

Middle School Council

Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2019

1. **Bronxville School Foundation:** Kicking off 2018 grant season. Looking for ideas from teachers, students and parents. Grant Application comes out after MLK weekend. High School Students can also write a grant. Always accepting donations. Now on instagram and twitter.
2. **Friends of SLC** putting on “game theory” Jan 29th. Math teacher. Great for students interested in puzzles.
3. **Bronxville NPC:** We identify and interview potential candidates for the School Board. We are soliciting candidates. Application online at Bronxvillenpc.com Deadline March 2nd.
4. **MS After School:** Take a look at the new website. Have some great classes for 6 to 8th graders.
5. **Report From Thomas Wilson, Bronxville Middle School Principal**

Social Media: Younger kids are using devices. Up until this year, 7th grade was the time that social media issues start to occur. This year, they are occurring in 6th grade. The school does not endorse that your kids are on social media. They are tools that they are not really ready to handle. Kids now have 400 kids in their pocket all the time which means they have no downtime. You should police your child’s use. You own the phones. Safety is the issue. Digital citizenship and footprint are part of the curriculum in the computer, english and social studies classes. We want kids to be present in their own reality. Phones are not allowed in classrooms and hallways.

National Assessment of Educational Progress: This is the largest clearing house of educational data used in academic research. We’ve been asked to participate this year. We will be giving a math or reading test to some of our 8th graders on January 30th. Scores will not be used for tracking kids. Tom will let parents know if their child will be taking the test.

Plagiarism and Cheating. We have formed a group to look at a 6-12 policy. It’s really about academic integrity. Tom talked about a “case study” on cheating in a classroom which showed that if a whole group is cheating, it can be seen as acceptable behavior because it’s the social convention. We have to set conventions for which we hold kids accountable and there has to be active teaching about them in every class. Students

also want teachers to provide sources and citations for their materials. Our committee is working on those definitions.

New schedule: We are working on a proposal for a schedule change. Our current schedule is 40 minute blocks. Some things that kids need to work on in school require more time than others. We are talking with teachers, administrators and a scheduling consultant. The proposed schedule will offer longer blocks of time for core academic classes.

Tom mentioned our new computer/robotics teacher from the Professional Children's School in New York City. Mr. Jason Wofsey joined the faculty in December and we are happy that he is on board!

Rachel Kelly mentioned that the Board approved a Teacher Retirement incentive.

6. English Department

Grammar Program - Grammar is linked with power. If kids can speak and write well, they will have the keys to be successful. The lessons are taught multiple times throughout their grades and are connected to what they are writing. There are four types of lessons - demonstration, inquiry (teacher poses a question about grammar, study text, collect examples, apply into writing), apprenticeship (all focus on one text and apply into own writing) and extravaganza (students teaching each other)

A parent asked about Grammarly and the teachers said that a lot of students are using it.

We are creating posters for each grade level for the classroom with the conventions taught last year. There is an expectation that kids keep these in mind going forward.

We consulted with the National Council Of Teachers of English. The idea of "urgent conventions" came from them. They urge districts to prioritize what grammar should be taught. There are 20-30 skills K - 9 from capitalization to appropriate citations and more advanced techniques. Each grade level has 2-5 skills that they are responsible for teaching. Grammar is taught in the context of writing. We also look at how authors use grammar.

There are checklists for the kids. Grammar is part of the grade for student papers. Kids know what they are working on for each paper.

7. Upcoming Talks

Feb 5th - Finding right fit for college

Feb 13th - Be Well talk on vaping

