

SARASOTA ACADEMY OF THE ARTS

MINUTES OF THE December 3, 2014

STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC) MEETING

Location:

Sarasota Academy of the Arts
4466 Fruitville Road
Sarasota, FL 34232

Council Members Present in Person:

Cecilia Blankenship, School Principal
Grace Washburn, Student Council President
Kathy Bechtel, School Staff Member
Jeffrey Kolowith, School Staff Member
Jenny Figel, School Staff Member
Joseph Solano, School Board Member and Parent
Sabrina Lugo, SAC Secretary and Parent
Leyanit Barron-Moreno, Parent
Sally Maletesta, Community Member
Mike Henry, Parent
Kyle Turoff, Parent

Council Members Absent:

None

Guests Present:

None

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 4:20 p.m.

REPORTS:

Secretary's Report:

Minutes from the November 12th meeting were distributed and reviewed by all. A motion was made to approve the minutes from the November 12th meeting. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

Old Business:

Leyanit reported on the ESOL Family Night. It was successful although not as many families showed up as they had hoped. There were several speakers including a Police Officer and the ESOL Liaison from the school district. Food from several different Hispanic origins was provided, as well.

New Business:

Cecilia reported on the Florida Charter School Conference she attended with Matt and Kelly. Focus was on testing and the new way schools are graded. There is a lot of uncertainty about the whole thing. We are fortunate to be a Charter School in Sarasota County because we receive a share of the professional development funds. Dr. White was named Super Intendant of the Year by the State of Florida. One important note they came away with is that if you are a Charter School, it is not okay to be mediocre.

At the conference, there were performances of groups from different schools around the State. Several Charter Schools were recognized for their Arts programs.

Jenny reported on Middle School reading. She informed us that Middle School students should read one million words per year. If they are not reading at their level or above, they need to read at a lower level to increase their reading level. There is no AR testing but they are doing different projects and activities. Initiative taken off in middle school is that reading is taught across all of the core classes. There is a strong need to encourage parent accountability and involvement.

Jeff reported on literacy for the elementary grades. 10% of the students that are not reading take up 50% of the teachers' workload. Those are the kids that are not here and are not doing their homework.

Kyle mentioned having the parents of the students with the lower reading levels shadow for a day.

In regards to keeping parents involved in school activities, Jeff suggested only putting things on the calendar that we will go forward with even if there is little interest. Then parents won't "pencil" it in rather than plan on attending.

Jenny mentioned for teachers to take the time to call parents rather than email. Cecilia said phone calls helped to get families to Literacy Night.

More is expected of Charter Schools and Jeff suggests we say the same to parents. We need to figure out a way to communicate our expectations to the parents make them accountable. Kyle suggested having parents sign a contract. Sabrina suggested sending frequent reminders/warnings for tardy and truant students. Cecilia said reminders are currently sent to parents whose students are tardy/truant. Mike suggested calling parents in for meetings.

Math: We finally settle with Pearson. All students will have access to SuccessMaker.

When asked what Grace thinks, she stated that the 8th Graders say teachers are hard but she thinks they are all good. Cecilia said the level of expectation for middle school students is higher.

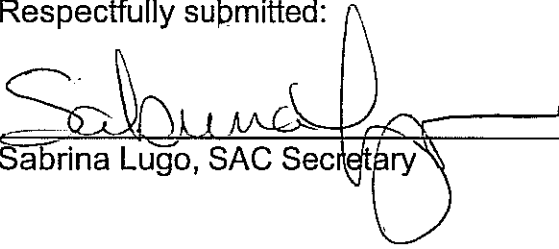
The school is not going to get Office 365 download. Microsoft is not honoring the contract. However, the students will have free access to Google Docs and will receive an email address.

Leyanit asked about grants for after-hours tutoring in preparation for testing. Jenny explained how some of the public schools offer it. Teachers will get paid to provide test prep work after school two days per week prior to testing. Reading is covered one day and Math is covered the other day.

The next SAC meeting is January 21, 2015.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Sabrina Lugo, SAC Secretary

Date: 12/11/14