

Notes from the first meeting of the Haggerty Middle School Working Group on June 2nd, 2010 (6 - 7:30 P.M.).

WELCOME

Superintendent Jeff Young hands out folders and welcomes everyone.

All of the information that is in the folders will be put on the Haggerty website.

- There will be 3 meetings

Tonight

Monday, June 7, 2010

Wednesday, June 9, 2010

- The intent of these meetings is to do the best work that we can and have closure at the end of the 3rd meeting.

The objective of tonight's meeting is a review of pertinent data. Jeff Young (JY) wants to have staff and parents become familiar with the data that Jim Maloney (JM) will provide.

JY wants us to figure out how we will know a good conclusion when we see it. He wants it to be grounded in reality. It should not be political, etc.

In case there needs to be more outreach to the Haggerty community, we need to figure out the best way to make that work (e.g. survey).

We are a working group that wants to be efficient and we want to keep people informed. We are representatives of the community.

INTRODUCTIONS

Janelle Bradshaw - Principal

Kevin McGonegal - Technology specialist. Has been at the Haggerty School for a number of years and is concerned about the middle school transition. He can also add some history. [left early]

Maryanne Fox - Parent of a 4th grader. Wants to make sure that there is a smooth transition for her son and his cohort.

Kathy Sampson - Family Liason

Mara Levine - Parent of 4th grader and Haggerty alum (now in 6th grade at Peabody ISP). Loves the ISP but the main reason for leaving Haggerty at the end of 5th grade was to avoid the stress of Haggerty 6th grade.

(JY wants to discuss what Mara means by 6th grade stress later.)

Meg Moloney - 4th grade teacher. A lot of history teaching in the Cambridge schools.

Susan Pemsier - Reading Specialist. First year teaching at Haggerty and wants to be part of the discussion of the transition.

Ray McCann - Phys Ed. Teacher. Has a long history at Haggerty.

Rowan Murphy - 6th grader at Haggerty and another son who is a Haggerty alum (went to 6th - 8th grade at G&P, and now in 9th grade at CRLS). Rowan wants to discuss the stress of 5th and 6th

grade at Haggerty and what can be done to alleviate this. She hopes that this will also contribute to larger discussion of middle school situation in Cambridge.

Bruce Fischl - 5th grader and 1st grader. Wants to figure out a transition that will work.

(JY what does "works" mean -- wants to get back to this later.)

Deb Henry - 5th grader. Works for middle schools and has worked for great systems and can offer some of her expertise here.

(JY appreciates this offer because whatever we think in the end it has to be something that works for Haggerty and for all of Cambridge)

Leslie Kramer - 6th grade teacher. She has been at Haggerty since 1993 "King Open" for 5 years prior to that. She is very worried about students on IEPs. Leslie feels as though Haggerty does inclusion really well and she would like more equity across the system.

Eric Rosenthal - 4th and 2nd graders. His main interest is in 4th grader since we no longer have the city wide solution for 2011 that he was hoping for. [left early]

(JY understands that the stress about the middle school transition begins around 4th or 5th grade. This is not good.)

Jim Maloney - Chief Operating Officer who has worked for CPS for the past 7 years. He wants to see people happy and wants there to be an improvement in the system.

Marlene Orlellana - 5th grader [arrived after introductions]

Robyn Gaillard - 5th grade teacher [arrived after introductions]

SLIDES

JM went over the slides that he handed out and will be on the website.

Questions and comments about the slides:

Leslie says that the 6th grade this year looks very different the rest of the school based on race.

There are many more kids of color in the 6th grade than in the rest of the grades. Socioeconomically, Haggerty also has a higher percentage of Free/Reduced Lunch students in the 6th grade than in the rest of the school.

Deb asked if there is a controlled choice policy.

JM said yes but it is assigned by capacity. For example, if there are 60 kindergarten seats and 40 of the seats are filled by Paid Lunch students, the other 20 seats should be for Free/Reduced Lunch. If only 10 students fill those seats, the other 10 seats will remain empty. This throws off the ratio because of the empty seats.

Janelle said that if a Paid student leaves Haggerty, they are usually replaced with a F/R student

Leslie wants to know where are the statistics for students with IEPs - part of the culture of the school.

Leslie said that families of special needs students need the supports that Haggerty provides. It is difficult to move a kid with special needs. She has kids in her class with heavy-duty IEPs.

JM district wide enrollment is up a little - we lose kids in the middle grades - and then picks up again in high school.

Haggerty one of the most stable enrollments.

Haggerty consistently in the top 3 or 4 chosen schools

Haggerty has a strong neighborhood component but draws students from across the city

JM pointed out that the numbers on slide 10 change hourly. This data on the slide is from 6/2/10.

Janelle stated that the wait list at Peabody is 0 because it is a sister school.

Peabody ISP has 2 strands for the 6th grade. Janelle said that some families that committed to go for the '10-'11 school year, may stay at Haggerty depending on what comes out of these working group meetings.

JM pointed out that the Family Resource Center is really a registrar.

Deb wants to know how opening up a 2nd class at the Peabody ISP happened.

Right now there are open Peabody ISP seats for 6th grade.

There are also open seats for 7th grade in the ISP but there is a wait list.

SISTER SCHOOL OPTIONS

Bruce wants to know what are the available options for a sister school where the students can move as a cohort.

Empty seats and physical space is needed.

JM said that if the 6th graders move as a cohort, the school they move to would need to add one possibly two depending on the location.

Kennedy Longfellow has space

King Open may have space

King has seats - but not a lot of physical space

Peabody has physical space

Tobin has physical space

JM said that here are other factors enter into it - other programs occupy some of the space at the schools.

We may be able move other programs to make room in a school for our cohort.

Maryanne wanted to know if the Peabody is the sister school model that we want to focus on.

JY said that we will discuss that in the 2nd meeting.

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

Janelle wants to know about the Amigos and Montessori programs and what effect they have on the district.

JM answered that we are a small district so specialized programs have limitations. For instance what happens when a 5 year old who has never been in a classroom before) comes into the Montessori school with kids who have been in the class since they were 3-years-old? How do the transfers in the older grades work for kids who have never been in a Montessori classroom before?

In Amigos it is difficult for a student to transfer into the Middle School without strong Spanish skills.

King applied for an Mandarin immersion grant for k-2. This way kids can transfer into the upper grades.

IEP STUDENT PLACEMENT

Marlene wants to know how are kids on IEPs are being placed to the middle grades.
JM said that most of the schools are within the district range with IEP students.
Janelle answered that the students go in with the general placement. It is done on an individual level.
The parents will have that info before Jan so they can make choices.

HOMEWORK

JY said that our homework is think about all of the data so that on 6/7 we can have a classic brainstorming session.
We will then pare down the list to 2 or 3 ideas that we can explore further.
On 6/9 we should reach a consensus.
On 6/15 JY will report to school committee

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Bruce says that it is important that the kids move together as a cohort.
Mara does not think that this is one of the most important factors. Mixing it up for middle school might be good thing.
Rowan says that it all depends on quality of the program.
Meg wants to abolish ISP since it is tracking.
Mara disagreed with Meg, and there was a short discussion about the ISP.
Rowan does not want this to turn into an ISP discussion. She wants to keep the spectrum broad.
JY did say that the ISP is being examined by the school administration.
Leslie stated that students with IEPs need to be supported and that we can not be only the school in Cambridge that does this.
Deb said that the middle school years are an extremely vulnerable time. We can not continue to wait to the last minute to let students know where we are going for middle school.
Ray wants to know if we can reproduce the Haggerty culture elsewhere.

Meeting adjourned