

**Concord Middle School
School Advisory Council Minutes
Thursday, November 19, 2015**

Members Present: Drew Rosenshine, Wendy Pfaffenbach, Peter Daly, Yuval Erlich, Joyce Chutchian

Members Absent: Lori Jackson, Sharon Moss, Lynne Beattie

Present: Cindy Larsen

Meeting is being recorded. The meeting convened at 6:05 p.m.

Review minutes from last meeting

The October Minutes were reviewed and approved by members.

Configuration Committee Update

The committee has met three times and there will be meeting with the subcommittee today. A draft schedule was presented, it will include having core subjects everyday, some re-balancing of academic time and a six day rotation. At the next meeting there will be an updated draft of the schedule. The Best Practices subcommittee visited schools in Needham and Shrewsbury They will visit another school soon. Regarding Space and building reconfiguration, there is a big class coming up from 5th grade that would make Sanborn extremely tight with the current 6th graders. There is money in the budget for another mod with 2 classrooms. The configuration could work though teachers would need to share rooms, and also may have to use multiple rooms. Once these "bubble" classes go by with the larger classes, we would have more flexibility to reconfigure. The Configuration Committee voted to put off consideration of reconfiguring the buildings for at least 3 years while these bubble classes move through our grades. The schedule committee continues its work. There is a tight schedule to make decisions and set a schedule.

Discussion of homework initiative

Drew would like to include in his Principal updates what we do as a council, and will also attach the CMS Homework survey. The members agreed to take out the line that states where "a link for all survey data questions can be found", as this does not exist online.

Members discussed the focus of our work examining the issue of homework. Will we do a pilot, or make recommendations? The group decided that instead of a pilot, we will look at what homework should be designed around. Members discussed the possibility of less homework quality, as opposed to quantity. What is the right type of homework? How does it impact families and the the health of the child. Some families are very positive and thrive, while others it can be a burden. We need to ask the students. What type of assignment prepared you for the next grade. What sparked your interest in learning.

It was recommended that we:

Look into making a sub committee.

Invite Harvard Professor Stephen Mahoney, Associate Director of the Harvard Teacher Fellows Program to come and speak at one of our meetings.

Possibly have Grad students from Harvard come and run a test, prepare a model with our students regarding homework and this could be done as an assignment for Harvard.

Visit/call Dover Sherborn school system and see how their homework program is working.

Engage the community

Review submitted articles

Delineate strengths/drawbacks of each approach

Members each picked out part of an article they wanted to discuss as part of a protocol discussion. A couple of thoughts from that conversation:

- Parental involvement. It can impact the homework, as in the quality that is returned. How does a teacher limit parental involvement to even out the playing field for the students so the teacher can meet their needs.
- There is no conclusive evidence that homework increases student achievement.
- We can't wait for the research and we need to make decisions. We need to make recommendations from the research we've done.
- Effective Practice. Contact people, talk to people to help us and colleagues figure out what the most effective practice is for the student.

Meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Submitted by Cindy Larsen

Approved by SAC Members 12/17/15