

Pierce School Council Meeting Minutes from October 7, 2010, 7pm

In attendance:

Melanee Alexander	Chandlee Dickey	Stacey Downey (PTO)
Carin Aquiline	Lisa Goldblatt Grace	Katie Hickey
John Badger	Sandy Lundy	Chuck Silverston (PTO)
Amie Buchman	Pipier Smith-Mumford	
Ginny Carroll	Karen Sutton	

I. Introductions

II. Meeting dates for 2010-11

Nov. 10, 7AM	March 9, 7AM
Dec. 9, 7AM	April 6, 7AM
Jan. 5, 6PM	May 4, 6PM
Feb. 2, 6PM	

Karen Sutton will bring snacks for November.

III. School Improvement Plan (SIP) Review

(handout—*2010-2011 Pierce School Improvement Plan, Executive Summary*)

SIP will be presented by Dr. Smith-Mumford at the PTO Parent Breakfast on Nov. 9th. One goal from SIP will be presented to the School Committee in November (probably the goal concerning the development of the Pierce Teaching and Learning Tours.)

Ideas for getting the SIP information to a greater number of parents:
Broadsheet notice with a link to full SIP and a few items pulled out in narrative that might catch people's attention and motivate them to use the link
Link on the Pierce School website

Clarification of terms used in the SIP:

CST: Child Study Team—a process for supporting teachers who need additional ideas for accommodations or strategies, sometimes for individual students

Parent portal: password-protected access for parents to information on the district website (e.g. directory information)

Clarifications of points made in executive summary of SIP:

Mentoring program—Program begins in 4th grade with a focus on relationship-building with students and families. Shift toward explicit conversations about how race plays a role in creating obstacles to achievement happens in grades 5-7, since students at this

point are more able to engage in these difficult conversations with their mentors.
Technology group—Pierce is being considered by the district as a site for a pilot program to happen in the latter half of this year
Paragraph 2 of “Continuing Efforts” section—revise to make it clear that “enhancing Child Study Teams, looking at library access and focusing more on Literacy efforts” are separate initiatives?

Praise from staff members and parents for the work, ideas and energy of Amanda Kretschmar, the new librarian.

Pierce Teaching and Learning Tours (PT<):

An off-shoot of last year’s district-wide Instructional Rounds network, for which Pierce was the site for one visit

Dr. Smith-Mumford: “People were getting excited about seeing their colleagues in action.”

The effort to create PT< is being led by Pierce teachers who participated last year in the district network.

11 staff members attended summer workshop to plan for fall PT<.

One tour in fall will focus on transitions (in classrooms, and student traffic patterns schoolwide); one anticipated for spring to focus on a curricular issue

Dr. Smith-Mumford is considering presenting this goal to School Committee.

Bullying (handout—*Public Schools of Brookline, Bullying Prevention and Intervention Planning, Third Draft*):

This fall the District is developing a Master Plan to address the new legislation; selection of a district-wide bullying prevention curriculum will continue into the spring; implementation of the curriculum will begin district-wide in Sept. 2011.

Initiative will be reported with more transparency to parents and staff

An Advisory Committee to comment on Master Plan will include representation from each school

The review process will include at least one open forum

To address parent anxiety about what the new law means and what is happening between now and implementation of new program in Sept. 2011, we should:

Send a list to parents of what’s already being done at Pierce (which would also be helpful to new teachers)

Publicize broadly the date for the open hearing on the Master Plan once it is determined

Pierce’s current efforts are primarily “social competency” curricula; the approved program must be a “research-based bullying prevention program”—the list of which curricula fit this definition is still being determined

Math Challenge Program:

Very good presentation made to PTO chairs last month by Angela Allen (District Coordinator for Mathematics, K-8). Any way to get similar presentation for Pierce parents/community?

IV. MCAS/AYP update from John Badger

(handout—four pages of selected data prepared by Mr. Badger)

AYP = adequate yearly progress

Defined as the aggregate student body and all sub-groups of the student body meeting performance targets for a particular year.

Each year the targets get higher, with the goal that 100% of students be proficient or advanced by 2014.

As a result, each year more schools across the state do not meet AYP.

(As John Badger put it, 100% proficiency by 2014 is a crazy target, but no target other than 100% proficiency is acceptable.)

For 2010 Pierce made AYP for the aggregate student body in both ELA and math. Pierce did not make AYP for the special education and low-income subgroups in ELA or for special education subgroup in math. Some other subgroups also did not meet performance targets in either or both areas, but aren't counted for AYP because we have fewer than 40 students in those subgroups.

The good news is that compared to similar schools across the state (including Baker and Lawrence schools in Brookline), Pierce has the highest performance for the special education subgroup.

In 2009 Pierce made AYP for the special education subgroup in both subject areas.

In 2010 the performance of all Pierce subgroups in ELA went down.

At Pierce any student who does not meet proficiency gets an individualized improvement plan (an ISSP) that identifies the content strands in which the student is struggling. The student then gets extra help in those areas.

By the time Pierce students reach tenth grade, very few do not meet proficiency. (John Badger has tracked the performance of cohorts of students from 4th through 10th grades.)

Fourth grade performance is usually lowest, across the state. Many possible reasons, including some related to test-taking itself. At Pierce teachers prepare students with test-taking skills and practice.

V. Principal Forums

Wed, Oct. 13—first forum of the year focused on 6-8th grades

Format planned by Dr. Smith-Mumford to accentuate the positive—how can parents and young people enjoy the middle school years?

Three teachers to speak on why they like teaching this age group

Grade-level groups where parents can bring any issues they want to discuss, moderated by staff from the Brookline Community Mental Health Center

Consideration, brought by PTO chairs, that the Principal Forums be reconsidered with goals of:

Increasing attendance

Offering additional “open meeting” time for parents to bring questions and comments to Dr. Smith-Mumford

PTO chairs suggest that “PTO” be removed from the title of these events. Perhaps School Council should have a role in planning the forums, with the purposes of providing an ongoing opportunity for parents to be informed of matters relevant to School Council responsibilities and clarifying for parents the work of the School Council?

Agenda item for next School Council meeting—Should format and content of Principal Forums be reconsidered? What, if any, role should School Council have in planning the forums?

People interested in being part of a conversation on this topic before the next School Council meeting:

Melanee Alexander

Carin Aquiline

Ginny Carroll

Stacey Downey

Lisa Grace Goldblatt

Chuck Silverston

Karen Sutton

VI. Adjournment: 7:30 PM