

## McKenzie PTA Meeting October 12, 2010

- I. Approval of September minutes
- II. Call to order and welcome @ 9:20
- III. **District 39 update – Dr. Ray Lechner.**
  - A. Good news – All district schools made the top 17 in *Chicago Magazine*.
  - B. Enrollment projections are flat. This is important because the birth rate is projected to decrease. Means that families are moving into the district.
  - C. Finances – Operating in a deficit. District revenues are tied to tax cap. Costs have been higher than the amount increase voted for in the 1998 referendum. State budget as also contributed to deficit. \$800K is owed from last payment period. \$1.2 million in cuts to budget projected immediately.
  - D. Have reorganized some finances that won't affect students: new cheaper phone system, eliminated MEC positions, reduced number of vendors, decreased amount of capital improvement. Increased class sizes.
  - E. Budget projections. School board standard is to maintain 40% budget reserves. Several factors contribute to annual spending increases: labor contracts, health insurance, energy costs, enrollment and foreign language. Personnel accounts for 80% of expenses. District's teachers' contracts are barely keeping up with peer districts. We seek to be in the middle. Many peer districts have higher salaries: \$67.8 K - \$79.3. Wilmette is around \$62K. Peer districts also have lower class sizes and lower expenditures. Wilmette's tax rate is lowest of peer districts: 1.7 compared to around 2.8 elsewhere.
  - F. What do we need to do? Cut programs and services, seek new revenue and spend down reserves. Efficient financial stewardship includes investing, reorganizing existing resources, withdrawal from expensive cooperatives, consolidate resources with neighboring districts (e.g. Avoca), and embrace "user fee" philosophy (attach more cost to busing and lunch).
  - G. What's next? School board will meet to determine next set of cuts. Initially, will keep them away from class room. A referendum would allow suspension of the tax cap for 1 year to allow for more revenue.

A parent asked if something similar to California's Proposition 13 would work here. It would not because that would have all the districts funds come from the government instead of taxes. In California, schools have deteriorated as a result.

### V. **Principal's Report – Dr. Welter.**

- A. Positive things in Dr Lechner's presentation were reiterated. Shows our children our getting a great education.
- B. The PLN presentation will be posted on the Website. Why did an Arlington Heights administrator give the talk? Because it's a neighboring school, and we are modeling our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning on their plan. We need to keep our eye on the future environment that our children will be facing when they are out of school. It will be very different from the past. The world we knew upon graduation doesn't exist any more. Need to teach children to be comfortable with technology.

They need a different skill set to deal with the excess of information and how to use it and understand it. There is a new way to look at the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We want to focus on our children being global contributors. Sarah Jerome left a DVD in the Parent Resource Center. This effort will tie into the work being done through CRC – we are taking on social responsibility. Things with a bigger purpose are embedded in curriculum.

- C. Drs. Welter and Lechner met with Village of Wilmette regarding traffic issues @ 15<sup>th</sup> and Highland. The neighbors there are frustrated with after school pick-up causing congestion and safety issues. The Village is taking matter under advisement. They will look at the way traffic could be handled – there will not be a crossing guard, but perhaps one-way traffic signs
- D. The traffic on the East side of the school (on Prairie) is also an issue. No volunteer wants the job of “traffic cop”. It’s ultimately up to parents to read the rules on the web-site. Possibility of a parent committee forming to deal with issue.
- E. There will be 10 4<sup>th</sup> grade student representatives who will read the Pledge of Allegiance at the Board meeting Monday night.
- F. October 29 will be ½ day. Halloween celebration will take place that morning with the all-school parade. The ½ day is used for school improvement and teacher preparation for conferences.
- G. Will be notified via e-mail soon of conference sign-up. Conferences will take place 11/11 from 8am-8pm, 11/12 8am-3pm and 11/10 Kindergarten only.
- H. There is a community and district survey coming out soon about communication. So far have been getting very positive feedback regarding paperless initiative. To that end, everyone should be getting The Monitor via e-mail. All school issues are archived on web site.
- I. Peaceful playground is in progress: blacktop being painted. PE teachers will teach the kids games to play on “new” playground. Supervisors will also be taught the Peaceful Playground games. May re-open parent volunteer recess program.

#### V Report of Officers

- A **President’s Report – Eleanor Lipinski.** The directory will be out next week. There was a 45% increase in McClub enrollment. Online registration and payment through PayPal was a huge success. The parent event with Sarah Jerome was a great event
- B. **Communications – Deb Sokol, VP Communications.** Communications committee will reach out to all PTA committee chairs to see if they need help with their communications. Erin Lyons is the Publicity Chair. She can help craft event and strategize from early stages of planning.
- C. **PTA survey – Jennifer Konz-Alt, President Elect.** Every year send this out to get ideas about a class gift. Will also ask a few questions about McClubs and new ideas for it. If you hear of any class gift ideas please share them on the survey.
- D. **Fundraising report – Ann Sciortino, VP Fundraising.** Ice Cream Social: costs were same as last year. More was spent on crafts. DJ should stay an extra 15 minutes.

**VI. Faculty Representative's Report – Lynsee Whitman.** Second graders went on field trip to the Grove. It was part of their Native American studies. The stipend from the Book Fair is greatly appreciated. The teachers love the garden. The 3rd graders are studying the Illinois prairies. Are also learning Heller addition and subtraction strategies. In art, all grades are studying fish in different ways. Student Council is starting 10/12. Jessica Torf and Lynsee Whitman will be running it. In Spanish, all grades are studying things that tie in with their curriculum.

## **VII. Committee Reports**

- A. Fall Frenzy – Friday 5:30-8pm. Today is last day to pre-order pizza and tickets on line. New craft is the monster finger. Still need volunteers. Sign up on line. Will have allergy free section in cake walk.
- B. Book Fair – Kirstin Stadheim. Very successful. Was moved up in the year (used to be in Feb). Raised \$9,400 in books for school. \$565 in books was collected for Carmen Buchner. This will be matched by Scholastic Books.
- C. Garden – Kirsten Stadheim. Bench installation may be complete this year. Have had an influx of volunteers. May add another day in spring. Each class has a different use. Open house on 10/18 after school.
- D. Sharing Committee – Kirstin Stadheim. Collected used books for Carmen Buchner School. Share the Warmth will be our annual mitten/scarves/hats drive from 10/25 -11/30. Will have box for donations. Share the Feast will take place from 11/15-11/30. Can donate Jewel cards to Carmen Buchner. Share the Joy program will take place 11/15 – 11/30. A needy Carmen Buchner child lists a gift they would like on a star. Pick up the star during dates and purchase the gift. A group from McKenzie will deliver the gifts on 12/4. Will also get a tour of the school this day.
- E. FAN – Jill Sutherland. 10/26 7pm @ Skokie School. Ellen Winner, Chair of Psychology at BU, will present how the arts influence children. Ann Collier's presentation on 10/6 was about how parents don't need to panic about what's in the news. The message is to teach social responsibility