

PACE - October 5, 2007

Introductions

Overview of PACE

Historically, three functions:

1. Bringing Parent Advisory Committees (PACs) together so that they work similarly
2. Providing a platform for the administration to showcase curriculum and policy changes
3. Offering forum for direct communication between parents and school administration

Effects of PACE

1. Community that Cares, an organization involving the school administration, clergy, sports organizations, and other to help advocate for the children of Danvers
2. Youth Health Subcommittee of the Danvers School Committee, which aims to help children make healthy choices

Icebreaker: What has PACE provided to Danvers?

Attendees identified that PACE:

- Offers effective information dissemination
- Supports communication between the PACs, which increases their effectiveness
- Allows parents to hear about school committee and administration decisions “from the horse’s mouth”
- Familiarizes elementary parents with what to expect in middle and high school
- Allows PACs to market their programs to each other
- Has been wonderful with informational meetings but needs to enhance round-table discussions
- Needs more involvement from the middle and high schools
- Needs to share the updated handbook
- Puts all the schools on the same page, because students notice the differences between PACs and what is offered at each school
- Communicates the challenges that the administration and parents face
- Is a conduit for information to be shared
- Displays both sides of the coin, for parents see education through their children, but administrators see it differently
- Allows parents to run activities that are not in the school budget but do enhance their children’s education (*editorial comment: I believe this is a comment on PAC rather than PACE*)
- Is the “mothership of PACs”
- Provides an opportunity for parent to parent and parent to administrator communication
- Provides training for parents
- Provides opportunities for parents to hear the administration’s way of thinking
- Should continue to allow for questions and answers at each meeting
- Provides a unique opportunity to obtain district-wide feedback, such as on the drug and alcohol surveys, and on the high school building updates
- Should allow PACS to get away from being just fundraising organizations
- Provides a forum for the school committee to ask parents for support
- Needs to have some evening meetings
- Explains curriculum changes based upon MCAS

- Should focus on district-wide issues
- Must address the demands on the school system with new home development in town

Plugs for Power School

- This empowers parents the middle school to see exactly where their children stand, both in schoolwork and extracurricular activities (is there really band practice today?)
- Children become responsible because the teachers discuss issues with parents only after the students speak to the teachers first

Additional information:

- Tom Murray, high school principal, is interested in hearing how the high school is perceived throughout the community
- Children communicate through facebook
- Perhaps principals should create blogs
- Thanks for Hospice Walk support

Introductions

Violetta Powers, principal, Riverside Elementary School

Sharon Burrill, principal, Smith Elementary School

Kathleen Curtis, director, Student Support Services

Connie Varoudakis, assistant principal, Danvers High School

Gary Niams, director of Fine and Applied Arts and Business, Danvers High School

Tom Murray, principal, Danvers High School

Tom Murraray

- “Danvers High School should be the pride of the community.”
- Students should feel safe, valued, and a sense of belonging.
- Walks about 3 miles per day in the halls of the high school
- Is striving to identify strengths and weaknesses as perceived by teachers, parents, and students
- Believes the students have the responsibility to make their high school experience what they want it to be, that teachers should make the school their ideal workplace, and his job is to combine the best of those ideas and make it work for both groups of people.
- The middle school computer portal (PowerSchool) or something like it will migrate to the high school after the middle school has had a chance to really work with it and smooth out the process. The status of technology in the high school will definitely impact the ability to bring it into DHS.