Minutes of the Culture and Climate Committee Meeting

Date: 10/30/23
Time: 7:30pm
Location: Virtual

Participants:
Brian Fleischer (Board Member)
Maggie Dock (District Mental Health/Anti Bullying Coordinator)
Crystal Hopkins (Board Member)
Maisel Rodriguez Vars (MFEE)
Dory Hack (MFEE)
Monk Inyang (Committee Chair)

Agenda Item 1: District Mental Health Team Update

- It was shared that a Quarterly SEL (Social Emotional Learning) & Mental Health Newsletter is in the works, aiming to reach both parents and students. Further details will be provided as they become available.
- The Parent Academy is planning to offer SEL workshops. Two sessions have been scheduled:
  - “Recognizing and Addressing Children’s Emotions & Building a Resilience Toolkit” on Thursday, November 16 at 7:00pm at Quantum Edgemont ES. Participants are encouraged to RSVP, and a survey will be distributed to gauge parent interest and guide planning.
  - “Supporting Children Coping with Loss,” offered both online on Tuesday, January 9, and in person on Tuesday, January 23 at 7pm. A Google survey will be shared for RSVPs.

Agenda Item 2: HIB Self-Assessment Grading and Related Topics

- The discussion covered the district’s progress towards the goals set for the 22–23 school year, highlighted achievements from various schools, and identified focus areas for the upcoming 23–24 school year.
- HIBster Training was mentioned, highlighting past workshops on October 19 and 20, and a follow-up planned for the November 7 Professional Development day.
- A specific HIB Training for Coordinators and Administrators with Dave Nash is scheduled for November 21st.
- The DREAMS program’s Climate Survey was discussed, starting with the Middle School and potentially expanding district wide.
Concerning HIB Reports, Mrs. Dock shared her review of other district’s HIB reports, noting that they do not include summaries. She proposed adopting a similar format for Montclair to ensure privacy for families when reports are submitted for public vote.

Agenda Item 3: MFEE Presentation on School Registration Difficulties

- Dory Hack and Maisel Rodriquez Vars from MFEE addressed the committee, highlighting the challenges families face when enrolling in Montclair schools, especially non-English speakers, and those without reliable internet access.
- They suggested reintroducing paper registration options and providing specific times for in-person registration assistance.
- They called for clearer registration requirements for unhoused families to ensure equitable processes.
- They recommended that notary services be offered at the Central Office to prevent families from seeking paid services elsewhere.
- They advocated for wider use of the Paragon system for translation assistance for district staff aiding families during registration.
- They proposed integrating the free and reduced lunch application process with school registration to streamline the procedure.

Next Steps and Action Items:

- Further details on the Quarterly SEL & Mental Health Newsletter will be distributed as they become available.
- Beginning the planning of 2023–2024 Culture & Climate goals
- Follow up on the suggestions and issues raised by MFEE regarding school registration difficulties.