

Middle School CAT Team Meeting Minutes for February 17 and March 17, 2010

The Middle School CAT Team has continued their mid-year review of major topics of interest during their meetings in February and March of 2010.

- A) **Survey:** Mr. Popinchalk distributed a survey from the Cultural Sensitivity Committee, which all CAT members completed at the outset of the meeting.
- B) **World Languages:** CAT members shared views about the school's role in encouraging students to take a World Language; one member feels a letter should accompany the enrollment card to personally encourage students to continue with their current WL study. Mr. Popinchalk explained that the enrollment cards were due earlier this year from Grades 6 and 7 in order to gather pertinent data that should improve the planning/scheduling process for 2010/11.
- C) **Middle School Planning Consideration 2010-11:** 1) A reminder that Ramadan continues to pose challenges in the first trimester calendar and the second half of the year will be challenging because of a long period of classes. 2) Mr. Popinchalk shared that the High School is in the process of adjusting the timing of the school day in order to increase the number of student contact hours for Higher Level I.B. and Advanced Placement courses. The Middle School is committed to working with these adjustments but will maintain Middle School program continuity and philosophy. 3) Mr. Popinchalk shared that the Middle School is investigating and discussing ideas for teaming next year, and says and will provide a further update next month. 4) All Middle School faculty positions have been filled except for one part-time position.
- D) **Educational Continuity:** 1) The Board has passed a new set of fees for next year. 2) The anticipated time frame for moving into the new Elementary School building is April or May. 3) The aim is to have the fence down before the end of this school year. *Questions from CAT parents: Why are we rushing the move into the Elementary School? Couldn't this wait until the summer break, or even August?* Mr. Popinchalk explained that this may not be feasible to wait to move into the classrooms in August; for one, a demolition process for Phase Two needs to begin in the summer; moreover, the respective faculty members must be available to move the classrooms. For these and other practical reasons, the move should occur before summer break commences. Parents can be reassured that the building will be completely finished before classrooms are moved.
- E) **Community Meetings:** Approximately 30 people attended today's Town Hall meeting, and approximately 20 people attended last evening's Board meeting related to proposed school fees.
- F) **New Building Tour:** Mr. Hollenbach will be leading a tour of the new building on this coming Friday at 10:00 in the morning.
- G) **Health and Safety Committee Update:** 1) Air quality is being tested on a regular basis; 2) Committee has recommended that classroom air conditioner filters be changed on a scheduled basis; 3) Cat issue on campus is being proactively addressed.
- H) **Student Led Conferences:** Mr. Popinchalk shared that some parents have reported they will not attend the upcoming Middle School Student Led Conferences; as always, he would appreciate CAT parent support of this event. Subsequently, a brief discussion ensued about the perceived problems associated with scheduling the conferences the day before spring break. CAT parents hold differing views about the value of SL conferences.
- I) **Cultural Sensitivity and International Relations:** Mr. Popinchalk mentioned that four students have been actively involved in increasing campus awareness about cultural sensitivity issues. Through a school-wide committee at CAC they have been working to promote and develop activities for the ideals of cultural sensitivity and the unifying people of different cultures at CAC. Mr. Popinchalk predicts that the committee will most likely continue with their efforts into the next academic year.

- J) **School Wide Learning Outcomes:** A proposed copy of the CAC school-wide learning outcomes was reviewed. A CAT parent commended the Middle School for achieving multiple desired learning outcomes, and particularly with regard to the care taking and care giving roles. Mr. Popinchalk shared that while this aspect is currently the least defined, it is the part that is most embedded in all classroom curricula. *CAT parent question: How does the Middle School do this so well?* Mr. Popinchalk suggested it is due to ongoing conversations with the faculty, their commitment to professional collaboration, and unified efforts with the parents to build upon what we are doing right, while always aiming to do better. The Middle School CAT team was part of that process.
- K) **AFG/Strategic Planning Representative:** April 17, 2010. Mr. Popinchalk invited a CAT parent volunteer to attend the upcoming AFG Strategic Planning meeting on April 17, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Unfortunately, none of the CAT parent members are able to attend and so a different parent representative would be sought out by the Middle School Principal.
- L) **AOB:** 1) A CAT parent shared that several Middle School parents are disappointed that Jansport backpacks are no longer sold at the school store. On a related note, parents would like to see basic sports equipment (such as volleyball knee pads) sold at the school store. A parent suggested that a sub-committee be formed to address these issues. Mr. Popinchalk said he would speak to Mr. Kraut about the Jansport bags. 2) Parents continue to be frustrated with the quality and expense of the food sold at the Middle School. 3) A CAT parent reported that the Grade Eight to Grade Nine transition meeting for parents was not advertised well enough in advance.
- M) **Next Scheduled Meeting:** April 21, 2010 in the Middle School Conference Room