

Connetquot Teachers Association

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Loretta Powell, President

Wednesday, February 06, 2008

Board of Education
Michael Kealey, President
Connetquot CSD of Islip
780 Ocean Avenue
Bohemia, NY 11716

Dear Mr. Kealey,

It has been brought to the attention of the Connetquot Teachers Association through the complaints of a large number of our members that many problems affecting both teachers and students appear to have occurred because of the actions or inaction of a certain central office administrator. These problems have affected teacher morale and needlessly complicated communication between teachers and parents.

Central to these problems is an attitude that appears to be autocratic when it comes to changes in instruction and procedures. This approach was apparent recently in the District's adoption of two new report cards in the last two years. Aside from the question of why one acceptable report card revision was not sufficient, the procedures involved in making such a major change in the manner in which teachers communicate with parents hardly proceeded smoothly. Teacher input was frequently ignored and undervalued. Training was poor and confusing; communication with parents and teachers was confusing and seemed to change at the last minute.

Teachers were told that the "new" report card would not be ready for the first report card period and grades would have to be transferred to the "new" card from the older "new" card. This would not be a simple matter since grades would have to be modified to fit the structure of the new report card. Teachers were immediately concerned that the modifications of grades already given would be extremely confusing to parents. At the last minute the central office decided not to transfer the grades. This change in direction at the last minute will cause some parents who receive report cards that are different from other report cards. Unfortunately, many teachers had already spent considerable amounts of their own time doing so. There appeared to be little concern by the central administration of this waste of teacher time that could have better been used to plan lessons and other professional activities.

Teachers were also directed to use **eSchools** to record their grades. Due to lack of computers that worked and/or were frequently unavailable, many teachers had to attempt to input grades from home. This lack of computer time and availability and support led to a great deal of frustration. The **eSchools** program frequently rejected teachers who attempted to sign on, when teachers were able to sign on the process was painfully slow.

Teachers were also required to submit their report cards for review by their administrator. This had to be done by February 5, 2008. This forced teachers to work over the weekend to make this deadline.

Aside from the lack of trust in the teaching staff this “review” demonstrated, the requirement forced teachers to attempt to input grades from home with all the resulting problems that arose.

The aforementioned problems give rise to the following questions:

1. Why did there have to be two “new” report cards in two years?
2. Why was the “new” report card not ready for the first report period?
3. Why was teacher training inconsistent and confusing?
4. Where was the consistent ongoing involvement of the central office that was required to make this adoption a smooth and seamless process?

In addition to the issue of the report card this central office administrator appeared to demonstrate the same autocratic attitude recently in communication with the District’s Professional Development Committee (PDPC). This committee is composed of teachers, administrators and other professionals. It is charged with working in a collegial way to develop professional activities through consensus. Every member of the committee is given the opportunity to give input and assist in developing these activities. The aforementioned central office administrator is a member of the committee who has chosen not to attend the meetings of the PDPC for years.

This committee worked through three full day sessions to develop an Annual Professional Performance Review Plan (APPR) at the request of the District. The APPR was sent to the central office as a courtesy. It was finished as far as the committee was concerned. It was returned to the committee with a large number of questions, corrections and substantial changes by the aforementioned central office administrator. The committee found these criticisms offensive since they should have been made at the PDPC meeting, but were not because that administrator does not attend the meetings although professional development is part of her responsibilities. The committee chose to make none of the requested changes.

Again questions arise concerning this administrator’s attitude toward professional staff.

1. Why does this administrator not attend the meetings of the PDPC?
2. Why does this administrator appear to not understand how the PDPC operates?
3. Why has this administrator chosen to put herself above the committee of which she is a part and reserve to herself the right of final review?
4. What do these actions say about the value this administrator placed on the professional staff?

The Association is deeply concerned with the problems we have enumerated. The professional staff is held accountable for their professional duties. We believe that the aforementioned administrator should be accountable for her actions or failure to act.

We request that the Board of Education investigate these important concerns. These concerns are real. We believe that the Board is responsible for maintaining the highest level of administrative performance. We urgently request that you investigate these concerns and take appropriate action to remedy the problems we have presented. We await your reply.

Sincerely,



Loretta Powell
President

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Files