

Peterson PAC Meeting

Date: February 7, 2019

Time: 8:45 AM – 10:00 AM

Total Present: 12

Scott Birney, Ibrahim Tulal, Anisa Patel, Meriem Mansour, Judy Edstrom, Nameer Al-Ali
Whitney Norris, Ka Wong, Tamanna Begum, Catherine Korda, Lynda Gibson, Sabiha Vohra

Peterson administrators & staff present: Yalil Nieves (Assistant Principal), Charles Deters
(Technology Coordinator), Magda Alexa (Bilingual Coordinator)

Parent Advisory Council (PAC): The PAC was created to help support the role of parents and the school as equal partners in children's education. The primary purpose of the PAC is to empower families to inspire and assist their children in achieving their educational goals.

There were 2 key agenda items for this meeting:

1. Peterson Updates
2. Presentation: Talking to Kids About the News by Dr. Rachel Birmingham-Hoel (director, Child & Advocacy Studies Program at Northeastern Illinois University)

details for all agenda items are provided below

- The call to order and welcome was completed by PAC Chair, Catherine Korda. Refreshments were provided for today's meeting.
- The new visual arts educator, Bethany Crino starts today, February 7th. Judy Edstrom will continue with visual arts education for grades 1, 3, 5 & 7 2x/month, which ensures that all Peterson students will have art in the second semester.
- Peterson RISE report will be sent home every 2 weeks as tool to communicate with students, parents, and staff about attendance, behavior, and academic performance. The reports will also help with setting goals and targeting areas where students may need additional support.

Talking to Kids About the News (Presentation Summary)

- Children are aware of (and in tune with) the news at much earlier ages than parents are aware of; more than half of children ages 8-12 report that they follow the news; 63% report feeling fear, sadness, or anger as a result of what they heard
- Most kids learn through social media, friends, and teachers but will turn to family to help them process what they have heard about
- Current issues that are in the news include: violence and war, safety and stability at home, violation of other people's rights, and anger surrounding division in families or communities
- Suggestions by developmental age for talking to children and processing events in the news:
 - Preschool (3-5): we often overestimate what children this age may see and hear. Kids this age have trouble mixing up reality and fantasy. The content does not matter as much as general sight and sound (i.e. loud, disturbing and scary things matter more than

what is being said). Remember that kids in this age group take things literally and remind them that they are safe. Engage them in the language of play and know the importance of routines to help them feel safe. Watch out for symptoms of stress (i.e. nightmares, anxiety, clinginess, fear that things will happen).

- Young elementary (6-8): children can now use symbolic thought about the future and can think in more complex ways. They are able to follow more of what is being said, which means they may draw incorrect conclusions leading to more fear or confusion. When they ask questions, flip the question and ask them “what do you want to know” or “what do you think is happening”. Try to limit visual exposure (talk to them by reading or talking as opposed to watching it on tv). Make sure to answer questions in a honest way but also in the simplest way possible. Don’t shut them down since they will likely hear about it in other places. Look for signs of stress (i.e. withdrawal, headache, stomach ache). This age group is more likely to tell you they’re struggling than preschool age children but not always.
- Older elementary (9-11): this age group is capable of logic and insight into what is happening. They may struggle with understanding the causes of bad things they see or hear about. They are likely to ask deep and difficult questions. They have more exposure to things that are happening and also more opinions. For this age group, you should also flip the question to see what they think about the issue and what they have heard. Exposure to the news at this age is ok but you should choose the source and the amount of exposure.
- Tips for parents to remember...
 - Feeling safe is important for kids of all ages
 - Validate children and flipping the question can help you to meet them at their level and help you to understand when their logic is faulty; when asking what they think about the subject or what they have heard, also ask them what their friends are saying about the issue
 - Monitor their media access
 - Be honest without giving too much information
 - Frame responses so that children can understand what is happening. It is ok to tell kids that you’re not sure of the answer or that you don’t understand or agree with some of the things that are happening
 - It’s ok to limit exposure but if they come to you with questions, they have likely been exposed (heard about situation) so you shouldn’t shut them down. Empower kids by showing that it is a valid issue of concern and ok to ask questions
 - Starting open communication with kids at younger ages can help build open communication and willingness to talk about difficult situations as they become older

Upcoming Events

Feb 22	Unity Through the Arts & Sciences (5PM)
Feb 28	Literacy Night (5PM)
Mar 21	Social-Emotional Learning Night (5PM)
Apr 4	Supportive Executive Functioning (8:45AM)

ESEA Title I Part A Funds were used to support this activity