

McKenzie PTA General Meeting

March 10, 2009

I. Call to Order and Welcome: President Julie Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:25 am. There were 21 people in attendance at the meeting, including 18 members of the PTA.

II. Approval of Minutes of the February 10, 2009. Minutes were reviewed and approved by voice vote.

III. Principal's Report - Dr. Denise Welter

- Higher than normal number of kids out sick for March
- Feb.: Valentines Day – thanks for all the help at the parties and to all the parents for attending open house.
- Variety Show is taking place now – thanks to John Klise (in attendance).
- ISAT testing taking place, finishing tomorrow. Question asked as to why our kids are testing for two weeks and at other IL schools they are not testing for the same length of time. Decided to test at McKenzie an hour a day (1 test/day) vs. other schools where they do 2 tests/day. Done during the same 2 weeks of March across the state.
- Outdoor Ed parent meeting to take place April 1st.
- Kindergarten parent orientation meeting April 16th. A week after the meeting there will be a lottery to determine if your child has AM or PM kindergarten. Letters will be sent a week after the lottery to notify if your child is in AM or PM kindergarten.
- Family Awareness Network presentation scheduled at McKenzie on April 30.

IV. President's Report - Julie Johnson

- Two of the three positions on the Executive Board slate have been filled by Mande Mischler, head of the Nominating Committee: VP - Room Parents – Ellen Vogel, President Elect – Eleanor Lipinski, as well as the Asst. VP Enrichment - Denise Swanson. Assistant Treasurer is still open and efforts are underway to secure that position. Suggestions have been presented for that role and if anyone has any other suggestions, those names may be submitted to Mande.
- Congratulations to Kristen Stadheim (PTA Landscaping Committee) for receiving \$6,000 for a Gripp Grant. This will offer the kids a new learning opportunity in an outdoor classroom setting.
- New Picture Day vendor, VIP, contract signed for one year. Overall pleased with the company's work. Concerns were due to delay in sending out class composite.
- Thanks to Maria Fowkes for providing coffee and treats at today's meeting.
- Enrichment opportunities still available (K-3rd grade) this summer. This year it will be held at McKenzie.
- Reminder to be mindful of sending out group emails BCC emails to minimize them being misused to solicit personal business.
- Feedback on the new report card will be requested via a survey monkey in May. Feedback may also be given directly via wilmette39.org website.
- April 30 is *Celebrate the Arts* day at McKenzie this year, taking place in the gym. This is an event that occurs every other year.
- On April 30, 7:00-8:30, Aaron Cooper, author of *I Just Want My Kids to be Happy*, will be speaking at McKenzie on developing resilience in children and how that will equip them for adulthood. The PTA is co- sponsoring this speaker with Family Awareness Network (FAN) and it is open to the township to attend. Event to take place in the auditorium.
- Tomorrow is Dr. Welter's birthday. Wishing her a very happy birthday!

V. Faculty Representative Report – Julie Garry

Julie Garry, McKenzie Technology teacher, gave an overview of each grade's activities, including highlights from the Specials. Julie spoke about the various activities supporting Celebrate the Arts Day at McKenzie, taking place on April 30. In addition, March is Youth Art Month and the McKenzie art students' masks will be displayed at the MEC.

VI. School Gift Summary - Kimbra Burnside, President-Elect

Both the climbing wall and the 11 digital cameras have been purchased and are already being used! The LCD projector for Mrs. Porter's Art Room and the LCD projector for the LMC being purchased by the District will be ordered through Adam Denenberg shortly and is likely to be installed this spring.

VII. Committee Reports

A. PTA Committee Recruitment for 2009-10: The following PTA Chair/Co-Chair positions are available for 2009-2010:

Jr. Great Books - 2	Bike To Highcrest - 1	Desperate Housewives - 2
Ladypalooza - 2	Boxtops - 1	Fall Frenzy - 2
Yearbook - Editor -1	Bulletin Board (not PTA ones) -1	Fourth Grade Farewell - 1
Yearbook - Business -1	Enrichment Coordinators:	Grocery Dollars:
	K and 3rd grade	Credit Cards -1

B. Variety Show – John Klise

John Klise, Producer of the 2009 Variety Show, announced that alumni saw the show last night and the cast and crew are looking forward to kicking off the show tonight. Karen David was commended on the job she did on the Ad book, including all the ads, personal messages and additional inserts that were added. There is a cast of 101, 25-30 more than last year. An explanation was made for ad placement on the back of this year's t-shirt. With the addition of an extra show this year, they were still able to just about sell out every show. This year the Variety Show tried new things such as (1) adding a show (2) Golden Ticket opportunity for kids to participate and generate more money (3) sell concessions. Suggestions for next year are to possibly add another matinee or move one of the 7:30 shows to a 7:00 pm start time. This would accommodate families with younger kids.

C. Gift Cards – Kathy Freedman

Kathy has gift card inventory available. Call anytime for any last minute gift card needs. Order form is always on the website. Special order is due Thursday, March 12 so that the cards will arrive before spring break. As a reminder, each vendor gives a percent of the dollar amount of the gift card back to the PTA.

D. Grocery Dollars – Julie Johnson (on behalf of Tip Walker)

Consider buying grocery dollars – available monthly or you can do it for a one time purchase. Contact Tip Walker if interested.

E. Outdoor Classroom – Kristen Stadheim

There will be a meeting on Tuesday, March 31 at 9:15 to discuss what needs to happen going forward with the outdoor classroom. If you enjoy gardening, or have an interest in the lunchtime program, please join in.

VIII. PTA Budget – Lisa Hoffman, Treasurer

Lisa Hoffman gave a quick review of how this year's grocery dollar fundraising program was restructured so that we now collect the money from participants in the grocery dollar program upfront and then use that money to purchase the grocery cards. In past years, the program was structured so that the McKenzie PTA purchased the cards and was then repaid by the grocery dollar participants. Due to this change, the PTA no longer has to act as a bank and *float* the money to buy the cards. This gradually freed up funds that are now being realized. At the same time, the PTA has reevaluated the reserves that are required and recommended by the PTA national guidelines. These guidelines recommend that a reserve of 50% of the operating budget is sufficient. The current Operating Budget is \$90M, bringing the reserve to \$45M. As a result of both matters, a \$100M surplus is available.

Q: Where are we on the budget for the 2008-2009 school year?

A: Due to a drop-off on some grocery dollar orders, we anticipate falling \$8-10M under budget. We feel confident that some or most of this money will be recovered by an increase in Merchandising sales as well as Variety Show ticket sales.

Q: What is the plan on how to use this money? Is there a special committee formed to determine this? - answered in section X.

IX. Discussion of Surplus Funds – Dr. Denise Welter, Principal

Dr. Welter discussed that the world we live in is one of technology, emphasizing the need to utilize technology in the classroom. Our kids are born ready to use the technology where we as adults have had to learn it. She also discussed the current goal of the District Community Review Committee (CRC) and McKenzie School is to define, create and develop 21st Century Learners. Dr. Welter indicated this type of technology would be instrumental in helping us meet this goal. She also addressed a question about timing of spending this money with reference to a June 30th deadline. Additional (surplus) funds raised for the school year are not needed for operating expenses or a reserve. Therefore, based on PTA guidelines, it is recommended to spend the money so that the children can benefit.

X. Recommendations for use of Surplus Funds – Julie Johnson, President

Julie Johnson gave a quick overview of the process that was used to determine this year's PTA gift to the school. As a result of research done to assess the needs of the school, an LCD projector for the Art Room came to the forefront. More discussion and collaboration took place with the District regarding this technology in tandem with interactive white boards. They wanted to partner with us in adding this type of technology to the school. The District offered to match the purchases that McKenzie makes with limited funding available. Because this \$100 M surplus is available and Dr. Welter and the teachers feel the need to move McKenzie into the forefront of today's teaching technology, the PTA Exec Board recommends purchasing LCD and Interactive White Boards (Smart boards) for the remaining 23 classrooms that will not already receive them due to prior gifts. This is at a cost of \$4M per classroom or \$92M total.

XI. Technology in our Classrooms - Julie Garry, McKenzie Technology Teacher and Adam Denenberg, Director of Technology District 39

The presentation by Julie Garry and Adam Denenberg included (1) Smart board video demonstrating the equipment by elementary teachers, including their testimonials on usage. Emphasis was made on the interactive white board becoming the focal point in the classroom and that it is interactive. (2) Julie had lists of examples from the McKenzie teachers of ideas they had on how they would use these IWB's in their classrooms. When this idea surfaced on getting this technology earlier in the year as an idea for a PTA gift, the teachers presented these ideas. Most had to do with group learning, covered an array of subject matters – ultimately empowering the students due to the interactive nature of this technology.

Q: Will this technology quickly become obsolete? Updates?

A: (Adam) These Smart boards were first installed in some of the other District 39 schools (Highcrest, Jr. High) in 1991 and they are still in use today.

Q: What about the durability? What if one child was to take a permanent marker or pen to it?

A: In the 10+ years of operation, we would imagine this probably has come up and will have to check with the company for the outcome. The materials seem to be easy to clean. It was also mentioned on the video that if a pen were misplaced, other objects originating from the particular pen tray can serve as a substitute.

Q: Would we be able to get the price down due to the large order?

A: Yes, there was already an indication that the price would come down with a smaller order than the one being discussed today.

Q: What are the District initiatives for Technology?

A: 2008-2009: Assessment of everything. Replace computers that are 6-8 years old. Purchase up to 2 LCD/IWB per elementary school.

2009-2010: Deal with the dated servers. Address the wireless infrastructure and phone lines (currently there are 7 separate phone systems being used). Establish a cycle of replacement for the various types of technology equipment.

2010-2011: Start focusing on Smart boards for schools.

Q: Once McKenzie is fully equipped with this technology, what happens in 2 years when the District is ready to purchase them for the school?

A: The District will have to fill in the gaps for those schools that cannot afford them. McKenzie will be 2 years ahead of this and the students will benefit that much earlier.

Q: Is it prudent to spend the entire surplus? What type of message does that send with respect to the economy, upcoming tax referendum and recent approval of the teacher salaries? There are people that are struggling and cannot take advantage of some of the "extra" programs such as McClubs and Great Books.

A: Because we are able to support the recommended reserve for next year to support key activities such as Enrichment, and still have this money, it is in the best interest of the PTA to support the school at all grade levels and fund this effort in full. This money is money donated via fundraisers from the McKenzie families over the past several years and the children should be able to benefit from this. Dr. Welter also mentioned that she has offered assistance with the extracurricular events and is open to any other scholarship ideas.

Q: If we did not outfit the entire school with these LCD/IWB, would it be possible to prioritize which grades would get them first?

A: The teachers were surveyed at the beginning of the year and before the official memo went out, Dr. Welter had received proposals from various grades on usage.

Based on this proposal, discussion and Q and A session, the PTA held a voice vote. There were 19 PTA members in attendance, including 7 Exec Board members. 18 voted for the purchase of the LCD/Interactive white boards for the entire school. One opposed.

XII. New Business – Next meeting April 14 at 9:15 am

XIII. Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 10:57 am.