

To: Parents and staff members present at our Emergency SLT meeting on 12/23/09
From: Guita Ranjbaran (Muscota SLT Chair)
Re: The context of our Emergency meeting

Date: 12/27/09

I would like to thank all of you for attending an Emergency SLT meeting on 12/23/09, a difficult day to find extra time, and on such a short notice.

Please consider this note as my opening remarks to a very important meeting, which was cut short into 45 minutes, due to our security guard's request who was instructed to evacuate us before her shift was over at 4:00 pm. It was very important to me that we have enough time to read through all the concerns that our teachers had listed, which provided the need for this meeting to begin with. Under such time pressure, I feel that our audience did not get an opportunity to fully understand how/why the School Leadership Team would take such matters as relevant to the work that we are elected to accomplish.

What we have done:

This year, so far, we have had 4 regularly scheduled meetings, 2 Emergency meetings, and numerous sub-committee meetings formed to help our Principal move forward with the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) of our school, which is a very important and time-sensitive commitment for us as a team, and especially for our Principal as the person ultimately accountable for the delivery of this document.

Our first meeting in September was allocated to understanding the Chancellor's new regulations. In October we had one Emergency meeting totally allocated to the CEP, which was followed up by a regular meeting, in which two presenters from the DOE were invited by our Principal to further guide us with the CEP. In November, we had the By-laws & the CEP as our main agenda items, but did not get to cover the By-laws because most of our meeting was taken up by the CEP. Additionally, we have had approximately 5 additional sub-committee meetings allocated solely to the CEP, and 2 to the By-laws.

In short, we have devoted the majority of our time/effort to helping our Principal, who is a very important constituent member of this body.

What we are accountable for:

It is true that the writing of the CEP is one very important goal of the SLT, but we are also accountable for addressing the concerns and needs of ALL CONSTITUENTS; we are responsible to act in the interest of Muscota New School to preserve our most valuable foundations of collaboration; and for acting as the appeal board when existing structures fail to resolve a conflict within the Muscota Community. (See MSN Bylaws; Article III, #1,6,7)

Responding to an urgent call from Muscota teachers, is therefore very much in accordance with what we are held accountable as a School Leadership Team. I was personally hopeful that our Principal would be attending this meeting, enabling us to resolve these matters of grave concern, many of which are based on contractual regulations of United Federation of Teachers. It is my understanding that all parties involved in the leadership and day to day running of our school are united in their persistence for following process and protocol, and that such challenges are all opportunities for growth as a team. This will enable us to find common grounds in dealing with contestations that may otherwise degenerate into polarizing and divisive tendencies.

What needs to be done:

Having heard the concerns of our teachers, para professionals, and school aides, I can only expect that we all bring our best intentions to the table at our next meeting, ready to do/change what needs to be done/changed in order to assist the Muscota staff perform their duties in an atmosphere of trust and collaboration. This will ultimately be of great benefit to our children, to us as parents, and the administration as the leader of a successful, progressive, small school, with a long history of adapting to all kinds of challenges, but never compromising on the foundational premises that created our school.