

Meeting Minutes

McKenzie PTA General Meeting

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

I. Call to Order and Welcome: President Kimbra Burnside called the meeting to order at 9:15 am.

II. Approval of Minutes of the April 14, 2009 - Minutes were reviewed and approved by voice vote.

III. Vote in Assistant Treasurer – Assistant Treasurer, Arti Bedella was voted in by voice vote.

IV. Introductions –Kimbra Burnside introduced the new Executive PTA Board for the 2009-2010 school year:
President Elect – Eleanor Lipinski Treasurer – Joy Kunny VP Room Parents – Ellen Vogel
VP Enrichment – Julie Radtke VP Communications – Mary Condon VP Fundraising – Jane O'Malley
Secretary – Kim Ratkin

V. Dedication and Honoring Ellie Logan – Curriculum Differentiation Teacher

In honoring Ellie Logan and her service to McKenzie School, a honeysuckle plant and trellis were added to the backyard gardens along with a plaque that was presented. Kimbra thanked Ellie for her years of service and time she spent touching so many of our children's lives.

VI. Teacher Appreciation Week Report – Micaela Daly, VP Room Parents

Micaela reviewed the happenings of Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-8) including: an extensive bulletin board project where the 1st – 4th graders wrote notes to the teachers, treats in the lounge throughout the week, shoulder massages, and culminating in a luncheon at the Montesano home. Food donations were provided by Starbucks, Panera (Evanston) and Kim & Scott's Pretzels.

VII. Principal's Report – Dr. Denise Welter

- Thank you to the outgoing board members who focused on leadership and accomplished so many things over the school year. Dr. Welter reflected on the teamwork of the PTA Board and its members as working as a community and as a result were able to accomplish so much over the year, including Smart Boards being purchased for all the classrooms, climbing wall, cameras, Enrichment Budget to support the in and out of school field trips.
- Kindergarten orientation meeting was well attended. Thus far there are 110 students enrolled.
- Over 100 parents from the township (majority from McKenzie) attended the FAN presentation.
- Heritage Day took place on May 1st with the 3rd graders and their families.
- Outdoor Ed program is scheduled for 4th graders May 20-22.
- Scheduling taking place for the end of the year picnics for each grade as well as the 4th Grade Farewell.
- Staffing for next year:
 - Due to the economy and District 39's "belt tightening" to be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers, there is a focus on class size. As a result, there will be 5 sections for grades K-3 and 4th grade will be cutting a class. The standards for the class size across the district are:
 - Grades K-2 – 24 kids max.
 - Grades 3-5 – 24-27 kids
 - Grades 6-8 – 30 kids max.
 - New staff members:
 - To replace Ellie Logan – Jodi Clutier will be returning to District 39. In addition to her high energy and qualifications for being the CDT, she is currently at a school that rolled out Smart Boards and is a trainer.
 - Looking for a new Speech and Language Pathologist
 - ELL – Jamie is returning from a year sabbatical

VIII. President's Report – Kimbra Burnside

- Village-wide PTO has asked us to remind parents when registering children for the next school year, be advised to proofread entries. A standardization of the School Directory is being done amongst all 6 District 39 schools, pulling the important information from the registration entries. In addition, the calendar will no longer be sent in the mail to each household. It is available online via Google Calendar. You can select whichever school(s) you would like to view.

- All PTA Chair positions have been filled. One update: Ladypalooza is looking for a co-chair. Please see Kimbra if interested. Location of event will be at the Sheridan Shores Club.

IX. Presentation – Dr. Ray Lechner – District Financial Report

Dr. Lechner gave a summary of the District 39 financial situation.

- ***School finance is in the mode of planned deficit spending.*** We have dipped into savings for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year.
- ***Where does our Revenue come from?*** 83% from local taxpayers, 15% from the state, 2% from the federal government
- ***Tax Cap*** In 1997, voters approved a tax rate of \$2.56 per \$100 property value. How it works is the CPI or 5%, whichever is less, + the value of new construction. Due to the result of the tax cap, actual taxing rate declines as the property value increases. Note: 80% of taxpayers do not have children in the District 39 schools. Since 1997, enrollment in total across the district has increased by 304 students.
- ***What do we do?*** Cut programs and services, spend reserves (which is what we have been doing now)
- ***Do we need reserves?*** Yes, to support schools during difficult financial times: Pay the bills, emergencies, planned deficit spending, maintain district AA bond rating. 40% of the Annual Budget should be in reserves. We are just dipping into this.
- ***Budget*** 82% of this is spent on wages and benefits, 7% on supplies, 5% purchase services
- ***How have we survived for 13 years w/o a referendum?*** Investments have had no losses, very conservative, continue to reorganize existing resources, withdraw from expensive cooperatives, reduce purchasing of services and capital equipment, aggressively monitor benefit expenditures, moved to user fee funding, nudge class sizes
- ***Getting Good Value in District 39*** Schools enhance the property values, consistently high performing students. Cost per pupil in Wilmette - \$11,607 – efficient.

To summarize:

- Seen program development and student growth
- Tax cap does not permit us to capture needed revenue to pay for normal operating expenses, let alone student and program growth.
- 2008 CPI puts every school district in financially difficult situation
- Expenditures outpacing revenues results in using reserves
- Operational fund balances will reach dangerously low levels in FY 2011.
- District must take affirmative measures to reign in spending and enhance revenue sources by spring 2011.

X. Faculty Representative Report – Kandace Happ (1st Grade Teacher):

Thank you for teacher appreciation week! We really appreciate it. Current activities by grade were listed:

- Kindergarten – space, telling time, Field Day at the end of May, graduation event
- 1st grade – sun, moon, earth unit, fractions, reading comprehension
- 2nd grade – Bike Safety, butterflies, light, writing assessment
- 3rd grade – enjoyed Heritage Day on May 1st, going to Chicago
- 4th grade – Outdoor Ed next week, Music Program, geometry, astronomy, persuasive essays
- Celebrate the Arts Day – 14 local artists visited. Thanks to Sara Kurensky and Julie Geyer for their help.
- Lunch Cooks – thank all servers, please be on time and present when here
- Library – all books should be returned next week.

XI. Budget Report – Lisa Hoffman, Treasurer

Highlights include: June 30th budget ends for the school year. Elizabeth Nassar will be doing the audit over the summer. We will be keeping a 40% reserve for the PTA budget, in line with the District guidelines. We will come in close to budget.

XII Committee Reports

- **John Klise - Variety Show.** Overall the Variety Show was a big success! There were 100 cast members and 8 crew, including 35 new members of the cast, more than 12 couples and 25 guys! New things that they tried included: marketing, adding a show, raising the ticket price, sold food, sold Golden Tickets to the kids. Challenge they faced were the misperceptions about the show being all about the money. Purpose was to raise money as it was a fundraiser for the school, but it was secondary to the community building and fun that was had. Net result of \$20,804 brought in by the multiple performances of the Variety Show!

- **Kirsten Stadheim – Outdoor Classroom.** Kirsten has two co-chairs. Plans are being made to weed and water over the summer and anyone that would like to help out, please let Kirsten know. Programs looking for help include the fall lunch program and grant writing, in addition to gardening.
- **First Day Coffee – Jenny Wert**
The first day PTA coffee is scheduled for August 27th. There is a sheet to sign up for bringing food as well as looking for table volunteers.
- **Grocery Dollars – Tip Walker**
It is estimated that grocery dollars will make about \$32-33M this year. The challenge we face is the dropping of subscriptions. There was discussion on why people are dropping out and suggestions for trying to keep current enrollment and give it a boost: (1) retain the fourth grade parents via letter (2) specifically address the incoming kindergarteners at the beginning of the new school year (3) reach out to get the teachers involved/participating. An additional way to support the school through the grocery is through the Dominicks e-scripts program, which is separate from grocery dollars gift cards and is free to the user.
- **Gift Cards – Kathy Freedman** announced that she did have cards with her and her next cutoff would be May 27th. This would accommodate room parents that are ordering for end of the year teacher gifts or soccer coaches. There is some inventory left as well.

XIII. New Business

XIV. Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am