

McKenzie PTA General Meeting – September 9, 2008
Minutes

1. Call To Order & Welcome

- The meeting was called to order by Julie Johnson at 9:20 a.m. There were 37 members in attendance.

2. Introductions

- Executive Board Members were introduced.

3. Approval of Minutes of May 13, 2008 General Meeting

- Minutes were reviewed from 5/13/08, and were approved by voice vote.

4. Principal's Report: Presentation by Dr. Welter

- We have 10 new certified staff members at McKenzie this year, with great experience and backgrounds. We now have 23 classrooms, with new sections in 1st and 3rd grades. Enrollment is up to 510 (up from last year). We welcomed 27 new families to the McKenzie community this year.
- Efficient and effective use of teachers' time will be closely examined this year, with a focus on Continuity Of Instruction and reducing the time and expenses involved in having substitutes in classrooms. Institute days and half-days have been implemented in order to provide District-level staff development and to help achieve the goal of optimal Continuity of Instruction. Also, staff will have a.m. and p.m. collaboration times for grade-level curriculum planning, which will be rotated so grade-level planning will not always happen at the same time of day, which will also help Kindergarten a.m. students. Solid instructional blocks of time are being re-structured by via recess & lunch periods.
- We have a new intercom system this year. This has a life-safety purpose, but is also a much appreciated new feature for starting the morning together with the Pledge of Allegiance. This fosters punctuality and unity. Please try to keep students on time in order to honor and respect the effort for all students and teachers to start the day together.
- McKenzie's School Improvement Plan (SIP) will focus this year on physical & emotional wellness of students, and customizing instruction. Regarding customizing instruction, students will have ongoing assessments, regularly checking to see how each child is progressing. Under wellness, McKenzie is piloting a program in two classrooms at each grade level, called "Second Step". This program focuses on building children's social skills, including problem-solving and empathy.
- McKenzie has added two evening PTA meeting this year. The November and February meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. The November PTA meeting will coincide with the Book Fair. Please help publicize these evening meetings, especially for parents who may not be able to attend morning PTA meetings due to work or other conflicts.

5. President's Report: Julie Johnson

- Julie noted new organization of PTA mailboxes, and overview of forms available.
- Picture Forms should be forwarded through Back Pack Express to Teachers
- For any space needed to be reserved inside or outside/around the school, please see reservation of space forms in the office. If space is needed during school hours, see McKenzie's secretary, Fran. For space after school hours, reserve space through MEC Secretary Mary Ann Esler. Forms are available in the McKenzie Offices.
- Car pool lanes are working very well this year.

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- McKenzie's Mentor program was kicked off this year for new families, called "Hand-To-Hand". The program is underway and has been well-received.
- District 39 Foundation is sponsoring The Kelly Miller Circus on Friday, Sept. 26 at 4:30 and 7:30. Please come out and support the Foundation. Tickets are \$25.
- District 39 encouraged bus ridership, which was publicized at the end of 2007-08 in order to encourage efficiency. And, indeed, bus ridership is up this year by 5%.
- Kindergarten playground equipment will be installed at the end of September.

6. Faculty Report & Grade-Level Report: Peggy Power

- Kindergarten: 5 Senses, Letter of week is "F", Handwriting without Tears program, Second Step Program
- 1st Grade: Peer Relations, word-knowledge skills, lunch is going well.
- 2nd Grade: Time & money concepts, fiction/non-fiction.
- 3rd Grade: Life cycles and plants; Botanic Gardens field trip upcoming
- 4th Grade: Oceanography & "Voyage of Mimi" film series, looking forward to Curriculum night this Thursday, Sept. 11.
- Spanish Reports for all grades were provided
- Student Council will start soon with Julie Garry and Jessica Torf in charge.

7. Notice of Proposed Amended ByLaws: Kimberly Alcantara, VP Secretary

- Updated ByLaws were made available to all attendees, with extra copies available as needed for anyone not in attendance by contacting Kimberly Alcantara. The revised ByLaws will be voted upon at our next-scheduled PTA meeting on October 14, 2008.

8. Approval of 2008-2009 Budget: Lisa Hoffman, VP Treasurer

- The Audit went well over the summer. No significant problems were revealed. Excellent results for Grocery Dollars and the Benefit resulted in the PTA Budget being \$20K over budget for the 2007-2008 school year.
- A proposed Budget was presented at McKenzie's Executive Board Meeting on September 4, 2008.
- The proposed Budget was distributed for 2008-2009. Lisa noted that there would not be a fundraising Benefit this year, as fundraising exceeded expectations last year. And, now that Grocery Dollars has been restructured so that the PTA does not pay for and "float" subscriptions in advance, the PTA now has newly-usable funds that were not available previously.
- Additional expenses of \$3000 were spent on the Kindergarten playground.
- The Budget was reviewed. A motion was made for approval of the Budget and seconded. The budget was approved unanimously by voice vote.

9. School Gift Report: Kimbra Burnside, President Elect

- Kimbra will be sending out a survey regarding school gift ideas. If you have ideas waiting, don't wait for the survey. Contact Kimbra at KimbraBurnside@gmail.com. She is collecting ideas on a wide-ranging basis including possible new ongoing program for students (e.g., school choir), auditorium refurbishments, school improvements, etc.

10. Fundraising Report: Jane O'Malley, VP Fundraising

- Ice Cream Social made a profit of \$800. Usually, the event is a break-even community-builder, so the profit was unexpected.
- Ladjpalooza will take place September 19th at the Wilmette Women's Club. A few more vendors would be great. Beverages and refreshments, socializing and shopping are on the agenda for the evening.
- Fall Frenzy plans are underway for October 17. Volunteer sign-ups will be posted for working game shifts, baking goods for bake sale, cake walk, etc.

11. Communications Report: Mary Condon, VP Communications

- Mary Condon reviewed modes of communications at McKenzie, including: (1) McKenzie Minute by Back Pack Express (BPE) each week, (2) Dr. Welter's Friday email-blasts to all McKenzie families, (3) flyers sent home by BPE, (4) School & District 39 web sites, (5) School Bulletin Boards, (6) Wilmette Life/Pioneer Press, and (7) communications from Room Parents for each classroom.
- Anyone who is NOT getting Dr. Welter's Friday email-blasts should contact the school. The email address entered into District 39's PowerSchool student registration is used for these blasts. If the email address is entered incorrectly or incomplete, the email will not reach the family. NOTE: In order to make sure each family receives the email, school-wide email distributions must be broken down by grade-level so it is not interpreted as SPAM by Internet Service Providers. This means families may receive more than one email if they have children in more than one grade at McKenzie.
- Communications is focused on process this year. We are moving from a paper environment to a virtual, online environment. Email Mary Condon with any "green" ideas to improve communications.
- Send an email to McKenziePTA@yahoo.com for any announcements that should be included in the McKenzie Minute; the deadline for McKenzie Minute submissions is Tuesdays at 8:00 p.m. weekly. Submissions should be concise and edited for inclusion as written. There will be a "DO YOU KNOW" section added to each McKenzie Minute highlighting different ways to find information, etc.
- Thank you to Faith Kanatzidis and Colleen Reese for their hard work preparing and distributing McKenzie Minute each week. Thank you to the Welcoming Committee, Deanna Goldman, Tip Walker and Julie Johnson, as this is a great Communications tool.

12. Committee Reports

- **Grocery Dollars (Tip Walker):** This is the main fundraiser this year, as there is no Annual Benefit. So, we are encouraging families to subscribe and/or increase subscriptions this year! New subscriptions and each \$100 increase in subscriptions will be rewarded with McKenzie-logo reusable grocery bags and magnets. Grocery Dollars can also be purchased on a one-time basis from Tip Walker.
- **Gift Card (Kathy Freedman):** We are looking forward to increasing Gift Card utilization. Kathy has inventory on hand for most popular stores, including Gift Cards for The Gap, Children's Place, Starbucks, Michael's, L.L. Bean, Land's End, Lettuce Entertain You, Blockbuster, Bath & Bodyworks, etc. Order forms for special custom orders are going out this week, and cards will be distributed within a week following the

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order. Gift Cards are great for coach and teacher gifts, etc. Kathy is very accommodating in getting you Gift Cards at last minute, on-the-fly, so don't be shy and call Kathy.

- **Circus:** Laurie Cavalier noted that the District 39 Educational Foundation is hosting the Kelly Miller Circus on Sept. 26 with two shows at 4:30 and 7:30 as a major fundraiser. The Foundation benefits educational and technological benefits for District 39 schools and students. Teachers receive Grip Grants through the Foundation to benefit innovative ideas and programs for District 39 students.

- **Environmental:** Rebecca Boyd encouraged people to sign up for Grocery Dollars and get your reusable mesh, McKenzie-Logo grocery bags. These logo-bags are also available for sale at \$6 each. She also noted that Styrofoam is recyclable if you rinse out cups and put them in recycle bins. Environmental committee is glad to help committees in order to help all our committees to be more 'green' and eco-friendly, including consultations on where to buy products, etc.

13. New Business

- Keith Dronen, School Board Member, attended the meeting and reported on summarizing reports generated by District 39's Community Review Committee (CRC). Last year's reports focused on (1) Facilities and (2) Continuity of Instruction. Past reports included a report on Teacher Mentoring & Induction, the results of which are also in progress. Also, a past CRC report on Wellness is being used to improve student Nutrition and overall Wellness. New D39 initiatives being moved forward by District 39 administration and the School Board are frequently generated via CRC research topics.

- Dr. Welter noted McKenzie's dear long-time speech therapist of 25-years, Cindy Milligan, lost her battle with cancer over the summer. Cindy's husband, Glenn Milligan, would like to memorialize Cindy at McKenzie with a tree-planting.

- Jill Pinkerton asked if the PTA would make contribution to the Cindy Milligan Fund. A donation of \$100 was made to the Foundation established in her memory.

- Sonja Iribarren is in charge of PTA Membership & Directory. PTA Membership forms are in the Office and are available online. PTA Membership costs \$25, which includes a directory. Additional directories are \$5 each.

- Jill Pinkerton reported that school pictures are being coordinated with a new vendor this year. Orders can be made online. Picture Day is September 16.

- Thank you to School Supply committee head Maria Miller for distributing school supplies without a hitch. And much appreciation goes to the Fall Luncheon organizers, Colleen Paholak and Julie Schrager. Also, a big thank you to Genny Wert in charge of Meet & Greet and the First Day of School Coffee.

- The Next McKenzie General PTA Meeting will be Oct. 14, 2008 at 9:15 a.m.

14. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.