Linden S.T.E.A.M Academy governing Board Meeting Notes

September 25th, 2013 6:00pm

Attendees: Diana Buonopane, Richard Bransfield, Kathleen Cutting, Laura Degelmann, David DeRuosi, Linda Patrie, Deborah Gesualdo, Rachana Gray, Jocelyn Ken, Ann Schiro, Susan Terban, Franklin Shearer, Leonard Young, Melissa Lightbody, Nick Catoggio, Alisha King, Linda Bell

Linden STEAM Academy  
Governing Board Meeting 9/25/13 at 6PM

* Connections
  + Kathy Cutting – Noted new agenda format and our mission to keep focus on innovation.
  + Ann Schiro - Asked if we should specifically incorporate old business items into the agenda. The board noted that the agenda always carries an item to accept previous meeting minutes and old business and members should review the previous minutes
  + Laura Degelmann – Shared that she was happy to have the meeting later in September as the start of the school year had been very busy.
* Acceptance of Minutes 9/25/13
  + Nick Catoggio – With reference to parent board member elections, noted that he did not remember agreeing on the one vote per family and the board discussed and agreed that it should be one vote per parent/guardian.
* Principal's Report
  + Rich Bransfield
* MCAS data was released; Linden met or exceeded goals, continued Level 1 status. Miss Buonopane’s math scores were 49th in the State. African American and Hispanic results continue to improve.
* Teacher schedules now includes Common Planning time once a week for K-4, each week will have a specific focus, 1st week ELA, 2nd Math, 3rd Project Based learning and 4th Data grade level data review.
* Ed Moscovitz of BSRI has offered a Math Coach to assist with aligning Math to Common Core requirements.
* SPED program has taken a shift for 6-8, moved from push-in model to pull-out model. Review of previous plans showed they were all written for pull-out model and all very similar. The pull-out model was creating issues with classroom space? Chair of ? Looking at how ED Plans are getting written with the intent that going forward Plans will be more specific to individual needs rather than boiler plate language.
* Mathworks program hugely successful. Peter is running this and there are a number of kids already mainstreamed.
* 1st BSRI meeting looking at fluency with a new focus on comprehension; scores improved from 13% in 2010-2011 to 60 % last year. Richard B. will or has asked BSRI to bump up bench marks.
* Dave D. noted that rather than respond to the Patch comparison of the Charter School to the Malden Public Schools, he talk about the successes of the Public Schools when he addresses the School Committee.
* The 2 new STEM Teachers looking a curriculum and are getting their supplies together.
* Mac Lab up and running, classes are signing up and coming down to use.
* Back to School Night was a huge success; it was agreed that the reminder call should go out the day before rather than the day of.
* There have been minimal issues around School Uniforms.
* Regarding MCAS scores Franklin S. noted that the 3rd and 4th graders didn’t do as well. Richard B. confirmed that the data also showed this, could be that there were teachers out on leave, and noted how important the teachers are and how they are connected to student success.
* Old Business
* The Board voted to change the By-Laws to change elections from September to May, with the nomination process to begin in February.
* New Business
* Ideas for STEAM Related Innovation
* Nick C. suggested that due to the many issues around lengthening the school day, we should focus on using the afterschool program to compliment what is being talk during the regular school day; create a STEAM innovation program for the afterschool.
* Deb G. noted that the PCSM is already using a SCREAM theme.
* Kathy C. to reach out to the teachers to solicit ideas for proposals to be presented to the board and Dave D. to take to a meeting with PSCM. Proposals should be based on Project Based Learning. Aim to pilot first set of classes for the session beginning in March.
* K-4 side Common Planning time last block could be used for innovation by having Exploratory Teachers enriching regular curriculum.
* Paul Hamersly now working for Malden Public Schools, to do a documentary on what’s going on at the Linden STEAM Academy.
* Kathy C. noted that some kids have started a Digiman Club and that Sarah Z. is coming from the High School to do the Drama Club with Kathy as previously planned.
* It was stated that the Engineer part of STEAM seems to be missing. PD for K-5 is scheduled: Engineering is Elementary from the Museum of Science; each classroom will have two units.
* The Board also needs to figure out how it’s going to look for outside funding. Lenny working on 501 3 status paperwork
* A suggestion for a STEM teacher is to purchase Vex Kits, teacher would need $1,200 Summer Class Training from WPI and the Kits are expensive.
* Could the schedule be changed to do an exploratory for a quarter rather than every four days, so as to have possibility for more project based curriculum?
* Knowatom is a science curriculum that would go all year long, it requires more time than current science blocks, but does include language and math. Mike H. will be approached for his input.
* The Board should be looking at the original innovation plan, to make sure we are complying as there is reporting and accountability required. We need to confirm that any ideas that are put forward fit and will improve student achievement. Also, programs stared must be able to be maintained.
* Given the importance of all teacher involvement, the board should schedule a presentation to all teachers. Franklin also suggested a meeting with the board and the Union Rep.
* Deb G. reminded that there should be no discussion of issues outside of the Board Meetings.
* Teachers should ask for the types of PD that would be most helpful for them.
* Consensus Procedure
* Nick C. and Deb G. noted and discussed that the by-laws say that decisions will be reached by consensus rather than voting, part of the Day of Learning also focused on this method for making decisions.
* Schedule Next Meeting
* October 17, 7:00am-8:00am
* November 13, 5:30pm-7:30pm