

HYDE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

To: Hyde Park School Board
From: Shelley Mathias
Subject: Principal's report
Date: May 3, 2010

Focus on upper grades

Cassandra Thomas and I attended the New England League of Middle Schools Annual Conference where we gathered information in the areas of math differentiation, formative assessment, scheduling, standards based grading, the use of Smart Boards in the classroom, and more. Cassandra and I strategically attended different sessions to maximize exposure to as much information as possible. We both found the conference very useful in terms of providing some insight into issues specific to middle level grades as well as instructional tools and methods that would be useful in facilitating instruction. It also provided us with time in the evening and during the drive to debrief and discuss what we had gleaned from the sessions. I hope to be able to bring the entire middle level team (5th and 6th grade) to the conference next year.

Board Guiding Principles:

- The Board is committed to ensuring an academic and social atmosphere that will assist each learner toward his or her highest potential. Further, the board is committed to realize this vision in as a cost effective manner as possible.
- School programs and activities will be chosen and evaluated in the context of assisting individual learners to reach their highest potential. Sources of funding will not be the primary factor in decision making.

Student Council formed

A fifth and sixth grader initiated discussions with me about playground improvements and the desire to fundraise to improve the condition of the basketball equipment and offer more selections for activities. Their comments lead me to suggest the formation of a Student Council. The two boys then recruited members of the Student Council. Officers were elected and the group is working on two fundraising events; a car wash on May 8th and a bottle drive on June 5th. I am acting as the group's advisor at this time.

There are quite a few children who have expressed interest in participating but already had committed to other after school activities. Students will be encouraged to participate in the fundraising activities regardless of their ability to attend the Tuesday Student Council meetings. Jean Pratt indicated that she would be willing to incorporate Student Council into the after school program next year which would be helpful in expanding overall participation and in insuring an advisor.

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2010 Budget Projection

I am projecting a deficit of roughly \$25,000 this year, which is less than 1% of the total budget (eight hundredths of a percent). This is in light of the 18% increase in enrollment and the 7% increase in students on IEP's. The strategic use of ARRA stimulus funds and other grant programs significantly helped in our being able to move forward on planned programs without resulting in a far larger deficit. In addition, we did not proceed with some initiatives in light of the change in the school census. This can be seen in the use of the 2010 technology budget where investment was limited to personnel required to maintain technology, and a small amount to repair existing equipment. This was possible because of the Board's decision to allocate funds to technology in the winter of 2009. We were also able to save in the area of evaluations because of professional development of several staff members, enabling them to perform the evaluations rather than outsourcing the work. Each evaluation done in house saved between \$1,000 and \$1,500. Finally, we benefited from the change in demographics in higher reimbursement rates.

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School Improvement Planning for 2010/2011

Dr. Taylor and I have been working on developing HPES strategies for the school improvement grant over the next three years, examining what will be permissible and how those strategies fit with HPES needs. Fortunately, there is a great deal of overlap and it will not be a stretch to present grant requests that are sanctioned by the School Improvement Grant program. As a Tier III school, we will not be able to get as much financial support as those schools in Tier I, but it is still worth seeking as much support as possible, especially in light of the State's current fiscal status.

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Community

There were some concerns regarding the cafeteria program by some parents. We have instituted the use of hair covering – hair nets or hats according to food service health standards. Additionally, I invited those concerned to form a group to work with Shirley Mason, learning about the Federal and State guidelines and budgets that she is required to work within and lending a hand in enhancing the program. The parents are working on forming a group.

The Board should note that our kitchen facility is subjected to surprise inspections by the State of Vermont and has scored between 97 and 98 out of 100 every time. Additionally, two points are taken because the kitchen does not have a three bay sink – a situation out of the control of Mrs. Mason. There is not enough space in the kitchen for a three bay sink. The Food Service staff should be commended for their work in insuring such a high level of cleanliness and food safety at HPES.

Board Guiding Principles:

- To address community expectations the board commits to generating, assembling, examining and disseminating relevant data on school, program and individual performance.
- Assessment data will be used to recognize success and to make program improvements.

A reminder, for planning purposes, I will not be at the May 3 board meeting. I will be attending the American Education Research Association Annual Conference in Denver.