from each other. It is felt that the quality of feedback from homework is as important as the homework itself. In math, in particular, practice and

feedback is essential. It was suggested that teachers give points for bell work. This would solve the copying issue. Ultimately, the majority of teachers would like the percentage to remain the same therefore there will not be a school wide change. Social Studies and Math are going to write a proposal requesting a change for their departments. This issue is going to be addressed again during department meetings. Questions to consider include: Can teachers make their own choices about homework? Does there have to be consistency between courses and should all grading be consistent between courses? If inconsistencies exist, parents might choose, for example, to request a teacher who doesn't count tests as much as some others. On the other hand, do we want to take the individuality away from teachers? It was a good discussion that will likely continue.

6. Connect-Ed – the program started at the end of February. Reports are sent out at the end of each day. Information comes back to the attendance person with wrong telephone numbers, busy signals, no answer etc. Approximately 140-170 calls are being made each night at 7:00pm. Some parents have indicated that the message moves too quickly and it can't be understood. The district is working on this issue. There are a few kinks in the system such as: many people are getting calls about absences when the excuse was legitimate, lessons have been a problem, if a parent doesn't call or send in a note when their child is out sick, a call will be made because the child will be marked absent. The positive side is that these calls help teachers inform parents of illegal absences (skips). There was a brief discussion about the fact that no definition of illegal absence is offered in the handbook.
7. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade incentive – some teachers were concerned about students missing instructional time. The incentive was scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> during periods 1-3. Students must have a GPA of 2.5 or higher. They will be given donuts and a movie as a reward for good grades. Some discussion followed regarding the appropriateness of an incentive for high school students, that they shouldn't need incentives for doing well in school. Other issues mentioned included how some hardworking; well-behaved students might be left out. Should there be an incentive for most improved in a class? It was suggested that these incentives be scheduled at the beginning of the school year to make teachers aware so that they can plan accordingly. Is this a SBPT issue and, if so, can SBPT vote on whether or not to offer incentives? Is it curricular? The issue was tabled for further discussion later.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:42pm.

Next Meeting Date – April 15, 2010

Respectfully Submitted by:

Lisa Kasdin  
Secretary, SBPT