

MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITION TEAM

December 12, 2006

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Tally Swanson, Paul Reed, Jennifer Jacobson, Diane Metcalf, Tami Schmitt, Michelle Devlin, Brenda Manson, John Wagner, Jeff Lunt, Chuck Lisk, Bryan O'Donnell, Penny Fiscalini, Butch Webb, Lisa Cornelson, Shirlene Fitzwater, Jeri Goebel, Donette Hope, Campbell Kirkman, Amity Butler, Mimi Tideman, Linda Williams, Michelle Reid

Welcome/Check In

Team members checked in and reacquainted themselves with one another.

Review of Minutes

The team reviewed and discussed the minutes from the last meeting. Norms were deemed as being maintained.

Review of Evaluation from Previous Meeting

The MSTT reviewed the evaluation results from the previous meeting. The team is committed to reviewing and working within the norms established. High performing teams review not only the content of the work they do; but, also the way in which they do their work.

Review of the Communication Expectations:

Review and reminder that communication is critical in this transition work. Staff, parent and student communications continue to be a priority in this process. The communication must be transparent and honest. Michelle Reid will work with district staff to craft succinct messages for both the website and press releases.

Communication plans on behalf of the parent and student team members were reviewed in generalities. Discussion ensued with regard to communicating often and concisely, particularly the rationale for the Facilities Efficiency Task Force recommendations. There is a concern that the community and even some staff do not fully realize what is going on. More will be reported at the January 16 meeting. Communication plans and strategies continue to move forward with intentional focus. Working effectively with the press continued to be discussed as a priority.

Hot Topic(s). (discussion and response plan)

The team reviewed one hot topic as an item for discussion. This item concerned staffing as it relates to paraeducators.

The team was reminded of the importance of taking into account the feelings and impact of the transition process on these important staff members. With regard to these topic connected to

communication and inclusion, the team affirmed several tenets of their norms. Team members were encouraged to speak their truth, clarifying they may well be speaking for themselves and not the team as an aggregate whole when sharing opinions, particularly dissenting opinions. Team members were also reminded that we will need to continue to extend one another grace as we individually and collectively respond to this transition.

Review of Reading Text to be Studied

The MSTT reviewed the assigned text, *Managing Transitions*, Chapters 5 and 9, regarding the launching a new beginning and concluding text thoughts. These thoughts centered on the five real and measurable costs of not managing transition effectively. Lively discourse followed small group discussion of this compelling text. We will continue at the next meetings to keep the text in front of us to guide our conversations. In a sense, the text assists us in having a rudder for decision making process and communication.

Review of Work Plan with Time Markers

The MSTT work plan was discussed. It is clear, we as a team are more thoughtful than any one of us are as individuals. The work plan was put in front of the MSTT for review and approval. While there are varying degrees of importance to a fairly wide variety of topics, we will get through them in a thoughtful manner. The LID information was very helpful in informing the work plan. This information has been integrated into the work plan. Members of the MSTT signed up for the various work teams they had interest in serving on. Further, other staff members from the middle schools have the opportunity to sign on with the work teams.

Essentially, we have been working on parallel tracks prior to the November 28 meeting. The two major bodies of work that were focused on prior to the board decision on November 27 were the transition strategies and middle school research best practice ideas. Both the gingerbread people info and the cloud concerns were incorporated into and continue to guide our work. This good work resulted from our LID time together and the collaboration the MSTT engaged in regarding the work.

Sign up for Work/Study Teams

Committee members signed up for work/study teams.

Review *This We Believe* Text

The text, *Managing Transitions*, will continue to guide us in future meetings. We will also be studying the text, *This We Believe*, a position paper outlining successful middle school research and strategies. The latter text is published by the National Middle School Association. We reviewed both page 7 from this paper and page(s) 43 and beyond at the LID activity.

Review of Reading Text to be Assigned

Another article we looked at from the New York Times addressed what we all already intuitively feel and know that kids today are growing up faster than ever before. Indeed, the premise of the article is that age ten is the new age fifteen. This has real implications in the planning and design of our new school.

Thanks and Gratitude

Thanks and gratitude for the continued generous contribution of time was again acknowledged.

Evaluation

MSTT members completed the meeting evaluations that assessed our commitment to keeping the norms while we deliberate.

NEXT MEETINGS

NOPSC: January 16 and 30
NOPSC: February 13 and 27
March 6, 2007