

PS/IS 187 School Leadership Team Meeting Minutes

December 14th 2023 7:00 AM - 7:59 AM

Parent Representatives

1. Joy Waitkus/Co Chair SLT – Elected Parent Rep
2. Amanda Shaw - PTO Co President
3. Kelly Ceynowa- Elected Parent Rep
4. Kierstin Hettler - Elected Parent Rep
5. Emily Hardy - Elected Parent Rep

Staff Representatives

1. Christopher Jennings/Co Chair SLT – UFT Chapter Leader
2. Emel Topbas-Mejia- Principal
3. Jessica Mitchell - 4th Grade General Education Teacher
4. Samantha Pastore – Health/PE Teacher IS
5. Marie Marricco - 5th Grade General Education Teacher
6. Amanda Burley - ENL Teacher

1. Welcome

2. Review and Approval of November 2023 Minutes

- a. Kierstin Hettler motioned to approve. Chris Jennings seconded the motion. Unanimous approval by the remaining members.

3. Principal's Updates

a. December has been a month of celebrating - more opportunities for bringing the community together (Talent Show was 12/13, 3rd & 4th Music Show)

- b. 8th grade math classes were readjusted to accommodate those students who will take regents. All 7th graders were given an assessment in June 2023 and their math teachers made recommendations for those students they believed to be ready for

the Algebra Regents Exam. This year, after reviewing grades from the 1st marking period, staff revisited students who are ready and want to take the exam. There was a shift between the classes and $\frac{2}{3}$ of the classes are currently preparing for The Algebra Regents. We are in the midst of looking at approaches & models in other schools to see how they program classes and to ensure as many students that want to take it are able to. We also want to ensure that our students that take the exam in 8th grade do not have to retake it in 9th grade.

- c. As an SLT we have to engage in progress monitoring how we are meeting our CEP goals. We need to update and revisit them in iPlan. Jennings is serving as a data specialist & has been analyzing and organizing sets of data from the ELA & Math State Exams as well as iReady & Acadience assessments.
- d. We are focusing on professional learning for our staff. There is a math coach from Teaching Matters that is currently working with 6-8 math teachers to support the roll out of the new Illustrative Math twice a month. There is also a coach working with 3-8 classroom teachers to support the roll out of the Expeditionary Learning literacy curriculum. Lastly, through a district partnership we are currently working on establishing a teaching model with our K-2 classrooms. The budget has been aligned to support these coaching partnerships.
- e. In January we are going to begin taking cell phones in grades 5-8. Cell phone usage is impacting our student learning in those grades. They will be “taken” in the morning and then students will be able to use them at the end of the day. We are currently fine tuning the

structure we will use. We are considering Yonder (it is a cell phone pouch & students keep the phone on their person but they cannot access it because it remains locked in the pouch. It can only be accessed by opening it with a magnetic key). This program will cost approximately \$4,000 - 5,000.

- f. Administration shared the updated cell phone policy with families at the November PTO meeting. A formal written communication will go out to families on the week of 12/18. There has been open communication with students, as they have been hearing about this possibility since September in assemblies.

6. Open Forum

- a. Parents asked how teachers feel about the professional learning that is taking place. Teachers shared that we haven't had full sessions as of yet. The coach is providing as much insight as possible and is assisting us in building our Expeditionary Learning curriculum for ELA.

- b. Ms. Emel stated that in 2020 the staff shared there was a need for more coherence in our literacy curriculum since we are a K-8 school. We were engaged & mentally preparing for the shift to a new curriculum. Teachers are working to make it our own and fine tune it to meet our student needs.

- c. A parent shared that the Yonder system and the removal of cell phones can set the tone for the rest of the day if it is handled in a way that seems punitive. We want arrival and the start of the day to remain positive.

d. A parent asked what is lined up in tandem with this updated cell phone policy to support students in understanding what it means to be a good digital citizen. The school culture subcommittee can hold workshops to support families with the concept of a good digital citizen. In addition, Ms. Pastore explained that during health students work on a cyberbullying unit. Mr. Mendez is continuing his work with conflict resolution and peer mediation. Ms. Emel included that Common Sense has “digital citizenship” lessons.

e. Parent member(s) suggested sending a letter home to parents to partner with school and provide suggestions, strategies, and approaches families can use at home. (ie...families don't allow students to use their phones during homework, students should not go to bed with them, providing the scientific research that relays the impact on the brain, modeling for the children to show how you interact with phones at home.)

f. Parent members of the SLT shared that there may be some pushback from families regarding this updated policy due to a concern over the inability to contact their child. Ms. Emel shared that there should not be a direct line of communication between families and students during the day. Families should contact the main office, it is fully staffed and someone is always available to assist. For a more direct line of communication with the school and teachers, we will begin utilizing Remind schoolwide. It is a digital platform for communication (phone calls, text messages & schoolwide blasts)

5. Planning for the next meeting

- a. We will meet in person on 1/18 in room 101 from 7-8.
- b. Subcommittees will meet before 1/18.
- c. Academic subcommittee will analyze vocabulary needs based on iReady data in order to support needs and goals.
- d. Ms. Pastore will share information and her findings regarding the I Challenge Myself curriculum.

