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

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SBPT Minutes – April 15, 2010

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

Excused: E. Lamb, P. Koch, K. Nicastro

Guests: R. Laird, C. Jenssen, J. Sanford, J. Greenbaum

1. Couldn't vote on March minutes because we didn't have enough members present to vote.
2. Agenda Approved
3. Study Hall Committee Report:
  - a. Classroom Management – it was suggested that we conduct an in-service for study hall management. It was felt that we need a consistent approach to study halls so that they enhance academic achievement. This is especially true of rollover study halls.
  - b. Subject Based study halls – some students would take advantage of this, others would not.

The intention is to create an environment of productivity in all study halls perhaps raising graduation rates in the process. We could look at students with multiple failing grades and use the study halls for enrichment purposes. A survey is being sent out, by e-mail, to all teachers for their feedback and comments. They are to respond by e-mail as well. There were some suggestions made for revisions of the survey. It was suggested that comments regarding study halls appear on report cards. Brenda offered a history about study halls pointing out that seven years ago, some teachers grieved the idea of a full-year administration assignment (study hall) even though several things were happening during that study hall time including homebase, lessons, band, choir and resource and study skills for our special education kids. A lot has happened since that time. The discussion ended with an agreement to revise the survey (add comment section, for example) and send it out to teachers. Finally, much of the action produced by this discussion will depend on master scheduling.

3. Arts Exploratory Committee: the intention is to allow the middle school art program to grow and to offer more support in arts major areas. It was felt that all arts should be included in the middle school curriculum, not just a few which is how it is now. This discussion was not prompted by the study hall issue but just to enrich our arts program. Brad met with Brenda and Alan. If this were to occur, these “extra” classes would be mandatory. There are scheduling concerns to be worked out. To do this, we would need a Contract Variance for one year. These courses would be in lieu of administrative assignments for full-time teachers. Music and dance are already being taught in the

middle school. Some examples of these classes were mentioned. There appears to be a lot of support for this proposal. If it goes through, it would have to be “legalized”. In order to make this work, our current schedule couldn’t change too much. It was also mentioned that some parents have left SOTA because of the lack of arts in the middle school. The intention is to increase arts exposure to our students. Some language in this proposal still needs work before a vote can take place. We would need commitments from current teachers and those that come on board later on. Since this is about essentially elective courses, we would have to use only resources already in place. We would need input from the building committee as well. The proposal is going to be brought back to SBPT on May 13<sup>th</sup> for a vote and Brad is going to bring it to the full faculty.

4. Homework – should grading percentages for homework be the same across courses? Teachers were asked to give feedback to this question. Some departments felt yes (Visual Arts, Student Support, English said it should be similar). More departments said no (drama/tech, social studies, math, science, language). These departments felt that each individual teacher because of different teaching styles should make this decision. Ultimately, at this time, nothing is going to change. Our homework counts for 10% of a grade, however, teachers do have options.
5. Parent/Teacher Conferences – October 14, 2010, May 19, 2011 are district wide. We suggested January 6, 2011 and March 2, 2011 or the additional dates. All will continue to be from 6:30pm-8:30pm. We couldn’t vote because we didn’t have a quorum.
6. Principal’s Update: We are in “dire straights”. So far, we have eight retirements. The student/teacher ratio for SOTA has increased from 16.5 to 17.5. We are going to have a 5.1 teacher reduction. Brenda has begun the budget process. Essentially, our enrollment will remain the same but our teachers, administrators, specialists and clerical personnel will be reduced. In our building, 84% of our seniors have full schedules. If enrollment increases in 7<sup>th</sup> grade we might have to look at eliminating elective courses such as general science classes, advanced math courses and some language. Brenda has a meeting scheduled to talk about staffing. There is a lot of diversity and talent coming in for 7<sup>th</sup> grade yet 52 kids left SOTA because families are moving out of the district. John Greenbaum commented that much of this starts in Albany.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:35pm.

Next Meeting Date: May 13, 2010

Respectfully Submitted by:

Lisa Kasdin  
Secretary, SBPT