

Meeting Minutes
McKenzie PTA General Meeting
October 13, 2009

1. Call to Order and Welcome: President Kimbra Burnside called the meeting to order at 9:16 am.

2. Approval of Minutes of September 8, 2009 meeting – Minutes were reviewed and approved by voice vote.

3. “The District 2009-2010 Initiatives and Finances” - Dr. Ray Lechner, Superintendent

Dr. Lechner first outlined the **District Goals 2009-2010:**

- (1) Green school: Establish a district-level committee, Develop school based action plans for a biggest loser contest – engage entire community, Create curriculum and instruction guidelines-integrate into curriculum green concepts
- (2) 21st century teaching and learning: New strategic plan with the content of the CRC report as the foundation, Educate staff and parents, Solicit feedback, Write an “easy to understand” document that is lean and mean (5 goals with multiyear implementation)

Secondly, he focused on **School Finance**.

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 years. Revenue get from taxpayers only comes twice a year.
- **Where does our Revenue come from?** 83% from local taxpayers, 15% from the state, 2% from the federal government
- **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:

1. Seen program development and student growth
2. Tax cap does not permit us to capture needed revenue to pay for normal operating expenses, let alone student and program growth.
3. Expenditures outpacing revenues results in using reserves
4. Operational fund balances will reach dangerously low levels in FY 2011.
5. Tax referendum likely coming up; however, must consider the New Trier referendum coming up and do not want to coincide with this. In past, taken more than one try to get referendum passed due to large number of households without school age children in NT Township.

4. Principal’s Report - Dr. Denise Welter

- The district initiatives drive the goals for District 39 education. Dr. Welter and her team are in the process of working on the **School Improvement Plan (SIP)** which includes measurable goals and targets each year. SIP team includes: teachers from every grade level, 2 parents. This group makes a presentation to the School Board, scheduled for November 16. Good goals are long range, so they don’t always meet them right away. Goals include:
 1. Green Goal: Measuring and cutting back. Paperless this year
 2. Wellness Goal: Social and emotional learning – posting books online that reflect Habits of Mind
 3. Using Second Step – piloting in classrooms
 4. Working on writing based on test scores across the district
 5. Looking more carefully at gender differences – girls and boys learn differently – content areas boys vs. girls learningDr. Welter will share all goals at the February PTA meeting in the State of the School.
- **Assessment update** – all done with performance testing also finished reading. 1st week in November the 3rd graders will take COGAT – no prep work.
- **Parent Learning Network** has included thus far: Tony Wagner lecture, Nurture Shock lecture, upcoming Video on Praise, Rewards Punishments – Oct 21, Howard Gardner – coming to NT on Oct 29 (via FAN).
- **Housekeeping: Fall Frenzy** – this Friday, **Parent Teacher Conf** – delaying online sign-up until Nov. 19 – you will receive an email, **Halloween** - half day of school, parade in am only, PM kindergarteners can come if they want to join in, Attending 21st Century Learning conf in Wash DC, Oct 27th **retake day** for class pictures.
- **Personnel** – Oshana back at McKenzie during the day, was on temp assignment; Stephanie Freed – twins arrived Friday (boy and girl!).

- **Habits of Mind** – Dr. Welter asked if the PTA would fund books that support each of the 8 habits being discussed in the classroom throughout the year. Vote to be taken later at the meeting.
- Next month **evening PTA meeting** – featuring Smart Boards that evening. 2 teachers will do presentations on SB.

5. Report of Officers

1. President's Report - Kimbra Burnside

- Anne Edmonson is our new Room Parent VP, voted in at the last Exec Board Meeting.
- Directories are at the printer right now. The cover will now be a dark purple/blue cover vs. light purple in the past.
- Gripp Grant deadline October. 15
- McClubs start today
- Fall Frenzy this Friday, October 16
- Ladypalooza – November 6
- Carpool lane reminder – please stay with your car, do not block traffic

2. Communications Update - Mary Condon, VP of Communications

- Mary reminded us of our goals from last year and how all of these were met:
 1. Reduce amount of paper going in backpacks – all events still going well despite less paper
 2. Build a website
 3. Build electronic newsletter (McKenzie Monitor)
- The Communications Committee is trying to make sure all parents are connected:
 - If still want paper, pick up a MM in front office. This is considered a transition year where we are trying to accommodate both paper and electronic users.
 - Every committee has a web page - If looking for something not on front page, look under Committee tab
- Backpack Express submission form – changed to make it simpler: You will hear from the VP in the PTA hierarchy to understand how to submit fliers for your event – your VP will champion it and send on to Dr. Welter
- Electronic reminders will be sent for new things or things that happen on weekends

3. Survey Monkey Update - Eleanor Lipinski, President-Elect

Thanks for responding to survey monkey! There were lots of different ideas on how to spend the surplus – some were related to enrichment, wellness of children...Next step is to meet with Dr. Welter and Kevin Nohelty (Business Manager) to review these and make sure we are spending the money wisely. Hope by next month to have more solid information.

4. Habits of Mind classroom proposal – vote. There was discussion that came up on the source of spending for these books (that Dr. Welter had previously spoken about in the meeting): Would this come out of the money of surplus? Could this come from Gripp Grant? Due to timing, would like to vote on now and spend from surplus; maybe consider Gripp Grant for something else. Kimbra also added that at the Villagewide PTO meeting they mentioned that we may be getting money back from schools (about \$1500) due to directory sales over the years. As a result, the book vote was approved. We will look into purchasing the books via gift cards (from Borders or Barnes and Noble) so that the school will also benefit in that way.

5. Faculty Representative's Report - Julie Garry

1st grade – completed gardens with Scientist in Residence Julie Zielke, time capsules, keeping nature notebooks, loving SB.
2nd grade – finished Mad Science: sound, loved going to see the play *100 Dresses*, went to The Grove, finishing ladybug lifecycle, **3rd grade** – finishing plant unit, studying prairie and pioneers, visiting Heller Nature Center, starting keyboarding classes today, **4th grade** – in language arts writing character descriptions, maps and globes, oceanography. **Library** – using document camera and SB, **Student Council** starts wed. at 8:20, continue to collect pop tabs, **Newspaper** – Jody and Julie going to do a blog online. *Family tradition* is the first theme. Students can email to Julie or Jody and they will upload to blog

6. Reports of Committees

- **Family Awareness Network** (Jill Sutherland) FAN is an organization that keeps a finger on pulse of what going on in the area and keeps tabs on speakers, books that apply to parents of surrounding neighborhoods. You can access the FAN website via the McKenzie website. Coming up is Howard Gardner (psychologist that came up with 5 Minds for the Future) speaking about what every person needs to be successful in the future. Monday Nov. 2nd – parent learning session put together by Howard Gardner.
- **Fall Frenzy** (Karen Dekker) – reminder that it is this Friday, 5:30 – 8 pm. There are lots of new fun things planned including an obstacle course. Pizza orders and tickets are due today, 15 volunteer spots still open. Signup in front lobby. Could use 10-15 more cakes (can always buy vs. make!).
- **Benefit Committee** (Kimberly Alcantara) McKenzie Benefit is scheduled for Feb 6 at the Lakeview Room at the Glen. The theme is *Growing Minds*. Karen David is working on logos and visuals. October 21 is the next meeting at Julie

Farina's home (1716 Forest Ave.) – just show up or let one of them know you are coming. There are a few open volunteer spots if available. Solicitations: the goal of the event is to raise \$18,000. Ticket cost covers event itself. Silent auction – getting great donations. Trying to be very focused and lean. Trying to get things people would enjoy and would want to spend money on. Money will go toward enrichment and field trip budget. Do need to raise money and is doable. Looking for more items for the silent auction: any sports tickets, birthday party venues...

- **Gardens/Outdoor Classroom** (Kirsten Stadheim) – Fridays in the Gardens has been at full capacity with kids. Groups include boys, girls and various interests from looking around; looking at bugs and the compost has been a big hit! There are 2 more Fridays in the Gardens planned until return in spring. They have finalized plans for future gardens. Hoping to have the fence up by the end of the month.
- **PLN** (Julie Johnson) – On Wednesday, October 21, 7-9 pm, we will view the video on Unconditional Parenting at McKenzie with a thought provoking discussion afterwards.
- **PASS39 Program** (Ann Dronen, McKenzie parent) hosts a morning coffee at Ann's house and that Tracy Kearney, a Romona parent, hosts an evening gathering at her house. The gatherings are to meet other parents of children w/ IEP's and to share, relate, socialize together.
- **Gift cards** (Kathy Freedman on behalf of Lia Chong) – Gift cards are available off the order form on the web or here today at the meeting. Consider them for soccer coach gifts!

7. New Business - Next PTA meeting is Tuesday, November 10, 2009 at 7:00 PM

8. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 am.