**Linden STEAM Academy**

Governing Board Meeting

May 22, 2013 6:00 PM

Attendees: Linda Bell, Richard Bransfield, Nicholas Catoggio, Kathleen Cutting, John Froio Deborah Gesualdo, Rachana Gray, Jocelyn Ken, Alisha King, Melissa Lightbody, Ann Schiro, Franklin Shearer, Leonard Young,

**Agenda**

* **Connections** 
  + Rachana Gray spoke about the day of learning. While it was a repeat, she felt it was good to go over the information again. It became obvious to those that went that our core values need to always be at the front of our thoughts. We all needed to look them up for an exercise. We should periodically review them at our meetings. Hold them up against what we do to be sure we are sticking to them.
  + Nicholas Catoggio spoke to the comment about the session being repeated. The District Capacity Team will be reaching out to other groups such as parents, the PTO, Teachers etc and will be making the presentation to them.
  + Richard Bransfield said the day of learning eye opener. We need to keep our focus on our core values. He reminded us that innovation schools are an experiment. We have autonomy to try different things. We should be doing out of the box thinking and when successful promote our ideas to the rest of the district. We have to use data to prove our successes.
  + Leonard Young had a conversation with teacher during the day of learning. They told him that they are looking at Linden and trying to see what they can learn from us. He reminded us that in our daily jobs our bosses and supervisors tell us what we have to do and we make it work. Here we have a voice and it is a great privilege for us.
  + Several people expressed their appreciation for Franklin Shearer’s email regarding our focus on math and future directions.
* **Mr. Zeiberg addressed the board.**
  + He felt that we need to improve the communication between school, parents and community.
  + He stated that the school website is not up to date, difficult to navigate and missing information.
    - Mr Luongo and other teachers who no longer work at Linden are still on it.
    - The calendar entry doesn’t say the Governing Board meetings are open to the public
  + He feels that two way communication is a problem.
  + He expressed a feeling of disconnect and unwelcome. Linden Alumni want to know what is going on but no longer feel welcome at the school. Parents don’t feel included.
  + In the past, the school has had science shows, talent shows etc. The past alumni aren’t invited and feel as though they are not welcome
  + He said that some parents feel decisions are already made, and that opinions aren’t being heard.
  + He had several suggestions:
    - Look into setting up a Facebook page or Twitter account.
    - Have specific Alumni days, where Linden graduates can come back into the school to meet with their previous teachers etc.
    - Hold a coffee or tea night for parents to come in and ask questions. Find out how to volunteer and how to run for elections etc.
* **Scheduling Options**
  + Exploratory schedules are complicated. We will be added a tech ed class to our list of exploratory classes. There is also a possibility we will be adding a Health Teacher.
  + Rachana Gray asked how we are going to accommodate these extra classes when we are required to have 120 continuous minutes of literacy and 90 continuous minutes of math in order to keep some of our grants.
  + Someone ask if the lunchtime could be flexible. Richard Bransfield commented that the lunch ladies are union workers. Their times are fixed and are not flexible.
  + These new exploratory classes will help get the teachers the 45 minutes of prep that they are required to have. Teachers are supposed to get 4 preps and a team time in a 4 day schedule.
  + The 15 minutes of recess for the k-5 classes are required. Richard Bransfield has spoken with the school committee in the past. They are part of a wellness policy that cannot be changed.
  + Richard Bransfield expressed that he wants equity for all teachers including exploratory and sped teachers. A rotating 6 day schedule doesn’t give exploratory teachers enough time with the kids.
  + We are fairly sure we will get the tech ed teacher, but it will depend on the budget. The school committee is pretty much set. The only thing that could cause a problem is if the City Council doesn’t approve the budget.
  + There was feedback from last staff meeting: Teachers are willing to give up team time every other day to get more time.
    - Several board members commented on how dedicated the staff at Linden is to offer this.
    - Nicholas Catoggio said that trust is being built, if teachers are willing to give up time.
    - Leonard Young said the scheduling is truly confusing and the fact that teachers are willing to give up prep time shows who we are as a school and how great our staff is.
  + Richard Bransfield hopes to know before July 1st what the final budget will be.
  + Adam Weldai said the chances are slim that the city council will cut the budget
  + Richard Bransfield said the schedule will be done in 2 weeks based on getting the extra staff person
  + He also said that the Youth Risk Survey made it apparent that a health class is needed.
  + The board doesn’t need to solve the scheduling issues. That is his job. The board’s job is to recommend that positions such as the tech-ed one get requested.
  + David DeRuosi said that after the budget is set if there is extra funds then maybe we could get a health teacher
  + The school committee has a 3 year plan is to get all schools in line with the same teachers for the same subjects such as Health, Foreign languages etc.
  + Melissa Lightbody commented that parents like the 8am-2:30pm time for pick up and drop offs
  + Richard Bransfield said he was meeting with Baystate Reading Institute to work out how we can do 30 minutes of science or social studies as part of our 120 minutes of literacy. They need to be back to back to keep the block continuous.
  + He wants to increase writing across the board. So it will be a part of Science and Social Studies.
  + Melissa Lightbody asked when the calendar for 2013-2014 comes out. Richard Bransfield said the School Committee meeting is Wednesday and they will vote on it. June 3rd.
  + Franklin Shearer asked if the teachers will need PD to help them weave science and social studies into literacy. Richard Bransfield said there will be PD offered from BSRI (Bay State Reading Institute)
  + Nicholas Catoggio said that reading nonfiction such as in Science and Social Studies will include vocabulary and writing reports, so it will be a good fit.
  + Richard Bransfield mentioned that we need to focus more on comprehension. Our fluency rates are going through the roof but our comprehension is not up where it should be. While it is great that the kids can read, it is not good if they don’t understand what they have read.
  + Kathleen Cutting asked if the 6th grade needs a side letter to join 7th and 8th grades.
    - Richard Bransfield said negotiations will change the separation of the grades. They were separated that was from long ago when we still had Junior High Schools. The new contracts should fix this, so a side letter wouldn’t be needed. Many of the side letters are written to get around the items that were written for a school system that looked very different from how it does now.
    - Deborah Gesualdo said the contacts are being cleaned up
* Ann Schiro asked that we revisit some of the items that Andrew Zeiberg brought up.
  + Richard Bransfield was confused about the lack of communication. Especially in regards to the Exhibition. He has sent out press releases and sent home several invitation letters.
    - In general it is tough to get parents to come to the school. The recent school safety meeting and the uniform meeting had a very low attendance despite using Connect Ad and sending home letters to advertise them.
  + Nicholas Catoggio agreed that we aren’t as welcoming to former students as we used to be. He felt that it was important to let them come back and visit with their past teachers. Perhaps we set aside one or two days where they could be allowed to come back to visit.
  + Richard Bransfield said that the reason they are no longer allowed to enter the school is for safety.
  + Rachana Gray agreed the website is not good. There is no easy way to find teacher’s email addresses. The teacher list is not correct. She acknowledged that the website is out of our control. It is a template that has very little wiggleroom for change, but the information should at least be accurate.
  + Nicholas Catoggio suggested we have a coffee night once or twice a year, where the parents could come and meet the board.
  + Richard Bransfield said we should combine the meeting with a PTO meeting so that they may be able to reach out to the parents at the same time.
  + Nicholas Catoggio said we need to have hard copies of our meeting notes available for people who don’t have access to our website.
    - He suggested that we leave a copy at the Public Library.
    - Rachana Gray said she didn’t have the time to print copies and place them at various locations around town.
    - Richard Bransfield offered to manage this through the school office. Rachana Gray will email him copies of the notes and if anyone comes to the school office looking for them, he will print them out.
    - Nicholas Catoggio agreed that we probably won’t have anyone asking for it, but we still need to offer it.
  + Nicholas Catoggio also felt we need to continue to post our meeting announcements at city hall. That our website wasn’t public enough.
    - Rachana Gray agreed to continue to do this.
* **Sixth Grade Room Assignments**
  + Kathleen Cutting asked Richard Bransfield if he would consider a discussion of getting all the 6th grade classes on one floor.
  + Richard Bransfield said that he was aware of the situation.
    - That the teachers have come to him and expressed that they would all like to be on the same floor.
    - We used to have a wing that was all Special Ed. That is not allowed. They need to be integrated with the rest of the school. So now he is trying to move Special Ed. into the regular class spaces.
    - Also the lockers are problem, there aren’t enough. By moving the classroom downstairs, they have more lockers so they won’t have to triple up.
    - If it can be done, it will be done, but no promises
    - There is a possibility of another Special Ed. class be added next year
    - Melissa Lightbody asked why do teachers have to walk kids to exploratory classes.
      * Several teachers spoke up: Kids need supervision. They tend to damage the building when they are unsupervised. They also like to pretend they forgot what class they were supposed to go to and use the time to roam the halls. Supervising the walk eliminates this issue and speeds up the transition times.
      * A suggestion was made that maybe they could have two 6th grade classes downstairs instead of one.
* **Drama Club for next year** 
  + Sarah Zeiberg is willing to run a drama club 2 afternoons a week.
    - It would be run by MHS students
    - 3 high school student to 7 -10 Linden kids
  + It was brought up that they need an adult to supervise
  + The kids would need to CORI checked.
  + A suggestion was made to have Karen Steele and PCSM get involved since they now report to David DeRuosi. PCSM could be responsible for the program.
  + Richard Bransfield suggested that we get PCSM and Karen Steele to come talk to us. He has hopes of someday creating a summer school at Linden run by them.
  + Deborah Gesualdo suggested that we bring Linda Kelly in for that meeting too.
  + Mr. Luongo used to supervise previous clubs.
  + Kathleen Cutting will respond to Sarah Zeiberg regarding our concerns.
* **Math Direction**
  + We are part of a 5 district partnership. The partnership is working together to come up with a curriculum that will match the common Core. Diana Buonopane is our representative.
  + One of the issues is that there are very few books yet written for common core. They have looked at the books that are out there, they aren’t rigorous enough.
  + The topics are decided by a national level.
  + Publishers are waiting for certain states to buy into the core before they develop the books. States like Texas who buy books from one publisher for whole state.
  + Malden, Everett, Revere, Chelsea, and Winthrop are all part of the partnership. If they agree on a book, they may end up purchasing it in bulk across the 5 cities.
  + ANET will play a big role with common core and we are ahead since we already have them here.
  + Andrew Chen believes think math will be the book to use, once they align to common core.
  + PARCC exam will be completely language based, which another reason Think Math may be the right book.
  + PARCC exams will replace MCAS in 2 years.
  + The common core will reduce the amount of topics but will cover the topics with more depth
  + We are close to making AYP in math.
  + Richard Bransfield and David DeRuosi both felt we need to use some of the Title I money on math. Currently it is used mainly just for ELA.
  + We need more math interventions for Special Ed kids.
  + We had the teachers who were unexpectedly out long term. It is expected that this will affect our math scores. Since it was unexpected, long term substitutes were not able to be put in place.
  + A comment was made that perhaps this topic isn’t something the Governing board should be debating, since we don’t have any direct ability to effect these changes. If the decision was about whether we should spend our money on Health Instruction versus Math instruction, then it would make sense for the topic to be discussed.
* **Technology Updates**
  + Other principals are watching how Linden is spending money on technology. Richard Bransfield gets called asking for specs on what he ordered so they can order the same things for their schools.
  + Richard Bransfield cancelled the orders for the Mimeo’s and ordered Hover Cams instead. The Mimeos cost about $700 each versus the Hover Cams which came to about $275 and do more things. This way he can have one for each class.
  + We currently have about 10 mimeos
  + We will have a Mobie tablet per classroom (40)
  + There will be 8 mini tablets per classroom
  + We will have 40 hover cams.
  + Professional Development is included We are just waiting for equipment to come in
* **Uniforms** 
  + Richard Bransfield spoke with Sparks. They will stock up on our colors.
  + T-shirt logo contest. The Art teacher will have the kids design the logos during class. Deborah Gesualdo will use her class time to allow the older kids (who don’t have art) time to work on the logo.
* **Next meeting – 5th 6-8**
* **Summer meeting** – decision postponed until next meeting
* **Report for school committee** – discussion postponed for next meeting
* **First Year Assessment** – discussion postponed for next meeting