

SLT Minutes April 28, 2017

Members in Attendance

	Teachers	Parents	Guests
Elana Elster, Principal	Dan Faagan	Corinne Bal	
Jerome Kramer, PTA	Elizabeth McNulty	Dahlia Doumar	
Katie Miller, PTA	Alison Merkel	Karen Saltser	
Deirdre McEvoy, UFT	Alexis Ritter	Tristram Yale	
Erica Williams, AP		Stefanie Goldblatt	
		Bill Reinisch	

Approval of March Minutes

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the March meetings were unanimously adopted with minor revisions discussed.

Advisory Update

Discussion continued regarding “advisory” programs. Ms. Merkel reported back to the members in attendance and guests regarding a program on advisories (the “Program”) that she attended. The takeaways from the Program included the following:

- Readiness to implement is very important contributor to success
- Discussion needed regarding types of issues that will be addressed
- Reasons for implementing advisory, mission, and goals need to be clear
- Teacher and advisor are not synonymous; for this to be successful need to create advisors
- Time is needed to implement

One of the items discussed at the Program was the goal of having kids in advisories learn skills and put them to use in a more public, social action oriented way. Discussing ensued among the members regarding issues such as the importance of size of the advisory group, time spent, curriculum development, efficacy of such a program on realizing stated goals and reasons why advisory might or might not be needed or otherwise additive to the current programs at M.S. 54. Additional discussion regarding how advisory might be different or similar to homeroom and the challenges involved with implementing such a program at a large school. Members discussed what additional skills and connections might be gained from advisory and what the goals might be. A suggestion was made regarding possible roll out of an advisory program either for a single grade or a more limited group. Another suggestion was that a special committee be formed to study this issue. Following the discussion, it was concluded that additional input was necessary from the faculty in order to further assess the viability and necessity of an advisory program. Following the collection of such input, the issue will be addressed at an upcoming SLT meeting.

Admissions/Incoming 6th Grade

Ms. Williams reported that the process was smooth and admissions were as anticipated. There are approximately 300 incoming sixth graders and the academic qualifications of those entrants appear similar to that in prior years.

Following that discussion, the meeting was adjourned and all other agenda items carried over to the next meeting.

Executive Session

The meeting began in executive session to receive information from the administration regarding the test scores of the incoming sixth grade class. Discussion occurred regarding the difficulty and somewhat arbitrariness of creating a division between the honors and academic class given the apparently closely banded test scores. Discussion also took place regarding the overall benefits to the vast majority of students of dividing the classes in a manner that is arguably less arbitrary than the current division between academic and honors. Thought is being given to how best to create sixth grade classes. The administration reported that in seventh and eight grade class divisions are often made based on foreign language choices. There was general support for trying to create a system of dividing the classes that most benefits the majority of students and addresses the close banding that has been seen in the test scores. One challenge facing the school is that there may be some parents who prefer not having their children in classes that are labeled honors. Further discussion took place regarding the focus in sixth grade on learning good study habits. The meeting concluded with discussion that it seems that it makes the most sense for the administration to look at the test scores and grades and create class groups that will accelerate learning.