

2008-2009 School Advisory Council

Membership: Gerald Yung, Principal

Donna Clark Cranham, PA Staff Representative

Yamika Velazquez, PA Parent Representative, ELL PAC Liaison

Kathy Holton, EA Staff Representative

Dee Ortiz, EA Parent Representative, Special Education PAC Liaison

Mary Frances Smith, JA Staff Representative

Parley Jones, JA Parent Representative

The School Advisory Council spent the year focusing on issues pertinent to the school's success. This included reviewing and discussing the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), offering input in the School Improvement Plan, providing a forum for any parent concerns, and selecting an area of improvement to work on. This year, the SAC chose to focus on how to make the standardized state tests, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), more understandable and applicable for parents.

The SAC held two events to help address this targeted goal. The first event brought close to 20 parent class representatives together on a Saturday morning for breakfast. Parents at this breakfast listened to a presentation on the MCAS, worked through sample MCAS questions, and brainstormed action steps to help communicate the importance of these tests. Many parents were surprised at how short the MCAS were (some were surprised that test sessions only had less than 40 questions) and the affect of low and high scores on students and our school. From this meeting, parents agreed to communicate to parents based on grades and to organize an MCAS Pep Rally. The pep rally was held on a Thursday and included parents participating in a mock MCAS and enjoying free McDonald's meals. The turnout for this event was low, around the high twenties, but the parents that did attend left very excited about the knowledge they had gained.

This year the SAC worked effectively at distributing leadership, namely away from the principal, and towards parents and teachers. For the past several years, the SAC has chosen projects geared to increase parent communication and involvement. This goal, while significant across so many issues, may be reconsidered in the future to allow for more instructional accessibility (in particular, the DCAP). In particular, the parents who came into the school for the 9AM breakfast to discuss the MCAS demonstrate a high degree of enthusiasm and motivation towards the twin topics of accountability (student performance, student interventions) and opportunities (field trips, lab-based activities). The vast majority of these parents had children in the younger grades and are looking for high achievement. They represent a great base for the SAC next year; motivated parents looking for a forum to discuss school goals and achievement.