Bitney Parent Council 1/10/2018

6:25 pm

Celine & Rich, Louise, Elkin, Valerie, Suzanne, Russ, Shannen

1. Russ: overview of the WASC process and the team. At end of 6-yr cycle, 3 member team comes end of March, lead is head of 2 alternative-type schools and "gets" us, and other two are from charter schools also. Which is good because the written work (mainly statistics) doesn't really address what/how we do education.

So Russ is adding quite a bit more, telling the story of the paradigm shift. Fortunate to have team who gets it. One section has to do w/school culture, pretty well drafted now, brought hard copies for us. Feedback in the next 24 hours would be appreciated.

Survey had issues, Russ will resend the link to everyone. Students will respond to their survey next week in advisory. WASC submission deadline is a week from Monday.

Feedback really wanted, detailed.

Valerie intro'd discussion. School history, grants have brought money but new program then no way to support it. Was destabilizing. So how does PC help fulfill the potential of the school. Chain of command good way to go. Thinks we need to work w/CC and then w/Bitney staff to help create solid foundation.2 areas right now most vital: create networks w/in Bitney (student reps, parent reps) w/access to parent & charter councils. Arteries to deliver oxygen to the org. Russ: advisors don't understand, need to explain not more work but helps them offload tasks to parents/students. Change wanted?

Valerie suggested that the school has to start "seeding" converstaions with parents so that they understand, coming in, that parents have to commit funding and volunteer hours.

Valerie asked, why isn't there a student rep on the parent council? Suzanne suggested that because this is supposed to be parents, just as the student council doesn't have a parent. The charter council, on the other hand, has reps from both constituencies.

The calls to action aren't working. We have to be "very strategic" about this and not have it burden teachers with additional work.

Russ: It's valid to say we have to continue working on getting feedback. right now we have to provide feedback for the accreditation process.

Developing a "Bitney Support Network" will require time and strategic thinking. Such as policies and guidelines that fit the flexible needs of Bitney will still providing structure.

Concerted effort required by staff and parents regarding social media. It's a wild west right now.

The parents and students need some understanding around how we're going to work on social media.

Russ: in the past, all ideas are good ideas if they promote education and celebrate kids.

Valerie will remove a post about a Philly Big Picture Program that wasn't positive.

Suzanne suggested developing implementation of social media and fundraising belonged to the charter council. Celine will add that to her considerations for the charter council.

Valerie has a volunteer who will work with us gratis to help all stakeholders understand how to best use social media and fundraising. She'll volunteer her services for 2018.

Russ sees no obstacles to doing this.

Oscar Perez -- another volunteer. All he does is work with youth as a mentor, facilitating children/parent networks. Val says he would be the kind of guy the kids would connect with well.

Suzanne said we need student government and our student rep need to work "in a direction."

Val said Russ and Oscar need to meet next. Oscar's strength in helping student reps to help them understand their roles. Suzanne emphasized that student government needs be brought in as well. Right now the student reps are too loose.

Suzanne is invited to set up her idea about structure relating to student reps and providing that to Russ. 8 kids who are confirmed by class as liaison with administration, parent council and charter council. But that's not the entire student government. That has a broader mission.

Russ: it's only happned through the leadership of few and the willingness of many. There's real diversity, but there's not rep leadership. Vanessa graduated; Tosh has stepped up to fill the leadership role. The timing is good to bring in Oscar to help develop student leaders.

Russ suggested that Oscar's arrival should be tied to announcing the need for student reps. Daniel thinks reps should be nominated by teachers and advisors.

Russ said the next assembly is next Friday.

\*\*\* VAL needs to send papers/notes used for her presentation.

Russ suggested that Val come to the staff meeting on occasion to express what the council is working on -- as pep talks.

Russ said that Heather and Oscar's support for Bitney proves the point of entry aspects of the Benevon model.

We will change these meetings to Thursday.

Russ suggested that we have different people represent the school at these meetings.

Val's dad: Storming, forming, norming mode.

Let's meet in 2 weeks.

Val suggested we spend time at the school meeting parents as they pick up their kids.

2. AGC

Suzanne said she looked at the spreadsheet available to track donations. She made changes.

Angelina only tracks checks and credit card transactions. Paypal and other donations are handled by Cathy.

We have no idea of the actual volume of donations.

Angelina said she would ask Cathy to update the spreadsheet. Angelina hasn't sent a message to Suzanne that that has happened.

The spreadsheet is wrong...

Celine noticed that when she went on to donate, there was no way to designate her donation for two students. She wondered what happened when "strangers" -- friends and family members -- donated.

Suzanne will meet with Kathy to discuss the lack of data.

Celine suggested we customize the PayPal form.

Valerie said she would go in and configure the PayPal page.

Student name, grade, how much money, type of payment -- one lump sum/monthly charge

3. Engagement

4. Louise - Parent Council fund?

Louise said the bank reported that we need a tax ID number. Russ said we have our own tax ID number. Louise said that needs to be provided to the bank. Right now, according to the bank, the only signers are Angelina and Lang. Both are past presidents of the parent council.

Suzanne suggested it should be Valerie and Louise. They need to go to the bank with Angelina to make that change.

Louise will suggest two times to Valerie to arrange that changeover.

5. Bistro

See the agenda.

We're in transition. We have funds that need to be used in a non-profit capacity. Christine Bannon will work with Shannen on developing Bistro operations and a manual. She offered a tablet and an inventory system to track what we need to restock.

SaveMart will put together our order.

The pizza fundraiser conflicts with bistro sales.

The seniors need a fundraising platform for their trip. Val asked if we could put the seniors in charge of the bistro. The seniors would earn the profits.

Shannen disagrees with that proposal.

Suzanne said we have to stop talking about the bistro as a for-profit entity. Excess revenues need to be used for school purposes; or it has to stop accepting donations from the Briar Patch and the food bank.

What if we eliminated the bistro and made sure

Celine suggested we bring in a food service person to evaluate our food situation.

Jenny Gray offered a hot meal plan then closed her business. Kwan suggested we contact Emily's Catering, etc. to see about providing alternatives.

NCSA's model has Emily's providing food four days a week. Families sign up monthly

Celine suggested we examine the bistro operations and determine their need.

Russ said we need to understand what the kids' needs are.

We as a parent council have decided to stop selling unhealthy foods -- chips, sodas or ice cream.

Let's ask Christina Brody to put a survey together for the kids on the need for the bistro.

Survey: What do you want in the bistro that it's not providing now.

Celine suggested we are done with this conversation. No decisions.

Di will put a survey together and circulate it to the parent council.

6. 2017-18 PC calendar of responsibilities

Celine suggested this would be a good meeting council topic fro our next meeting.

7. Support for fundraising/engagement

NEXT MEETING:

Event calendar

Update on AGC

What next fundraiser will be

Success of Louise to update the bank account for the parent council

Fundraiser: Bitney shirts or hoodies (Celine asked about the status of getting a new logo)

RUSS:

Prospective familes -- recruiting:

Strategy -- to invite kids for shadow day and then have parents meet with other parents of current students.

Celine suggested it would be helpful to have parent council present during the recruitment events.

3 new sophomores are on campus

3 seniors graduated

1 student transferred to another program

It's net zero and two who may not stick.

The student who is at sea is still on our books.

87/88 students still.

Russ said one of the on-going goals is to increase enrollment to 125.

We only had one presentation at feeder schools. Now is the season for that.

Student council was very involved in that -- and creating a letter inviting students to come shadow at the school.

Valerie suggested we eliminate alternative Bitney Facebook pages. She'll deal with that.

Russ: School was established in 1998. Coming up on the 20th anniversary,

Next fall would be a good time to celebrate that.

Valeria offered a message to Charter Council: we will draft and send a letter. We would like oversight -- guidelines and policies for social media and fundraising.

Valerie said she'll get the letter off to Celine and the council by next Tuesday.

Valerie: message to the teachers: When we do online bad stuff, let us know! Post a message underneath, so Valerie will be notified and remove the offensive content.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January 25 at 6 pm

Valerie... will provide food if we provide the wine.

$5 a person as a donation would be appreciated.