

**Hanlon School**  
Site Council  
Thursday, October 20, 2016  
3:15-4:15  
Principal's Office

**Members**

Sarah Cronin, Principal  
Beth Kelly, Kindergarten teacher\*  
Valerie Sharpe, Grade 1 teacher  
Katie Velluti, Grade 5 teacher  
Brad Pindell, Community Representative\*

Jen Atkins, Parent  
Jason Hatcher, Parent  
Rachel Shanshiry, Parent  
Mandy Taft, Parent\*

\*Absent

**Agenda**

**1. Introductions**

**Present:**

**Not Present:**

Sarah Cronin, Principal	Beth Kelly, Kindergarten teacher
Valerie Sharpe, Grade 1 teacher	Brad Pindell, Community Representative
Katie Velluti, Grade 5 teacher	Mandy Taft, Parent
Jen Atkins, Parent	
Jason Hatcher, Parent	
Rachel Shanshiry, Parent	

**2. What is Site Council?**

Reviewed Site Council guidelines. Discussed the role of the Site Council as an advisory board that makes recommendations for school improvement. It is not a decision-making board.

**3. Roles (need: Co-chair, Notetaker)**

Jen Atkins was elected for Co-Chair. General duties will include managing meeting time, organizing subcommittees if applicable, and general follow-up. Rachel Shanshiry was elected as Notetaker.

#### **4. Look at preliminary draft of this year's School Improvement Plan**

The committee reviewed the School Improvement Plan. This plan includes 5 goals that apply to all the Westwood elementary schools, created jointly by the respective principals. The plan also includes 2 Hanlon-specific goals. The meeting focused on reviewing these goals. We hope to discuss any potential amendments in the next Site Council meeting.

Some discussion points around the School Improvement Plan included the following:

##### Science:

- In January, the State adopted new science standards. The Science Leadership Committee met over the summer and researched multiple science curriculums. WPS will pilot a program called STEMscopes.
- Along with hiring a district Science Coordinator, Kate Doyle, WPS has contracted with Mark Hothouse to professionally develop teachers on their science content knowledge.
- WPS is implementing the physical science component of STEMscopes this year. Next year we will introduce Earth and Space, followed by Life Sciences in the third year.
- Ms. Velluti spoke favorably about the new science curriculum, adding that there were a lot of "hands on activities" and that children were engaged.

##### Literacy:

- Hanlon is currently in year 2 of the Foundations Early Literacy Skills program, designed for K-2.
- Mrs. Sharpe spoke highly of the program, which teaches important foundational skills.

##### Math:

- The Math Specialist, Jen Gillis, is meeting with teachers in student-centered coaching cycles. She is a great support for teachers and students.
- Mrs. Sharpe spoke about the Math Specialist's involvement in everyday math workshops in first grade.
- Mrs. Velluti explained that the Math Specialist prepares fifth graders for fraction work by completing "fraction prerequisite skills" during the first half of the year and following-up with small group work 3 days a week with children who have been identified as needing additional support. The Math Specialist has also been involved in developing an enrichment group for the fifth graders.

##### Student Assessment Data:

- Math and Literacy Specialists
- Each teacher meets with his or her grade level colleague and special education liaison for ½ hour/week. Math and Reading Specialists attend these meetings on an alternating basis. The focus of these meetings is for teachers to work closely together to look at student work, assess student strengths and needs, create small groups for instruction, and monitor and analyze data.

##### Partnerships/programs referral:

-Melissa Berkowitz is the Hanlon School Psychologist. She gets referrals from teachers and parents to address social/behavioral/emotional concerns of Hanlon students. She meets with students for lunch and social skills groups and also holds teacher trainings.

-Referrals are also made to community resources for children with emotional, behavioral, and social needs beyond the scope of the School Psychologist. Referrals are made to:

- WYFS
- William James Interface referral
- Riverside

## **5. Open Discussion**

-Questions were raised around low parental involvement. We have a new and super motivated PTO this year, but only one set of parents attended the latest PTO meeting. Site Council members also noted a decrease in volunteerism, parent participation, and room parents, though not across the board. One member commented that that parents' time is more difficult to come by.

-General discussion ensued about potential reasons for lower parental involvement, which included:

- Parents not knowing what is entailed in various volunteer positions/events
- Parents feel like the school is doing well and running smoothly and that therefore their participation is not needed.
- Parents are involved in copious activities outside of the school
- Parents are not aware of all the events, positions, and needed assistance.
- The following suggestions were made:
  - A one-pager or brief handbook is made outlining the various positions for which we seek volunteers and the requirements for each.
  - Coaching/mentoring for incoming room parents by exiting room parents
  - Create a blurb/summary about what room parents are responsible for (by grade)
  - Looking for a "seasoned room parent" to help craft one-pager for Room parents
  - Sarah asked members to talk to/ solicit parents' feedback about volunteer opportunities. Where would parents like to be involved?

## **6. HW: Brainstorm ideas for Hanlon-specific SIP goals**

To be discussed in our next meeting.

Next meeting date/time: December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from 3:15-4:15, Mrs. Cronin's Office.

### **Purpose of Site Council**

The School Site Council was first formed in 1993 in accordance with M.G.L. ch.71 §59C. It is a representative, school-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers, and community members. The law outlines four major areas of responsibility for councils. School councils assist principals in: Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards,

identifying the educational needs of students attending the school, reviewing the annual school building budget, and discussing a school improvement plan.

#### **Norms (adopted in 2014)**

- Assume best intentions: We're all here for the good of the students and to make Hanlon a great place to learn
- Value diverse points of view: Gently push back when questions arise. A variety of opinions makes us a stronger group.
- Co-chairs will limit time for each topic
- Be professional
- Maintain positive and productive communication with the school community
- Respect confidentiality of students, families, and staff during all discussions

### **The Mission of Hanlon School**

Welcome to the Paul R. Hanlon School, an elementary school that educates students from kindergarten through fifth grade. In our nurturing environment, children learn with teachers and staff members who celebrate and honor the similarities and differences of individuals while providing challenging learning experiences that facilitate each child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth. Whether students are learning to read, to solve math problems, or to advocate for themselves or someone else, they will experience success, disappointment, and many events in between. At Hanlon we encourage all children and help them use their mistakes as learning experiences that will build their character and resiliency.

School life at Hanlon is inspired by our core values, beliefs that were identified several years ago by the adults and children in our school community. Our core values continue to guide how the Hanlon community learns, works, and plays together.

#### **THE HANLON SCHOOL'S CORE VALUES**

Achieve academic success in a safe and nurturing environment

Develop knowledge and understanding through exploration and discovery

Demonstrate effort, pride, respect and responsibility