

McKenzie PTA General Meeting – October 14, 2008

1. Call To Order and Welcome

Julie Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes of 9/9/08 Meeting

Minutes from the PTA General Meeting of 9/9/08 were distributed and reviewed. A motion to approve Minutes was made and seconded. A voice vote approved the minutes from Sept. 9, 2008.

3. President's Report – Julie Johnson

Julie announced the placement of a "Kids Corner" at the PTA General Meetings for preschool kids and toddlers attending the meeting, graciously overseen by parent Jennifer Lind. The Kindergarten playground is now fully-installed except for a disabled-accessible bucket swing, which is coming soon. Swings will be adjusted as needed. Directories for each D39 school are being produced together, and should be distributed by the end of October. The Hand-To-Hand mentoring program for new McKenzie families has been well-received. Any mentors who have not initiated contact with their new family should do so now. Prior to foreign-language being part of the school day, there was a before-school foreign language program in the D39 schools. There are still funds in that former foreign language budget and it will be used for some foreign language enhancements in our school (videos, etc.). Thank you to our Mulching McKenzie crew who worked hard recently on cleaning up the McKenzie grounds.

4. Principal's Report – Dr. Welter

Thanks to all our McKenzie Committee Heads, Members and Volunteers. Congrats to Julie Johnson, who was instrumental in overseeing installation of the new Kindergarten playground. This is Fire Safety month; students heard a presentation from a Fire Chief, and enjoyed the community outreach experience. Dr. Welter reviewed upcoming calendar events. McKenzie's Student-Teacher Halloween Parade will be held Oct. 31. Halloween parties in classrooms are for McKenzie students only; younger siblings can't be accommodated in classrooms due to space constraints. Note that school will be IN SESSION on Veteran's Day (Nov. 11), but will NOT be in session on Election Day, Nov. 4. Most District 39 schools are used as polling places, so teachers will have a professional development program, and students will not be in the schools given safety concerns and anticipated congestion on Nov. 4. COGAT testing for Grade 3 will take place the week of Nov. 10. In-service teacher training has focused on Everyday Learning Math as well as the new Progress Reporting system, which should be a well-received change. Welcome to Cindy Dougherty, our teacher representative at the PTA meeting today, who is a Learning Behavior Specialist (LBS) in McKenzie's Functional Academics Program.

5. Report by Faculty Representative – Cindy Dougherty, LBS

Cindy Dougherty provided an overview of subjects being focused on by each of the grade levels, including special projects and field trips.

6. Vote on Amended ByLaws – Kimberly Alcantara, Secretary

McKenzie's Amended ByLaws were reviewed by the 25 PTA Members in attendance. The only change is a notation on Page 6 to reflect the change in name from VP Ways & Means to VP Fundraising. A motion was made to approve the revised ByLaws. The motion was seconded. All members in attendance voted in favor of approving the Amended ByLaws. The motion passed and the ByLaws will be signed and finalized.

7. Communications Report – Mary Condon, VP Communications

The Communications Committee is committed to reducing paper that McKenzie copies and sends home \ via Back Pack Express (BPE), while also maintaining effective communication with parents. Each event should send out only one paper flyer via BPE. However, major events may use two paper flyers, with the choice and ability to send one of those flyers as a half sheet, making a total of 3 BPE distributions (one full page and two half-pages, or two full-pages). Currently, we have 4 primary communication channels, namely, BPE, McKenzie Minute, McKenzie Web Site Parent Pages and Pioneer Press Notices. The intention is to enhance and make more effective McKenzie's web site and email-modes of communication. The McKenzie Minute is an important weekly communication tool and is available via BPE and viewable both online and via email from Dr. Welter. Dr. Welter has added an email communication blast at the end of each week, which is primarily for principal information. PTA information may be added if there is room, but this communication from Dr. Welter is not intended as a primary PTA communication tool. The McKenzie Minute should be used for this purpose, or one of the other PTA primary communication channels. The Red Dot system will be very important, and will be implemented soon. The Red Dot system is a copy/paper-reduction system so that only ONE student from each McKenzie family will get a flyer, rather than multiple children from the same family getting the same flyer. Any suggestions regarding Communications are welcome and should be directed to Mary Condon.

McKenzie PTA General Meeting – October 14, 2008

8. Presentation – Denise Thrasher, District 39 Administrator for Student Special Services, Ann Dronen, Pass 39, Cindy Dougherty, LBS

Dr. Thrasher oversees special education services, as well as other District 39 areas including student registration, summer enrichment, health services, discipline, transfer of records, and the ELL program. Services include Early Childhood program, as well as services for Gradkies K-4 and Grades 5-8. These grade-level services are inclusive, with some pull-out services and functional academics programs. Dr. Thrasher reviewed the number of special education teachers and specialists in District 39, the percentage of students in District 39 with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for special education services, and comparisons to state averages. Dr. Thrasher also reviewed McKenzie's Functional Academics program.

Ann Dronen from Pass 39 presented information about the group of parents of children who have IEPs. Pass 39 is an informal group, with varying levels of involvement, including email communications, collaborative meetings, social networking forums for parents, support for development of district-wide Disability Awareness programs. There is also a strong effort to keep students with IEPs and more severe disabilities in their home/neighborhood schools. Advantages for all students include access to special education personnel & specialists, who provide assistance to entire classrooms – not just individual students. Students also learn to appreciate, accept, and understand differences among community members. The greater student community is also benefited by being prepared for and exposed to the range of differences that exist in our world.

Faculty member and LBS Cindy Dougherty from McKenzie's Functional Academics program noted what a great program we have at McKenzie, and thanked everyone for patience and acceptance of all the kids.

9. School Gift – Kimbra Burnside, President Elect

Kimbra presented information collected from an online survey on the McKenzie PTA's school gift for 2008-09. The response rate is still low, and Kimbra encouraged everyone to go ahead and still email her with any ideas for the school gift. Technology questions were frequently raised as a priority. Kimbra will be talking to McKenzie's Technology Teacher (Julie Garry) as well as District 39's Director of Technology (Adam Denenberg) to see what needs there may be in this area. Outdoor/indoor recess equipment, PTA-supported school choir, artist-in-residence or scientist-in-residence, as well as auditorium renovation capital campaign were also mentioned as desirable potential gift ideas.

10. Committee Reports

- a. **Ladypalooza:** Jane O'Malley reported for Arleen Boudart. The event was held on September 19 and was well-received.
- b. **School Pictures:** Picture Day went well, and with pictures anticipated soon. Class photos are in a composite form, rather than one group photo. The composite is an 8x10 composite with each individual, including picture re-take students. The composite will be distributed later in order to include all staff and picture re-takes.
- c. **Box Tops:** This committee will try new efforts this year. Instead of taping the box top "Box" in the front vestibule, the boxes will be maintained in each of the classroom. They students will decorate boxes that will integrated into classrooms. There will be boxes for students to make donation of box tops to McKenzie or to Carmen Buchner.
- d. **Fall Frenzy:** Gilda Fox reported that volunteers are still needed for the much-anticipated event taking place this Friday, Oct. 17. Older siblings are great for assistance as well. Encourage attendance and have fun!
- e. **Landscape Committee:** Kirsten Stadheim reviewed the garden needs. The Butterfly Garden and the Prairie Garden. Kirsten spoke with the Chicago Botanic Garden and other Wilmette school reps about school gardens in general and what other schools are doing. At Central School, they have established a lunch program as an option for kids to do something at lunch in the garden (quiet option for sitting, reading, looking at plants, etc.). One idea would be to create an outdoor classroom garden area. This would give kids a chance to learn outside, teachers may be able to take groups to the garden, examine plants, check rain gauges, create rain barrels, draw pictures of flowers, composting, etc.
- f. **Book Fair:** Book Fair will take place on Tuesday thru Thursday, November 11-13. The first day of the Book Fair coincides with the next PTA evening meeting. On Tuesday & Wednesday, the book fair will be open all day straight through until 8:00 p.m. On Thursday, there will be morning hours from 9:00-11:00 a.m. only.

McKenzie PTA General Meeting – October 14, 2008

- g. **Environmental Committee:** Rebecca Boyd reported that Walk To School day was a great success. Fewer kids are driving to school; more are working. The environmental awareness committee seeks any suggestions or ideas. Recycling guidelines for Wilmette are available. Elmer's glue bottles and glue sticks are available for recycling with bins in the front of the school. Bulletin Boards are being created for Environmental Awareness showing all sorts of different recycling ideas.
- h. **Grocery Dollars:** Tip Walker reported that grocery dollar cards are available for all manner of upcoming holiday parties and meals. Jewel, Dominick's, Whole Foods, Treasure Island. New cards will also be made available in November from "The Grand" in Winnetka on Green Bay. They will give us a great introductory percentage-cut of 25%, probably for at least the first 3 or 4 months that we purchase gift cards from The Grand. NOTE: The Grand is also donating cupcakes for Fall Frenzy as well. Only one-third of our current McKenzie families are subscribers. We are trying hard to increase subscriptions this year. We get a better rate from subscribers who pay by check instead of by credit card due to credit card processing fees. Encourage subscriptions and get your holiday orders in!
- i. **Gift Cards:** Gift cards are available from Kathy Freedman. She also has PEAPOD gift cards. So, if you don't do grocery dollars because of, purchase your Peapod gift cards from Kathy.

11. New Business – Next Meeting Nov. 11, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.