

Community Engagement Committee Minutes
Location: Bixby Library

December 20, 2016
6:05-7:19 PM

Meeting called to order 6:05 P.M.

In attendance: Diana Raphael, Kristina MacKulin, Finn Yarbrough, Laurie Gutowski, Travis Park, Kasi Pierce, Judy Elson, Scott Grant. Absent: Kathryn Wyckoff, Megan Tarte, Chris Cousineau.

1. Accepted minutes of 11/15/16 meeting with revised next meeting date: original minutes read 12/13/16 and should instead read 12/20/16.
2. **Authentic Community Engagement:** Debrief article from last month's meeting. Diana R. and Kristina M. report on their video interview with Partnership for Change, regarding the CEC grant opportunity around "authentic community engagement." Discussion of how the CEC can engage the community in an 'authentic' way, where 'authentic' means the CEC sits at the table with the community on equal footing, rather than as a governing body that retains full executive power to accept or dismiss community input.
3. **Student input update:** Google Doc with the students' engagement is reviewed, and discussion ensues on how the CEC can interpret this data and reciprocate, sharing the results back to students and parents. Provoked by question from Kasi P., Diana R. requests that a note be added to the minutes that the results from the parent engagement (on open-house night) be interpreted and shared as well. Possible venues of dissemination: school newsletter, ANSWD website and FB page, and FPF. Travis P. raises discussion on whether and how to extend the engagement to grades below 9-12.
4. **Faculty input.** Discussion on how to craft questions for faculty engagement, recognizing that "educational opportunity" is only one piece of the school system. There may be other kinds of obstacles/opportunities that faculty foresee. Finn Y. raises the concern that asking how to be prepared for "a very different future" is a leading question—and also wonders if another question should be added, that does not limit faculty to commenting only on educational opportunities, but allows for commentary on the way the system functions. Systems frameworks may be one way to interpret the fine-grained data that we receive, in order to interpret it more broadly into language appropriate for a vision statement. Wide-ranging discussion on the merits of asking questions that may result in negative feedback. Agreement that the third question will read: "What obstacles in the system stand in your way as a teacher?" Judy E. thinks it will be important for the questionnaire to include an introduction as to its purpose. Introduction to be delivered in person by a representative of the CEC. Finn Y., Diana R., and Kristina M. indicate availability to attend staff meetings in order to introduce the questionnaire. It is vital that the anonymity and voluntary nature of this questionnaire be communicated and upheld.

5. **Community Focus Groups:** Diana R. will arrange to attend a luncheon at the senior center, accompanied by Finn Y. She will work with Susan Cartwright to host a focus group.

6. **Next Steps:** Diane will contact JoAn to ask principals to include CEC in upcoming staff meeting, will arrange luncheon with senior center, and will arrange focus group, and will draft final questions for faculty engagement. CEC members standing by to fill in

7. **Next Meeting:** set for January 24, 2017, 6:00 – 7:15 PM Bixby Library

Meeting adjourned, 7:19 P.M.

TEXT:

To some school leaders and educators, the term “community engagement” is largely seen as a synonym for public relations or marketing, and to them “stronger engagement” means improving quality of information materials distributed to the public or convincing the community to support the decisions those school leaders have already made. To others, community engagement means surveying or talking to students, parents, and community members, and then using that information to inform plans, governance decisions, and school policies. In this case, the school leaders still retain the power to make unilateral decisions without the direct involvement of stakeholders. While strong communications and persuasive leadership are essential for every school, our definition of community engagement is quite different: **Authentic community engagement is the constructive disruption of (1) structural inequities and unfairness in educational systems, (2) traditional hierarchies of power and privilege in school systems and classrooms, and (3) deeply entrenched patterns of negative, unproductive thinking and relating in school communities, especially among groups from different socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. When authentic forms of engagement are done well, schools and educators become more responsive to the needs and priorities of their students and families. We also see more inclusive conversations between schools and their community, stronger and more trusting relationships between educators and families, more energized and welcoming school cultures, greater support in the community for equity driven educational innovation, and—most importantly—improved educational results and outcomes for all students, but especially for the most marginalized, low achieving, and historically underserved student populations.**