

**Meeting Minutes
Community Review Committee (CRC)
Wilmette Public Schools District 39
January 11, 2010**

Committee Members Present: Debby Atwater, Steve Becker, Cassandra Black, Laura Born, Rebecca Boyd, Beth Carmody, Romy DeCristofaro, Adam Denenberg, Mindy Douthit, Katy Forsyth, Susan Fortier, John Gridley, Julia Marran Grosh, Hornstein, Melanie Horowitz, Raymond Lechner, Chris Leutz, Dan Murray, Frank Panzica, Tracy Peacock, Diane Philips, Pam Rezek, Carolyn Sennett, Barbara Ungar, John Walker, Karee Wallach, Denise Welter.

Committee Members Absent or Excused: Maria Baird, Kathleen Boehm, Beth Burke, Marlene Dodinval, Debbie Greif, Harvey Schmidt.

1. Introductory Remarks/President's Report

Susan Fortier called the meeting to order and began by thanking Laura Born and Pam Rezek for their faculty presentations at each of the District schools. Ms. Fortier also thanked Mindy Douthit and Tracy Peacock for their work in going through the findings from the surveys that faculty members took following the presentations.

The Minutes from the December 7, 2009 meeting were approved.

2. Superintendent and Board of Education Report.

The reports of the Superintendent and the Board of Education (represented by John Flanigan) were combined into one report.

The H1N1 clinics went off well.

Heather Glowacki was appointed as principal of Romona School.

A finance committee was appointed by the Board of Education. The committee will be looking for ways for the District to "tighten belts."

Twenty-first century learning was discussed at the WEA executive board meeting. Representatives are excited about the approach and have some ideas for the focus groups.

3. Village-Wide PTO Report.

There was no Village Wide PTO Report.

4. Committee Discussion

a. Presentation of Survey Results.

Ms. Douthit and Ms. Peacock reported to the committee on the results of the surveys that were performed immediately following each presentation. Faculty members brought laptops to the presentations and the survey was able to capture instant reactions to the presentations. The overall response rate was 60 percent.

Ninety-five percent of respondents reported that the information presented is relevant. They were most familiar with the themes of “technology” and “collaboration.” Communication, social responsibility and technology were identified as top priorities.

There was a difference in priorities between the elementary (K-4) and upper grade (5-8) levels. At the elementary schools, “social responsibility” and “communication skills” stood out, but the other priorities were more evenly ranked. The upper schools had no real agreement on priorities.

Respondents identified “time” and “financial resources” as key roadblocks. “Professional development” and “conflicts with existing curriculum” were also identified.

Ninety respondents provided additional comments. The additional comments fell into nine general categories.

Ms. Douthit and Ms. Peacock then recommended that the next steps should include working with the top themes for on-line and live focus groups and work with the Teacher Education committee to keep in touch with CRC initiatives.

b. Discussion

Ms. Fortier opened up the discussion to the entire committee to discuss how the work flow process is going.

There was a discussion of whether the current subgroups should temporarily disband and hone in on the top themes. Each new group would focus on a different theme and create the “bulletpoints” or “to-dos”

for the strategic plan. Some thought that this is a good idea that would allow the committee to go to the substance. Another approach would keep the subgroups focused on their action items. Other suggestions included something that might overlap the two types of groups or divide the Teacher Ed and Focus groups into the five top themes as defined by the initial survey results.

The discussion then turned to the importance of maintaining the research component and using the teacher focus groups for valuable input. The Survey/Focus subcommittee will be using a two-tiered approach whereby faculty would first be asked to participate on-line, then a few people would be asked for a few hours of their time.

More discussion followed on similar topics:

- whether there could be other types of focus groups, such as asking New Trier students how they felt coming out of D39 schools compared to students from other school districts.
- the focus groups should also discuss what is already being done in the classrooms.
- the topic does not lend itself to silo thinking, as the themes merge together and the themes need to be approached with more of a cross-section.
- a theme should not be taken off for study just because it was not prioritized in the survey

As there was general agreement that the themes do merge together, the committee determined that the subcommittees would remain in tact, but some subcommittee members would temporarily assist the Survey group.

The Survey group will start by focusing on top themes (as identified in the initial survey) but acknowledging that others may blend in; ultimately all eight themes may be covered. Right now the groups need more direction, and the survey group would like more input on what to ask the teachers.

c. Subcommittees

The committee broke out into the four subcommittees for the remainder of the meeting.

d. Regroup of Entire Committee

Each subcommittee reported on its next steps:

The Parent Committee will coordinate with Dr. Lechner to prepare a “kick off” letter to parents in the District. The letter will note that parents might

be hearing and seeing some new things in the District and will begin to provide more information.

The Survey group is moving forward with on-line focus group plan. A meeting is scheduled for the next week. There will be an on-line focus group for administrators on January 26. A second group will be asked what the themes look like to them. This will be followed with live focus groups.

The Plan Template subcommittee will be working on a high level draft of plan that will be modified as information from the focus groups is provided.

The Teacher Ed subcommittee would like survey to ask teachers what they would like for professional development and when would they like it. There were suggestions to ask teachers to ask what it means to teach a digital native, a student of today. Members of the subcommittee will be researching what other districts are doing. Some members would be attending conference and many of the faculty members on the subcommittee will be speaking with their contacts. It was also noted Apple has a 21 century module for learning.

The meeting was adjourned.