

Administrator Report - February 13, 2014

Section 1.0 Vision

Health and Sex Education Curriculum Development Committee – The committee met this afternoon to discuss the parent information night which will be held in March [date TBD] and reviewed video options for the 5th grade student presentations which will be held in April. We are currently in discussion with **Jennifer Olson** an affiliate professor and coordinator of school health education for GVSU.

School Improvement Planning Committee –The January 27, 2014 meeting was cancelled due to weather and has been rescheduled for Tuesday, February 25th.

Family Math and Literacy Nights- Math Night was Wednesday, January 15th, and it was a very nice event. Turnout was higher than last year – Beth Scarbrough and Harmony Perry did a tremendous job organizing and hosting. **Literacy Night** was cancelled due to the weather and is being rescheduled for either March [Reading Month] or April [Poetry Month] – the staff is collaborating to determine.

Section 2.0 School Culture

Diversity Week – February 10th – 14th Sana Amash and Molly Swartzlander have once again organized a full week of activities for this annual celebration. Details are in this week’s Link and on the school social media sites.

International Anti-Bullying Day – Wednesday February 26th – Our community will once again be “In the Pink” as we continue our efforts to eliminate bullying in our school and society. Our fabulous 5th grade class – Discovery F – will be handing out pink wrist bands to younger students “caught being a friend” to help prepare for and promote this event. We will also continue to “show our color” on the last Friday of each month.

February 17th – Staff Professional Development Day

Math Professional Development with Esther Billings, GVSU

Response-to-Intervention and Assessment Data Review with Beth Scarbrough, Rtl and Title I Coordinator to further our efforts in continual staff development and instructional improvement – aimed at increasing student achievement our teachers and paras will be spending the day building their knowledge and skill in Math and Reading instruction and assessment.

School Climate Survey – The Google doc of responses was sent to Board members and staff – the staff also took a survey to assess their perceptions, which we reviewed at last week’s CP. We will meet as a staff to compare our results to those of our parents and plan next steps. A synopsis of the results will be shared with families via the Link and in the School Improvement Planning meeting. *Please do not share the Google doc link with anyone prior to our public presentation.*

Open House – March 19, 2014 – Invitations have been sent to the printer – and will be mailed shortly. Molly Parker and Anne Rasch are organizing.

Section 3.0 Management

Open Enrollment began February 1st – We have already begun to receive application from new students and parent tours have begun in earnest. Rachel Harth needs to be commended for her attention to detail and management of this incredible undertaking. Each year, she insures all is ready and updated. Please be sure to thank her for this, just one of the many things she does for us throughout the year – much of it unseen and unnoticed by most of us – due to the professionalism and humility with which she accomplishes her tremendous work load and variety of tasks.

Snow Days – We have currently reached our quota of 6 days on January 29th. All schools are waiting to hear from the Governor regarding a waiver to avoid the necessity of adding days to the end of the school year should we go beyond this number. We are fine for now – *[note: many schools in the state have already gone well beyond this number.]*

Staff Changes - **Danielle Starke** joined our team on February 3rd as a full-time Special Education Resource Teacher. Ms. Starke has 11 years of experience at Abney Academy. She is certified and endorsed in Cognitively Impaired and Emotionally Impaired. She is currently working toward completion of her Master’s degree at Grand Valley State University. Nora Faber, our Studio Coordinator decided to leave her position on January 17th to focus her time and energy on her art and family, a decision that we understood and accepted. Fortunately for us, **Kay Waterson**, previously classroom para in Discovery A, has stepped into the position seamlessly. Kay came to our attention last August when she applied for the Studio position. She was second in line for the role, and seeing how talented and enthusiastic she was, I convinced her to join us as a para. She is a certified art educator recently having graduated from Kendall College. She is also a talented musician on many instruments, and been a tremendous addition to our Afternoon Meeting performances. She and a fellow band member will be performing during our Diversity Week festivities next week. **Amanda Rimer**, has joined the Discovery A team as para. All is working beautifully.

Focus School Update - We have been meeting monthly as a staff with our District Improvement Facilitator, Marcia Kay, who has been appointed by the MDE, in collaboration with MSU. Ms. Kaye last visited Monday, February 3rd to review our GEMS report – a compilation of our activities to reduce the achievement gap between our bottom 30 and top 30 percent of test takers. The report consisted of Board meeting agendas and minutes, administrator reports, professional development schedules, etc. The state is attempting to insure that all Focus Schools are actively engaged in reducing their gap and increasing the achievement of all through communication to all stakeholders, staff development, and strategic implementation of programs and interventions.

Hungerford – Renewed our contract with Hungerford to secure their services for the following year.

Telephone System – RFP resulted in several bids – TDS again was the best and met all of our legal requirements. I signed the contract to provide 911 capable phones in all classrooms and offices in the school, as well as an upgrade to our existing internet capacity [to 50Mg] which will also insure our ability to provide online assessments when that requirement is implemented. Installation will begin in June and our first bill will come due in July. Our new monthly cost will be approximately \$1,200 a month – a three-fold increase over our current system – however, we will receive reimbursement [dependent on our Free and Reduced Lunch Numbers] for a significant portion of this cost through the ERate program each year. [e.g. for 2012-2013 we paid out \$4,800 and received \$2,900 [60%] back through ERate]. We should expect the same percentage going forward. The term of our new lease is for 5 years. In addition, we will own the phones at the end of the contract.

Computers – Still waiting to be contacted by an HP Rep regarding a new lease for hardware and software. Our current lease expires in June as well – I do not expect a significant increase in our current monthly cost – approx. \$900 per month for 35 desktops. I have also spoken with the consultants at the ISD regarding setting up a temporary computer “lab” for the MEAP/Smarter Balanced test window when the assessment goes online.

Title I On-Site Review Re-Visit - February 13, 2014 – We have submitted the majority of required documents and are simply waiting to meet with the state representatives this Thursday. We have been working since last June to fulfill the requirements mandated by the state following last year’s On-Site review. We are prepared and ready to complete.

Fundraising Workshop at GVSU Johnson Center – January 15th – Eric Doyle and I attended. Great event, informative, and reasonably priced.

Section 4.0 Relationships

GRPS Charter School Contract Renewal – We are currently in the process of arranging a meeting to discuss parameters with Superintendent Neal and others regarding next steps. I will keep the Board informed as the process develops.

KETA - We have been allotted a video camera, tripod, and other hardware by the KETA Board, of which I am a member. Delivery is uncertain at this time, but I will notify everyone upon delivery.

UICA-KCAD-GRPM- As part of my work with the Collaboration Team developing the new Human Design focused school with GRPS, I was invited to attend a screening of a documentary on Design Thinking at the UICA on January 24th. At the end of the film, a panel spoke to the attendees regarding the importance, impact and potential of design-thinking. David Rosen, President of Kendall College, gave the GRCDC a recommendation of a K-12 school in Grand Rapids that has an approach aligned with this practice. A very unexpected but welcome bit of free publicity.

Advent School, Boston, MA – Last week I visited the K-6 school along the Charles River as part of my ongoing efforts to increase my exposure and understanding of the Approach in various contexts and settings, as well as promoting and sharing our program and school with other educators. Boston is the incubator of the Approach in the United States as a result of its proximity to Harvard, the home of Prof. Howard Gardner, who is credited with bringing the approach to the United States. As a result, Boston is home to many schools and early childhood centers inspired by the Reggio principles. The visit was inspiring and validating. The staff and children were hospitable, generous with their time, interested in our school, and just so excited to share what they are doing in the spirit of Reggio. Bottom line – they are a wonderful school, but we are better! ;-)- and we are doing for much less than \$23,000 dollars a year in tuition per child.....

GVSU – continues to place EDF 100 students with us – the latest group started last week and will be here with us for the remainder of the semester.

Section 5.0 Professionalism

Representing the GRCDC at the Advent School in Boston, Collaboration Team Member KCAD-GRPM-GRPS, Advisory Board for GRCC Early Childhood Program, BRAINS Foundation Board Member, KETA Board Member

Section 6.0 Advocacy

Advocacy on behalf of the school by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context

Site-Plan Development/Fundraising Committee - Eric Doyle, Janay Brower, Scott Ayotte, Jason Ferenczi and I have been meeting to accomplish the immediate goal of realizing our vision of redeveloping our site plan. We have tentatively planned an information session to be held in conjunction with our Open House on March 19th.

Report on Prior Board Directives/Recommendations

Before and After School Data – The program averages 10 children each morning and 39 children each afternoon. Wednesday is the largest attendance in the afternoon. We currently have 55 students that attend on a regular basis. Tessa and I met on January 21st to review the budget and provide guidelines to Wafa and staff regarding scheduling to insure we stay within our proposed budget. I met with Wafa and she is in the process of implementing these as well.

Other Relevant Updates, Requests, or New Business

Snow Build - The target completion date for the snow and ice build is Saturday, February 15th – Snow has already been delivered to our parking lot. Rich Haralson will begin moving into a large mound with a bulldozer on Monday the 10th. He and crew will be working throughout the week to finalize their vision. I have spoken with our insurance company, the state liquor control board and the GRPD to insure we are complying with all laws and regulations and we have been given the “green light” to proceed. We do not require a temporary liquor license since the school will not be providing any beverages for those in attendance and no money will be changing hands.

Respectfully Submitted,
Erin Melcher