

Coffee with Catrina Friday, November 9, 2012

Attendees: Pam Laurent, Kris Kouwenhoven, Kristin Ginsburg, Theresa Gile, Donna Gile, Stephanie Larsen, Elin Melchoir, Susan Keith, Catrina DiNapoli, Kathy Alexander

Talking Points

Lunch Room Protocol – some parents feel that using cards to symbolize “total quiet-quiet voices-regular voices” during the transition to lunch in the cafeteria for grades K-4 does not support the social environment they want for kids in the cafeteria. Catrina explained that this system came about last year when there was input from students and staff that the cafeteria was just too noisy. Staff brainstormed ideas with students and each other and brought those thoughts to Student Council and we began this plan. She also noted that there haven’t been referrals to the Planning Room during the lunch window yet this year, which is very different from years past. K-4 grade classes need to sit with their class, but 5-6 now can sit where they want and they don’t use the quiet cards (rite of passage for them being the older kids). They have risen to the occasion, so maybe the 3-4 could also. It was suggested that if students want a change, they should bring their concerns to the Student Counsel reps/suggestion box and renew the discussion.

Building Security – some parents feel that access to the building is too easy. Although there are signs for visitors to sign in they can still easily get into the building through the front door and bypass the office to sign in if the office folks are engaged with others. It is important for fire and safety reasons that visitors sign in and out. The EEE preschool is now required to sign in when picking kids up (new this year). Suggestions were to have a bell when people enter the building so if Jenni and/or Jennifer aren’t in the office they would hear the bell. Another suggestion was to change the signs on the door are more direct “Visitors Must sign in at front desk” (or something similar). A final suggestion was to have a greeter at the door.

Student Behavior – some parents see the Planning Room as a “playground” for kids who want an escape from the classrooms. Catrina gave a quick overview of the Educational Support System (which can be found on the BES website). The over-arching idea behind supporting kids with diverse behavioral needs is to be proactive (catch the behavior before it becomes a major problem), not just reactive (punishing/giving consequences after the behavior has happened). BES relies heavily on the Responsive Classroom model and a PBIS - Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (pbis.vt.org) framework. The school uses a team approach for support access to education and behavioral supports for all kids. The classroom teachers, counselors, school-based clinicians and RC coaches work with kids needing a little extra support followed by special educators, trained assistants and the school psychologist when an individual behavior plan needs to be put into place for a child. Catrina will follow up with the Bristol Family Connection group and get information out about what is being done through newsletter and blog updates.

Food Services – Kathy Alexander shared new federal regulations set forth by the USDA and how this has had a huge impact on how food services operates, prepares and serves food to children. Lots of behind the scene activity has been occurring since August. She encouraged families to look at our SU website

related to school nutrition at anesunutrition.com. She also spoke about the breakfast in the classroom and how it has been super positive for all involved. BES won the Bronze Award from the USDA for the Healthier School Challenge see www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/healthierUS/. Kathy, Lorraine, Catrina and David Adams (superintendent), as well as some 5% students were getting ready to meet with a representative from Senator Leahy's office to discuss the new food guidelines following the coffee.