

Frank McCourt High School SLT
Minutes of March 31, 2015 Meeting*

Present: Maria Hartman (Parent/President), Evan Smith (UFT Rep), Danielle Salzberg (Principal), Mary Manhardt (Parent/Secretary), Ann Marie Foss (PTA President)

Parents in Attendance: Marilyn Lee, Lena Jakobsson, Laurie La Ferrara

Maria called the meeting to order at 5 pm.

Agenda Item 6: The Library was discussed first. Ms. Salzberg explained, in answer to parent questions submitted and put on the agenda, the basic situation of the campus-wide library. The Brandeis library is located on the 3rd floor of the building, and was closed all last year for renovations. It has reopened this year, but because there is no campus or individual school budget for a librarian, it can only be used by teachers bringing their classes there on an ad-hoc basis. Sometimes teachers bring groups there during lunch, sometimes to do specific class assignments or work. But the availability of the library is a question of staffing and supervision, campus-wide, that is, it's a matter for all schools to act on. A parent asked if we could get parent volunteers to supervise library time. Ms. Salzberg indicated that that might be possible, but would need to be worked out. Another question was raised about if PTAs could work campus-wide to raise money or apply for grants for a part- or full-time librarian. Ms. Salzberg says that too would be a possibility if someone were willing to take it on; she shared that one of the campus principals, from Global Studies, is passionate about library access and would be a good ally for a parent or committee interested in increasing library access. Additionally, there is no mechanism for borrowing books from the library at this time. There would need to be someone willing to reach out to other campus PTAs if this is a priority task for SLT or an individual parent, or group of parents.

Agenda Items 3 and 4: CEP Goals for this and next year

Maria asked what our plan should be for generating our CEP goals for the coming school year. Ms. Salzberg suggested we make next year's goals more 'universal', i.e., rather than setting goals designed to be achieved by and to impact constituencies in the the school (administration, faculty, parents), we all work together on a goal or set of goals that we as a community would have ownership of, both in achieving and enjoying the benefits of.

Mr. Smith observed that many usual CEP goals are 'outward-facing' goals, that is, they aim to effect mainly how the school is seen by outsiders (other parents, community, on-line ratings.) The data we assess our goal achievement by is similarly 'displayable', and outward-looking. At our May and June meetings, one thing we might consider is whether we can use DOE data to help measure our goal achievement.

Ms. Salzberg recalled that SLTs were started as a way of increasing transparency about how large school decisions were made. And that the framework now used for CEP goals is brand-new, different from what came before Chancellor Farina was appointed.

This led to a discussion of our current, constituency-based goals. Mr. Smith outlined where we are with our 2014-15 school year goals:

1. Instruction: The goal was to become even more rigorous in our academic instruction, as outlined in a redrafted Policy for Student expectations, and measured by students

graduating with an 80 on their Algebra Regents. The policy includes encouraging sophomore and junior students who passed, but also scored sufficiently near to an 80 (70 – 79) on their Algebra Regents, to RE-TAKE the test to score an 80 or above. A Pilot program for this goal was run during the first Intersession in December 2014/January 2015, when a Regents prep course was offered prior to the test. (This was for students taking the Algebra Regents for the first time as well as for re-takes (CHECK FOR ACCURACY). The goal is a 5% increase, and so far, with only half the school year gone, a 2.7% increase was reported. There was a long and involved discussion of the old Integrated Algebra Regents and the new Integrated Algebra Regents and how the current 10th graders are being exposed to both. Parents questioned what Regents scores matter for, and the answer is, if students are applying to or attending CUNY colleges, Regents scores are looked at for placement (an algebra or geometry score of 80 or above means that the student will not have to take a math placement test at CUNY). Otherwise, though they show up on NYC HS transcripts, they probably don't mean a lot to out of state schools. Additionally, schoolwide Regents scores factor into the School Grade in the College Readiness category. So, it is an achievement metric, and there will be a pitch to advisors, students, parents that the school aims to have FMHS students excelling on Regents with scores of 80 and above, as opposed to merely passing with a 65. Additionally, this will be the school culture presented to present 9th graders and incoming classes in the future.

Ms. Salzberg pointed members toward the DOE/SLT website, for ideas of “buckets” or categories of goals we might start considering; Maria will solicit other ideas from the community as well.

2. Advisory Trips – These have already happened in the 11th grade; the 9th grade are doing and planning community service trips together; the 12th grade are planning a school wide Field Day for the end of the school year, and they will be using that as their ‘trip’, with each advisory taking on one aspect of the planning and running of the Field Day.
3. Teacher Teams – Teacher Teams meet Wednesday mornings, as well as grade-level teacher meetings (these are 9th; 10th; Upper house, combining 11th and 12th). The goal is to increase credit accumulation. The focus this year is on the benefits of revision, and data is collected to show the students the benefits of revising work.
4. School leadership – A potential goal for the new teacher contract is more teacher development time. The mandated contract time has shifted from meeting with students to teacher development, which seems like a negative, but Mr. Smith pointed out that now resources are better allocated. For example, instead of having 3 teachers in the Math Resource Room after school, there is one.
5. Strong family and Community Ties – as measured by participation in School Survey, the results of which will be coming in late in the year.

As we consider goals moving into next year, Ms. Salzberg says it all boils down to two questions: How do we make the school better? How do we get the students more of what they want and need?

A parent asked, what can we do to get the name out? Ms. Salzberg replied that we need to constantly be asking, who are we? What are our values? Some quick ideas: that more parents

come to Intersession Expo or the 9th grade GMO presentation, that we have more community-wide events, where all grades and their families can gather and form bonds.

Agenda Item 5: School Safety Issues

A campus-wide School Safety Meeting will be held on April 21, at 10 am, at the school. All are welcome to attend.

Meeting adjourned at 6 pm.

May monthly meeting is May 5, 2015, at 5 pm.

*This was the April monthly meeting. Meeting rescheduled because April regular meeting date, first Tuesday of the month, fell during Spring Break.