

School Council Meeting Minutes: November 15th, 2021

In attendance: John Smith, Nicole Kepnes, Donna Strouse, John Lin, Anita Lotti, Tim O'Mara, John Soraghan, Sterling Williams, Lilly Caplan, Chelsea Ohene-Addo, Grant Mayer, and Emily Waugh

Review of October Minutes

- Discussed the start of school and new flex block
- NEASC report and recommendations reviewed
- School improvement measures are taking place:
 - Equity audit
 - New schedule system
 - NEASC recommendation implementation

Budget Update

- On the budget scale a 0.2 means funding for one, year long course
- Site based funding: technology, labs, supplies, etc. - department heads have kept this level funded
- Personnel funds: some proposed changes are awaiting superintendent and business manager approval, including:
 - 0.2 increase in english
 - 0.6 increase in math (due to financial literacy demand and freshmen geometry class sizes)
 - 0.5 or 0.6 increase in social studies (due to high Senior turnout rates, US History requirements, and interest in additional courses such as Government and Law, Latin American studies, and AP Psychology)
 - 0.2 increase in fine and performing arts (due to interest in a theater workshop)
- Bridge Coordinator position change: increasing from a educational assistant to teacher salary
- Around a 1.4 increase proposed in total

Equity Audit Update

- An equity audit is being performed through NYU Steinhardt. Joanna Geller is our local contact for the audit.
- The audit will consider a variety of factors that could impact a student's experience, with the goal to give everyone equal opportunities for success at DS
- The equity audit will help us to identify strengths, challenges, language barriers, BIPOC experiences, and create a sustainable action plan to address issues at DS
- Focus groups are meeting now, and large surveys will be sent out in the Spring

Mask Policy and Potential Changes

- The state mask mandate was extended until January 15th. However, districts with 80% or higher vaccine rates can make the local decision whether or not to mandate mask wearing.

- Our superintendent has contacted the state to ask for removal of our mask mandate, and the board of health is in support of high school students removing masks since we have a high enough vaccination rate. The school committee must vote for this change to occur.
- If all members involved approve the change, mask wearing could potentially become voluntary.

Superintendent Search Update

- Our current Interim Superintendent is Kathleen Smith.
- Our new superintendent is hoped to begin July 1st.
- The finalist naming process has begun, although the candidate's names remain confidential for now. Names are scheduled to be made public around Thanksgiving.

Next Meeting:

Monday, December 13th, 2021