"Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity…"

Charles Mingus

Grey Matters

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Last week wrapped up another successful session of fall conferences at RJG. In fact, there were more requests for conferences this year than ever before. While we need to acknowledge that there were a small handful of glitches, the vast majority of the conferences went without a hitch. What many people may not know is how these conferences were scheduled and all the work that went into making these two half days work. Up until a few years ago, parents came to school on conference days, stood in line outside of a teacher's door and then waited their turn at the door of next teachers. Thanks to a dedicated group of parents we now schedule specific appointments, thus allowing parents to use their time more efficiently and provide teachers time to prepare. This year, the following parents, one from each of the eight teams, were our scheduling volunteers: Laura Brock, Shiela Golikeri, Mary Amato, Jim O'Neil, Debbie Fecher, Nancy Coppolino, Karen Noriega, and Liz Hober. Each volunteer took the conference request forms and, on a first-in-first-scheduled basis, scheduled all the available 5 minute time slots. Ultimately, this amazing group of parents schedule at least 2,240 individual teacher conferences! With that said, there were still an additional ten to twenty families per team who did not get scheduled for conferences. These parents have been scheduled to meet with their child's teachers before school, after school, and/or during team meetings through the rest of December and into January.

Over the next few months I will be reviewing this process to see if we can make a great program even better. Research shows that there is a clear correlation between parent involvement in the educational process and student achievement. Given the high caliber of students in Acton-Boxborough, this proves true. At the same time, there is only so much time available for these conferences. Please let me know if you have any suggestions or thoughts on how we schedule the conferences; what you like about the process as well as what we might be able to do better.

I also want to remind everyone that my next drop-in hour is this coming Tuesday night, from 6-7PM. Swing on by if you have any thoughts, concerns, or just want to say hello.