

McKenzie PTA General Meeting January 13, 2009

I. **Call To Order & Welcome.** President Julie Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

II. **Approval of Minutes of November 11, 2008.** Minutes were reviewed and approved by voice vote.

III. Principal's Report – Dr. Welter.

Dr. Welter reviewed McKenzie's involvement in Kindness Connection, a service program for elementary students. Each grade level will be working on a different service project. Students and teachers are excited about the projects.

Early release day will take place this Friday, January 16, 2009. Report cards are being worked on to go home January 23. COGAT Test results will be sent home for 3rd Grade students at the end of this week. Several new students have moved in to the McKenzie school district, with move-ins taking place this January 2009. Keep in mind the challenges we have during these snowy days. Parking lots during the day are for staff only. Be careful in crosswalks. Pick up registration packets in the office for Kindergarten starting on January 30, 2009. Early Registration helps the school with planning and staffing.

IV. President's Report – Julie Johnson

McKenzie's Book Fair was a success in November, with thanks to Kirsten Stadheim for chairing that event. McKenzie PTA sponsored a great Movie Night and a great Open Gym night in December. More Open Gym Nights will be forthcoming in 2009. Thanks to Alison Stein for all the great sharing programs that took place at the end of the 2008 calendar year. Thanks also to Gift Card Chair, Kathy Freedman, and Grocery Dollar Chair, Tip Walker, for accessibility and assistance in making gift cards available quickly prior to and throughout the holiday season. North Shore Stationary has gone out of business. The PTA is researching the acquisition of a new School Supply Vendor. Julie provided an overview of the puzzle-piece project throughout the school, highlighting the way everyone in the school works together, yet stands alone independently as well. Students each designed their own puzzle piece, and the pieces fit together to form a puzzle that fits together and highlights the individuality and interconnectedness of the students. PTA Committee Chairs and Officers will be designing pieces for a puzzle as well. McKenzie will be partnering with FAN (Family Awareness Network) to bring a speaker to McKenzie's Auditorium on April 30, featuring Dr. Aaron Cooper speaking on "I Just Want My Children To Be Happy", focusing on flexibility, resilience, coping skills and disappointment, and how these are important skills in achieving long term happiness. Fourth Graders will be having a Fourth Grade Farewell meeting to plan farewell activities for the fourth graders as they prepare to move on to Highcrest. Variety Show rehearsals have started this week. The show will take place March 10-14, with a total of six shows. Thanks to Amy Yulish for providing Hospitality refreshments for the meeting today.

V. **Faculty Report – Kris Uhler.** Ms. Uhler provided an overview of activities ongoing at each grade level and in specials, including enrichment activities. Open House will be February 19, 2009.

VI. **VP, Secretary – Kimberly Alcantara.** Kimberly announced that this meeting will be her last meeting as McKenzie's Secretary. She is running for Wilmette District 39 School Board of Education. Kim Ratkin has been appointed and approved by the Executive Board as McKenzie PTA's new Secretary.

McKenzie PTA General Meeting January 13, 2009

VII. School Gift – Kimbra Burnside (Pres. Elect).

A. Installed LCD Projector in the Art Room, for use in presentations by Art Teacher Chris Porter for the benefit of all students at McKenzie.

B. New Digital Cameras for use by students and teachers.

C. Climbing Wall in the Gym

Funding for the three above gifts exceed the original allocated school gift budgeted amount by \$3000. A vote was requested to approve this above-budget funding, which is possible based on the PTA's current funding resources. The motion was seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

It was noted that the PTA and Executive Board also considered proposals for the PTA to fund an outdoor classroom-garden on McKenzie grounds. The idea is attractive to many McKenzie constituents, and funding for an outdoor garden/classroom area is first being pursued through possible third-party grants that may be available, rather than as a PTA gift.

D. Budget and PTA Funds as of Winter 2009. Because of the re-allocation of accounts and changes in billing processes for the Grocery Dollars program, in addition to cumulative budget surplus from previous years, the Executive Board reported on its expectation that a meaningful amount of additional money will be available in McKenzie PTA funds this Spring 2009 while still maintaining a healthy operating reserve, versus the amount identified in available PTA funds during the Fall 2008 Budget process. It was noted that in recent past years, it was difficult to spend down reserves while still feeling assured of a healthy level of operating reserves due to the manner in which Grocery Dollars was previously billed and funded. The timing and availability of re-allocated Grocery Dollar funds were difficult to project definitively in the Fall 2008, but have now begun to clearly solidify in 2009. Fortuitously, President-Elect Kimbra Burnside elicited several substantial funding requests that would enrich and benefit McKenzie students.

E. Grade Level Classroom LCD Projectors. Although it is impossible to fund all of the ideas proposed for a PTA Gift to McKenzie, McKenzie's PTA Executive Board expects to seek approval to spend, (subject to budgetary resources to be confirmed by Treasurer Lisa Hoffman), an additional \$14,000 to install LCD Projectors at one selected grade level. This vote will take place at an upcoming PTA meeting in Spring 2009.

VIII. McKenzie Website – Mary Condon, VP, Communications. A report by Mary Condon was delayed until next meeting due to time constraints.

IX. Committee Reports

A. Book Fair – Kirsten Stadheim reported that Book Fair sold about over \$17,000 in books. We took all the proceeds in book-exchange, which gave us 50% of the proceeds, which will be spent on books in the classrooms and in the library.

B. Gift Cards – Kathy Freedman plugged Gift Cards, noting that January order forms are due tomorrow (January 14, 2009). Use them for every-week and everyday shopping! Borders, Starbucks, Walgreens, iTunes – birthday parties!

C. Grocery Dollars new subscriptions and inventory are available, as reported by Lisa Hoffman on behalf of Tip Walker. Contact Tip Walker.

X. Presentation – Assessments & Differentiation (Dr. Welter and Ellie Logan). Dr. Welter and Ms. Logan provided an overview of assessments and testing at McKenzie and District 39. The overview

McKenzie PTA General Meeting

January 13, 2009

included: (1) Fluency and literacy testing at early grade levels (K-1 DIBELs), (2) Curriculum-Based Measures (CBMs, Grades 1-4), (3) Scantron Performance Series tests measured against State standards, along with District comparisons (3x Per Year, Reading Grades 2-4 and Math Grades 3-4; teachers get immediate feedback, which accumulates year-to-year). Scantron Performance Series tests were piloted over the last 3 years, and now are implemented throughout the District. Rather than send Scantron data home 3x per year, a user-friendly profile will be sent home each May with growth throughout the year, and interpretations throughout the year. (4) ISAT for Grades 3-4, with curriculum aligned to State Standards and District comparisons. Downside of ISAT is that we don't get results until the following school year, which doesn't help the school move forward with those students, which is frustrating. This explains the bias toward District and grade-level assessments. Measures show a "meets" or "exceeds" state standards comparison. ISAT features reading and math assessments, plus Science for Grade 4 students. (5) COGAT Testing and Grade 3, 5 and 7, which are timed tests predicting students' likelihood of success in school. The skills are not in any one content area, but are categorized according to verbal, quantitative and non-verbal. Students are asked to complete a sentence, compare analogies, make equations balance, achieve nonverbal spatial-visual questions. Information is provided about how kids compare to other students at their grade level. COGAT results are being sent home at the end of this week. The next PTA meeting (February 10, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.) will be preceded by an informational overview to take questions about COGAT testing and results.

XI. D39 Educational Foundation – Wendy Irwin reported on the activities of the District 39 Education Foundation. Gripp Grants are awarded by the Foundation within District 39, named in honor of a WJHS teacher. The best ideas that affect the most children are awarded Gripp Grants, with grants submitted by District 39 community members and teachers within the District. The 2009 Gripp Grant Submission deadline is Tuesday, February 17, 2009. Grant proposal ideas for innovative educational programs, technologies and enrichment opportunities are welcomed from District 39 teachers, staff, and families. For application information and guidelines, please go to the Foundation Website at www.D39Foundation.org. To discuss grant ideas, please contact the Foundation's Gripp Grant chair, Wendy Irwin at wendyirwin@aol.com.

XII. New Business – Next Meeting Feb. 10, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

XIII. Adjournment – Julie Johnson adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.