

Meeting Minutes

McKenzie PTA General Meeting

September 8, 2009

I. Call to Order and Welcome: President Kimbra Burnside called the meeting to order at 9:12 am.

II. Approval of Minutes of the May 12, 2009 - Minutes were reviewed and approved by voice vote.

III. Principal's Report – Dr. Denise Welter

- Dr. Welter arrived from a District 39 meeting held to further discuss the delivery and viewing of **President Obama's speech** to the nation's children scheduled Tuesday, September 9, 2009. The decision made as explained by Dr. Welter and emailed to the parents states: *We met early this morning as an Administrative Council to determine whether we should change our implementation of the viewing opportunity. We reviewed the initial considerations we had pondered, such as our technology, space, and timing limitations. We apologize if you interpreted our delayed showing of the address as disrespectful, as this was not the intent, but a function of these limitations. These concerns remain today, and as a result, we are going to stick with our original plan of showing the address on Wednesday (September 9, 2009). However, we will also include Kindergarten through Grade 2. Grades 1-4 will view the video during their lunch recess, and Kindergartners will see it during their morning or afternoon session. If, for any reason, you determine you do not want your child to view the address, please email me and the classroom teacher, and we will provide an alternate activity. Please get back to us by 9:00 AM on Wednesday morning if you are opting out for your child.*
- **Smart Boards** are here and in use! There were 2 training sessions for teachers this summer and more are scheduled for the fall. In addition, McKenzie has on-site trainers for ongoing training opportunities.
- **Parent-teacher conferences will now be online** and the first set of conferences in November will be offered on two specific days: November 12 and 13. There will be 42 slots to choose from over the course of 2 days (20 minute conferences/student). More information to come.
- **Thank you to Julie Geyer** for getting the electronic version of the *McKenzie Monitor* up and going! If you are not receiving an email from Dr. Welter on a weekly basis with the *Monitor* attached, please check that the district has the correct email address for you.
- **Becky Littman, Assistant Principal at Central**, will be joining McKenzie on a limited basis. On special assignment, she will be helping out Dr. Welter with some of her administrative duties such as teacher evaluations and supervising paraprofessionals in addition to Peaceful Playground (see below).
- McKenzie would like to piggyback on Romona's purchase of the **"Peaceful Playground" program**, which is a series of organized games on the blacktop that are run during recess and serve as an alternative to soccer, and other ball sports. The PTA will need to consider if they are willing to contribute to the license fee for this program so it can be used at McKenzie as a recess option.
- There are two **district initiatives** as a result of last year's CRC:
 1. Green Initiative – the 6 District 39 schools are in a *Biggest Loser* competition with each other, trying to cut back on usage of toner, paper, postage and electricity.
 2. 21st Century Learning

IV. Report of Officers

A. President's Report –Kimbra Burnside

- Kimbra thanked everyone that has helped fill over 70 PTA committees, leaving only one spot available: **School Supplies Chair**. This person is needed to take over the Schoolkidz program, coordinating the needs of the teachers via their class lists and offering this program to the parents. This person should be ready to start working on this at the end of Sept. Anyone interested, please speak with Kimbra.
- **School Directory** is going to print this week. Any changes that need to be made should be addressed with the District.
- In order to **reserve a room at McKenzie**, please speak to Fran Digate in the front office for those reservations taking place during school hours (8-3:15) and speak with Rene Eggleston at the Mikaelian Education Center for before or after school.
- **New to McKenzie Picnic** took place on August 30th at Vattman Park with almost 40 families attending.
- There is an article in *Wilmette Life* (Thursday, August 27) that mentions McKenzie and its full-scale introduction to the Smart Board technology.
- The **Back-to-School teacher luncheon** was a success!
- Ellie Logan sent a **thank you note** to the PTA for the trellis in her honor of retirement.

B. Approval of 2009-2010 Budget – Sheri Herd, Treasurer

- Copies of the budget were passed out in hard copy. Approval of the budget was given by voice vote.
- Many of the committees have lower targets than in the past. The Benefit is listed at \$18,000 and this covers the next two years, under the assumption that we are having a Benefit every other year. The school gift is listed as \$0 as agreed upon last year due to the large number of gifts given by the PTA during school year 2008-2009.
- Celebrate the Arts is listed as \$0 since this event is every other year, taking place 2008-2009.
- Landscaping/Outdoor Classroom has a \$12,500 budget, with an additional \$7,000 (not reflected in the budget) contributed from the Gripp Grant. This money is to be used for various items: new fences, seeding, and new shed.
- In July, the audit of the PTA budget was completed. As a result, the PTA has a surplus of \$25,000 from last year that should be spent this year on those families that helped contribute. See C. (below) for further discussion of this surplus.

C. School Gift Report - Eleanor Lipinski, President-Elect

- Traditionally, the President-Elect position works to determine the school gift. However, at the end of last year, we agreed that there would not be a school gift for the 2009-2010 school years due to the abundance of funds used to supply the school with several gifts (a climbing wall in the gym, cameras in the classrooms and Smart Boards equipped throughout the school). However, due to the aforementioned surplus, we now have the opportunity to review what other options might be valid for the \$25,000 surplus. As a result, Eleanor Lipinski will be sending out a survey via Survey Monkey to all McKenzie parents for suggestions. We are hoping to get results from this by the November meeting so we will have a decision and can move forward.
- Questions were addressed regarding the surplus. Sheri Herd, Treasurer confirmed that there is already a reserve of 50% in the Operating Budget (based on national PTA guidelines). The surplus is a direct result from the money made in the 2008-2009 school years. The \$125,000 spent on gifts from last year was a result of (1) a surplus that had cumulated over many years and (2) due to the restructuring of grocery dollars. Finally, as a non-profit, we should be spending the money down and it should be used on those families that are at the school.

V. Faculty Representative's Report – Peg Power (Learning Behavior Specialist)

Kindergarten classes are off to a great start! They have been learning that there are many things to do like reading, writing and math. **First graders** have begun their units on poetry and have been reviewing math facts. They are getting used to the full day program as well as enjoying having lunch at school! **Second grade** will be attending the play, *100 Dresses* in October and going to the Grove to learn about Native Americans. In science, they are studying the life cycle of ladybugs. **Third grade** classes are settling in and learning new routines. All classes are starting their study of plants and growing Wisconsin Fast Plants. This unit includes a trip the Botanic Gardens at the end of September. They are also enjoying using their new Smart Boards, especially in math that can now easily be reviewed and/or completed as a class. **Fourth graders** continue to work hard in math and reading. There is already a buzz about Outdoor Education **Student Council** will be starting on Oct. 14th. Mrs. Garry and Mrs. Torf would be happy to have Student Council help with PTA projects. You can contact one of them if you have an idea or job that could use Student Council's help. The **Spanish newsletter** will be available monthly and will be emailed as part of our effort in going green. Please read them to update yourselves on the latest events happening in Spanish. Last but not least, the entire school faculty wishes to send a heartfelt **thank you** to all of you, for your efforts and hard work in raising funds to purchase and install a smart board in each of the classrooms. While the teachers continue to learn how to integrate them into the curriculum, the positive effects that they have had on the students has already been noticed. The students love working on them! Thank you to the PTA for all that you do at McKenzie. We are all excited to start the 2009-2010 year off!

VI. Reports of Committees

A. Benefit – Julie Farina

Planning is underway for the McKenzie Benefit, scheduled for Saturday, February 6 at 7:00pm at the Lakeview Room Park Center in The Glen.

B. Fall Frenzy – Jane O'Malley

Fall Frenzy will take place on October 16. Circulating around the room is a volunteer list for bakers for the cake walk and bake sale - 165 cakes are needed. Fliers are coming home next week and it will be posted on the website. Please sign up to volunteer – many are needed for this event.

C. Outdoor Classroom – Kirsten Stadheim

The Landscaping Committee has changed its name to the Garden/Outdoor Classroom Committee. Projects they are working on include:

- Connecting the butterfly garden and prairie area with a fence
- New Alphabet Garden – letters placed throughout, plants with names that start with different letters

- New compost bins provided by Eagle Scout project – helpful to the first graders studying soil
- Note: please do not put in anything meat or dairy in the compost bin as this will attract rodents
- Starting this fall, Fridays during recess there will be parent volunteers in the gardens to give kids a quiet option during recess to read, color, etc.
 - Weeding opportunities always available

D. Green Committee (formerly Environmental Committee)

Primary goal of this group is to promote: *Reduce, Recycle, Reuse* and to make it easier for the staff and students to recycle. Simple, visual posters will appear at school recycle bins so it is easy to tell what can go in them. The group is also acting as a resource for parents to know where to recycle specific items and for PTA committees when planning and holding events. Environmental Awareness Week is October 5 -9. McKenzie (Julie Garry) is collecting print cartridges and cell phones throughout the year.

E. Grocery Dollars – Tip Walker

Grocery Dollars is the one of the biggest fundraisers at McKenzie and is easy to participate in. We are continually looking to increase subscribers. Grocery stores that you can purchase from are Dominicks, Jewel, Treasure Island, Whole Foods and Peapod (through gift cards). Also, Dominicks has an EScripts program where they will give back 10% to the school if you go online and input your information on the website (or give them to Tip and she will do it for you). Julie Saltzman manages the delivery of the grocery dollars and is always looking for volunteers to help with the delivering. We will have a grocery dollar booth at Ladypalooza.

F. Gift Cards – Lia Chong

Consider buying gift cards for regular or upcoming purchases through the McKenzie gift card program. It does not cost you anything and each retailer gives a percent back to the school. Lia orders monthly based on order forms turned in and delivers the cards to you. She also has inventory on hand of various retailers. If you are concerned with losing a card, some retailers offer you the opportunity to register them online (Starbucks, I Tunes, Amazon). Think about ordering for your business, gifts.

G. Ladypalooza - Melissa Hirschel

Ladypalooza this year will take place at the Wilmette Golf Club on November 6, 6-10. There are still a few vendor spaces left and they are looking for some non-jewelry types of vendors. As the evening progresses, there will be some modeling going on with the assistance for some local stores. It will be a fully catered event and if the weather cooperates, we will have access to the back patio.

H. Ice Cream Social – Kristen Lipsey

Scheduled for this weekend featuring Bobtail Ice Cream, face painting, DJ.

I. Parent Learning Network (PLN) – Julie Johnson

The Parent Learning Network is a new group that has formed to give parents the opportunity to talk with each other about education and issues consistent with the District goals outlined earlier by Dr. Welter. On August 20, Tony Wagner spoke about Global Achievement Gap. Next meeting is September 30 at Loyola Academy to hear Ashley Merryman, co-author of *Nurture Shock*, book about praising children. Future events were handed out and will be posted on the website.

J. Picture Day – Jill Pinkerton

Tuesday, September 15 is Picture Day. Hand in order forms. Class photo will come in the spring. One check per child.

VII. New Business

- Next PTA meeting is Tuesday, October 13, 2009 at 9:15 AM
- Peaceful Playgrounds – Dr. Welter was able to find out the fee for the license for the Peaceful Playground which was \$3,999 (includes template, training, video, lesson plan). It was proposed that the PTA pay for half of this program (\$2,000) and was approved by voice vote. The question was raised if parents would be able to volunteer on the PP activities. Yes, once McKenzie is up and running, we will hope to get those parents that are interested trained in the activities as well.

VIII. Adjournment – meeting was adjourned at 10:22 AM.