

Meeting Minutes

McKenzie PTA General Meeting

Tuesday, April 14, 2009

I. Call to Order and Welcome: President Julie Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:25 am.

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

III. Principal's Report – Dr. Denise Welter

- Thank you to special guests participating in today's meeting: Luke Pavone, Principal from Highcrest, Kelly Jackson, Foreign Language Coordinator at Highcrest, Erin Brighty, 3rd Grade Teacher and Jessica Torf, 3rd Grade Teacher.
- There is a lot going on in coordination with the purchase of the Smart Boards for McKenzie: Staff development will take place over the summer, on Friday, April 17, there will be a demonstration at the MEC, 1-3, done by the SB rep.
- Outdoor Ed meeting had a great turnout. Program is scheduled for 4th graders May 20-22. School nurse will be attending.
- Kindergarten orientation meeting on Thurs. 6:30. Thus far there are 88 students enrolled. Thanks to the welcoming committee for giving tours to parents. There will still be a lottery as the AM time is more popular with limited space.
- Last day of school is now June 11th (vs. June 10th)
- Fourth Grade Farewell will still take place June 9th during the regular hours of school.

IV. President's Report – Julie Johnson

- Last day of school PTA Coffee – June 11 for the hour of school
- Smart Board purchase is very exciting for the school. Julie thanked everyone involved for making this happen, with special thanks to the PTA. She mentioned that it is a great opportunity to add this technology to the school and encouraged all to attend the presentation on Friday at the MEC, 1-3.
- Kirsten Stadheim received a \$6K Gripp Grant on behalf of creating a McKenzie Outdoor Classroom/Garden. We recently found out that McKenzie was not awarded the Chalet grant. Thanks to Kirsten's determination on this project, we are looking at how this initial funding will be an opportunity to make this project our own. Julie thanked Kirsten for her hard work thus far and in advance for the strides being made in the future on the gardens.
- Teacher Appreciation lunch is now Friday, May 8th (vs. previously scheduled for May 7). It will take place at Rosanna Montesano's home, 11:30 – 2. More info to come – all are welcome.
- Movie night is this Friday evening.
- Next week is Earth Week.
- Tuesday, April 28 is Bike Safety Day
- 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.
- April 30 is Celebrate the Arts Day. Local artists will be at the school interacting with the kids.
- Teacher Appreciation Week is May 4 – 8.
- Next school year the District calendar and Handbook will be online only. There will be a link to events at each school.
- A standardization of the School Directory is being done amongst all 6 District 39 schools, pulling the important information from the District demographics. This should get the directories out much quicker.
- Busing for next year – if you pay for busing in full, an Early Bird special is available. If you decide to pay in installments (new this year), you will not be able to take advantage.
- Julie announced that this is her last time leading the general PTA meeting. She presented to the group at the meeting the puzzle that the PTA put together, including pieces created by all 106 Committee Chairs. Julie thanked all of the many volunteers over the year in helping making the PTA and all of the events a success (over 200 volunteers over the school year). She thanked each of the PTA Exec Board members with a flower and gave a brief description of each person's role on the Board.

V. Introductions and Vote on New Slate

Those at the PTA meeting voted on the incoming slate of Exec Board Members. All were in favor and those voted in included: Eleanor Lipinski as President Elect, Ellen Vogel as VP of Room Parents, Denise Swanson as Asst. VP of Enrichment. Incoming for the second year of their term are Joy Kunny as Treasurer and Julie Radke as VP of Enrichment.

VI. What to Expect at Highcrest:

Mr. Luke Pavone, Principal Highcrest Middle School

Mr. Pavone had received a list of questions from Julie Johnson (President) addressing some of the questions parents of 4th graders had about their kids experience the following year at Highcrest. Questions and answers included the following topics:

Home Room: The 5th and 6th grades are divided into “houses” and this is considered each child’s home room. The kids stay with their house for most of the day, with exceptions being language, Reading and Math. There are 9 forty minute periods that make up a typical day. There are 16 sections or houses in 5th grade with 4 teachers per house.

Changing Classes: All kids take a pre-assessment for Reading and Math and this determines placement.

Lunch: This starts at period 3 (of 9) for some. Included is a 20 minute recess.

School Day: 8:49 – 3:40

Drinks/H2O – Water filtration system recently put in school. Kids are encouraged to carry environmentally friendly water bottles around during the day and for use during lunch.

Specials: Art, Drama, Music, Technology – there is a quarterly rotation for each of these.

Physical Education: 40 minutes/day and the kids do not change into a separate uniform for gym.

Famous Events at Highcrest? Service projects, Civil War Day, Variety Show that kids participate in

Placement – try to split up problems identified early on, will not honor friend requests

New Assistant Principal starting next year – Cassie Black from Highland Park

Musical Instruments/Choir – it is encouraged that each student participates in choir or band/orchestra. As a result, 85-90% of students do participate. Practice takes place before school and at times during school.

Ms. Kelly Jackson, Foreign Language Coordinator

Four languages are offered at Highcrest: French, German, Latin and Spanish. The fourth graders chose their language for the 5th grade at the beginning of this year. There were DVDs of the classroom activities for each language that all the 4th graders got the preview to help them make their language selection. There was an online registration for this language preference. The language period will be 40 minutes vs. the 20 minute period of Spanish they are used to at McKenzie. Typical curriculum includes homework, tests/quizzes and projects. There is a German trip offered every other year. Kelly encouraged any parent to come forward with info on a trip idea for one of the other languages. The kids stay with the same language from 5th through 8th grade.

VII. Faculty Representative Report – Jessica Torf

Jessica Torf, McKenzie third grade teacher, gave an overview of each grade’s activities, including highlights from the Specials. Jessica spoke about the following:

- Kindergarten – working on weather, colors and numbers in Spanish
- 1st grade – they are taking an Earth week related field trip to the Kohl museum
- 2nd grade – Studying air and water in science and Mad Science is visiting the classrooms
- 3rd grade – Finishing unit on rocks and minerals, the Chicago Fire and preparing for Heritage Day on May 1
- 4th grade – Going to the Adler Planetarium with their unit on astronomy
- April 30 – Celebrate the Arts Day – 14 local artists visiting the school. Still in need of a weaver, beader
- Spanish – newsletter highlights each grades activities
- Mrs. Schoenberg wanted to thank the Environmental Committee for 4 new books

Jessica also presented a video from the gym teachers, thanking the PTA for their gift of the climbing wall and showed the kids using it at all grade levels.

VIII. Budget Report - Lisa Hoffman, Treasurer – Lisa was available to answer any questions on the budget.

IX. Committee Reports

- Lisa spoke on behalf of Tip Walker and Grocery Dollars, encouraging parents to continue to take part in the ongoing fundraiser.
- Gift Cards – Kathy Freedman announced that she did have cards with her and she was about to place the order that would come in prior to Mother’s Day.

- Environmental Committee – Rebecca Boyd presented the group with the activities taking place during Earth Week. In preparation for the week, there would be an all school presentation tomorrow (Wed., April 15). Earth Week events are being advertised on the internet and via Backpack Express:
 - Monday – wear green
 - Tuesday – Walking School Bus – map coming home
 - Wednesday – Recycling Relay in gym
 - Thursday – Sports equipment exchange or donation
 - Friday – Book exchange – bring in a book/take a book
 There will also be presentations in the library on renewable energy, led by parent volunteers.
 Finally, reusable McKenzie bags are on sale for \$6 which include a 10% off Fresh Market coupon
- Last Day of School Coffee – Jasmine Hauser announced she would be heading up this event. More to come.

X. Response to Intervention (RtI) – Mrs. Erin Brighty, 3rd grade teacher, McKenzie School and Ms. Kelly Jackson, Foreign Language Coordinator, Highcrest Middle School

A presentation was given by Erin Brighty and Kelly Jackson with the objective of defining Response to Intervention (RtI), giving a history of RtI, introducing some basic concepts related to RtI and demonstrating how RtI will benefit your children.

- RtI is a process of addressing student needs in the classroom by (1) Implementing specific instructional practices or interventions. (2) Monitoring a student's response to that instruction or intervention. (3) Using that data to guide educational decisions.
- As District 39 implements RtI, the implementation process will include (1) Continuing to deliver high-quality, differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students (2) Using data more effectively to drive educational decisions for all learners (3) Providing high-quality interventions for students requiring supplemental instruction (4) Providing on-going professional development and parent education
- RtI can benefit each student by effectively teaching all children, intervening early, using a multi-tier model of service delivery and using a problem solving approach to make educational decisions
- The Three Tier Approach can be described as follows:
 - Tier One - CORE CURRICULUM: Students in Tier One typically represent 75-85% of the student population. Universal, or Tier 1 supports, are those academic and behavioral strategies that all teachers routinely use at the first sign that the student is having problems in the classroom.
 - Tier Two – TARGETED INTERVENTION: Students in Tier Two typically represent 10-15% of the population. These students are not making adequate progress in the core curriculum (i.e. Tier 1). They are provided with increasingly intensive instruction that matches their specific needs.
 - Tier Three – INTENSIVE INTERVENTION: Students in Tier Three usually represent about 5% of the population. These students have demonstrated lack of adequate progress in the Core Curriculum (Tier 1) and in their response to *several* more intensive interventions (Tier 2). Tier 3 students are often, but not always, under the umbrella of Special Education services.
- Identification of Specific Learning Disabilities - Previously, school districts used a discrepancy-based model to determine Specific Learning Disabilities. New federal regulations are aimed at implementing the 2004 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). Schools may now use a problem solving approach to document how a child responds to research-based interventions as part of the evaluation procedure. The goal is to ensure interventions are occurring before a student is made eligible by law. The intention of these changes is to ensure that all students' individual needs are met.
- Parents can be involved by communicating frequently with your child's teacher, making suggestions for strategies that work at home and asking what can be done at home to reinforce any interventions that are being used in the classroom.

XI. New Business – Next (and last) meeting May 12, 2009 at 9:15 am

XII. Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 pm.