**PTA Council Meeting Minutes**

**October 27th, 2015 7 p.m.**

Evanston/Skokie Council of Parent-Teacher Associations, District #21

Willard Elementary School

2700 Hurd Avenue

Evanston, IL 60201

**Attending:**

Kristin James (Dawes/Chute/ETHS), Miriam Barnett (King Arts), Jenny Blickenstaff (Washington/Nichols), Elliot Frolichstein-Appel (Dawes/ETHS), Stephanie Clemson (Dewey), Karen Larkin Young (ETHS), Sarah Laing (Lincoln), Isabel Schultz (Lincolnwood/Haven), Carolyn McNulty (Nichols), Stephanie Davis (Willard), Anne Hutchinson (Willard), Denise Kohn (Willard), Kerry Maman (Willard), Jerry Michel (Willard Principal), Jerry Succes (Willard Assistant Principal), Suni Kartha (Orrington/Haven/D65 School Board)

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

**1. Welcome & Introductions**

* Kristin welcomed everyone to the meeting, and all attendees introduced themselves. Principal Jerry Michael shares some information about Willard. Current enrollment is approximately 530 kids, and space is an issue; older buildings were not designed to accommodate the number of students today. There is one strand of TWI at Willard. Willard is doing a “One Book, One Read” initiative this year of the book “Red.”

**2. D65 School Board Updates – Suni Kartha**

* ***Budget***: Both operating and capital budgets have been the subject of much discussion at the Board and Committee level this fall. Many of D65’s buildings are not built for the sizes they have currently.
* ***Strategic Plan***: The Board is excited this year to get into the implementation phase of the Strategic Plan. Quarterly progress reports are posted on the District’s website; click [here](http://district65.schoolwires.net/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=57&ModuleInstanceID=1552&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-D8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=2199&PageID=1165) <http://district65.schoolwires.net/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=57&ModuleInstanceID=1552&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-D8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=2199&PageID=1165> for the most recent update. One exciting area of progress is around social-emotional learning. Many local principals have been very supportive of this effort. A “Whole Child Council” (facilitated by Biz Lindsay-Ryan) has started meeting to look at social-emotional learning issues. This council is charged with evaluating a variety of social-emotional learning efforts currently being implemented by schools and how the District can build on successes. They are also looking at suspension data to make sure consequences are equitably administered. There is also a “School Climate Committee” being implemented at a few schools this year. There was confusion regarding whether the Whole Child Council and the School Climate Committee are the same committee, or how they overlap, or what the differences are. Carolyn McNulty offered to talk to Joyce Bartz (Assistant Superintendent of Special Services) about these 2 committees to clarify their charges, and will report back to the PTA Council. The District is planning to host a community forum regarding these new committees and their initiatives sometime in November. Date is still TBD. [After the meeting, on October 30, Joyce Bartz sent a letter advising that the informational meeting on school climate committees will be December 3, 6:30 – 8 p.m. in the JEH Board Room.]
* ***New STEM/Curriculum Directors***: There was a question regarding the impacts made to date by the new STEM and Curriculum directors (Matsuo Marti and Stacy Beardsley, respectively). According to the Willard principal, both new directors have reached out to Willard to learn about what is being done in school in these disciplinary areas. The Interim Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction (Stacy Beardsley) is said to be focusing on literacy. Both are also working on communication between the District and the schools surrounding curriculum. Also focused on talking to teachers and building leaders, looking at interventions and curriculum mapping.
* ***Safe Entrances***: There was a question regarding when all schools would have the planned “safe entrances.” All schools are currently safe, that is, all have locked doors, buzzer entries and emergency plans in place. The goal is to have safe entrances with two sets of locked doors and a vestibule in all school buildings, but there are currently inadequate funds for them. “Life Safety” funds cannot be used for these entrances. Right now, capital spending is focused on maintenance, because that’s all the District has funds for. Kristin has meet with the new D65 Security Director XX, who has been charged with taking a look at all the schools and prioritizing safety and security issues.
* ***School Board Liaisons***: New this year, each school has a designated D65 Cabinet Liaison as well as a D65 School Board member liaison as an initial point of contact. It was suggested that the PTA President from each school should send an e-mail directly to your liaisons inviting them to a PTA meeting and/or school event. Here is a list of the liaisons for each school:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **School/Site** | **D65 Cabinet Liaison** | **D65 School Board Liaison** |
| Bessie Rhodes Magnet School | Joyce Bartz | Tracy Quattrocki |
| Chute Middle School | John Price | Candance Chow |
| Dawes Elementary School | Maria Allison | Suni Kartha |
| Dewey Elementary School | Beatrice Davis | Claudia Garrison |
| Haven Middle School | Beatrice Davis | Claudia Garrison |
| Kingsley Elementary School | John Price | Tracy Quattrocki |
| Lincoln Elementary School | Peter Godard | Claudia Garrison |
| Lincolnwood Elementary School | Maria Allison | Richard Rykhus |
| King Arts Magnet School | Mary Brown | Candance Chow |
| Nichols Middle School | Beatrice Davis | Jennifer Phillips |
| Oakton Elementary School | John Price | Omar Brown |
| Orrington Elementary School | Peter Godard | Omar Brown |
| Walker Elementary School | Mary Brown | Candance Chow |
| Washington Elementary School | Peter Godard | Omar Brown |
| Willard Elementary School | Maria Allison | Jennifer Phillips |
| Rice Children’s Center | Mary Brown | Suni Kartha |
| Park School | Joyce Bartz | Richard Rykhus |
| JEH Early Childhood Center | Joyce Bartz | Jennifer Phillips |

**3. Approval of Minutes from September Meeting**

* Elliot Frolichstein-Appel made a motion to approve the September meeting minutes as presented by Secretary Jenny Blickenstaff, Stephanie Clemson seconded. The September minutes were unanimously approved.

**4. Treasurer’s Report – Budget Discussion and Audit Committee Report**

* Karen Young presented the audit report for the period July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015. Beginning balance was $1984.08. Receipts during audit period were $3875 (including PTA dues and donations), for total cash of $5,859.08. Total expenses for the audit period were $4,410.77, for an ending balance of $1,448.31. The written audit report will be posted to the PTA Council listserv. Kristin thanked Karen and Olga Bernick for completing the audit report.
* Dues invoices will be sent to the schools soon. Dues for this year will be $100/school (an increase from $75/school), in light of the additional parent education and advocacy activities of the Council.
* This year, D65 has donated $4500 to fully fund the Navigating Diversity Series.
* Kristin presented the Treasurer’s Report, as Treasurer nominee Olga Bernick was absent. The account balance as of September 30, 2015 is $561.11.
* Kristin also presented the proposed budget for FY July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016. Sarah Laing made a motion to approve the budget, Elliot Frolichstein-Appel seconded. The budget was unanimously approved.

**5. PTA Council Leadership Election 2015-2016**

* The Nominating Committee (consisting of Akari Yamada, Julie Cutter, and Miriam Barnett) posted a slate of candidates to the PTA Council listserv on September 17, 2015. The slate is as follows:
	+ Kristin James President
	+ Miriam Barnett Vice President
	+ Jenny Blickenstaff Secretary
	+ Olga Bernick Treasurer
* No motion was necessary because the Nominating Committee posted the slate. Kristin asked if there were other nominations, and there were none. Kristin asked for a vote on the proposed slate. Vote was in favor of the proposed slate.

**6. D202/ETHS Parents Engaged Report – Karen Young and Elliot Frolichstein-Appel**

* Kristin strongly encouraged D65 parents to get educated on what is going on at the D202 level, as what is going on there now will affect you and your children. Ask questions!
* ***D202 Board Meeting***: At the October 26 D202 Board Meeting:
	+ Marcus Campbell, ETHS Principal and D202 Asst. Superintendent, presented a report on the recent black male and female summits, and mentioned that plans were being formulated for a summit for another subgroup.
	+ Board President Pat Savage-Williams talked about her experience from the PEG (Pacific Education Group) conference (4 of 7 board members attended the conference). Ann Sills, Mark Metz and Monique Parsons described their experiences as well.
	+ ETHS administration presented their report on student achievement trends over the last 3 years. Results were mixed: more students across the board are taking AP exams and scoring well on them, but student achievement as measured by the percent of students meeting expected growth from Explore to ACT tests fell. In addition, ETHS is beginning the process (done every 3-5 years) of developing long-term goals, and are seeking parent and community input. Karen encouraged everyone to look at the Board packet from last night, look at the goals and achievement reports, and write to D202 Board members. Click [here](https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicMeetingMaterials.aspx?ak=1000529&mk=50174362) to see the Board packet - [file://localhost/<https/::v3.boardbook.org:Public:PublicMeetingMaterials.aspx%3Fak=1000529&mk=50174362>](file://localhost/%3Chttps/%3A%3Av3.boardbook.org%3APublic%3APublicMeetingMaterials.aspx%3Fak%3D1000529%26mk%3D50174362%3E). Click the following link for Board member e-mail addresses: <http://www.eths.k12.il.us/domain/46> . Click the following link for a video of the Board meeting: <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/76334497>
* ***ETHS Parents Engaged***: This is a parent-run group whose mission is to improve communication between parents/guardians, ETHS administration and the D202 Board and support parents while their students are at ETHS. They sponsor 3 events every year: (1) a “meet the adminstrators” night in the fall, (2) a course selection/planning event in the winter, (3) a welcome to ETHS event in the spring for rising 9th grade (current 8th grade) parents. Get more information at [www.ethsparentsengaged.com](http://www.ethsparentsengaged.com). Registration has already started for next year: November 12 is incoming freshman night (7 p.m.), and course selection nights are coming up January 6th.
* There was also discussion regarding avenues for getting your voice heard at the D202 level. You can go to Board meetings, write to Board members (see contact information above), but it can be difficult to get a dialogue going with respect to any particular issue.
* Kristin raised the question of what access to D202 administration and Board members would look like. Elliot said that 3 or 4 years ago, ETHS did a “road show” at the D65 schools, which were successful and full of information. Maybe ask them to repeat, since school populations have changed? D65/D202 State of the Schools event is also a good way to hear from D65 and ETHS. There was discussion of selecting a joint theme (maybe D65/202 Joint Goals?), and ask representatives from each District come to a PTA Council meeting. Parents should take note of the Joint D65/D202 Board meeting on November 9.

**6. FAN Programming**

* Anne Hutchinson is the new FAN liaison for the PTA Council. She will report back to the Council after she attends her first meeting.
* Questions were asked about whether and when FAN events will be held in Evanston, and if a forward-calendar could be shared with Evanston schools so scheduling conflicts can be avoided.
* Mary Finn (ETHS parent) is interested in creating a discussion group around the book “Raising an Adult,” which was a recent FAN event. There was a question whether similar speakers would be coming to town that would support this or related ideas.

**6. Bake 425 Fundraiser**

* Local pizza restaurant Bake 425 (there are currently 2 in Evanston) are willing to run fundraisers to give back to your school. It is an easy, no effort fundraiser. For more information, call Starlett Tulchinsky at starlet@bake425.com or (773) 757-4218. Karen Young volunteered to create a list of local restaurants that do these fundraisers, and put it on the PTA Council website as a resource for local schools.

**7. Council Committees**

* ***Parent Education (Heather Sweeney)***: The October 14 Navigating Diversity event was a success. Over 140 people attended, and evaluations were positive. The stories were very powerful, and it was an engaging event. The theme for this year is “Becoming Allies: Inspiring. Next session is November 16, and ETHS students will facilitate the sessions. They have been working with The Leadership Project at ETHS, and there will be a diversity consultant there as well. High school students are encouraged to join in the session. In advance of the November session, consider taking the Harvard “Implicit Bias” test by clicking [here](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html) - <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html.> The [PTA Council website](http://ptacouncil.weebly.com/navigating-real-life-diversity---session-one-2015-16.html) - <http://ptacouncil.weebly.com/navigating-real-life-diversity---session-one-2015-16.html> - also has information regarding the series, including one of the stories shared at the October 14 session. Click the link above to get to the Navigating Diversity portion of the website.
* ***Special Education (Katie Smith and Carolyn McNulty):***
	+ The Special Services Advisory Committee recently had their first meeting of the year. Joyce Bartz (Asst. Superintendent of Special Services) was also at the meeting. The committee asked Ms. Bartz for information regarding the types of assessments and testing (and the timing) planned for the year. They are also asking for more information regarding Tier 3 of the District’s social-emotional learning curriculum (to supplement the social-emotional learning forum held last year). They also asked for an updated D65 “philosophy” on inclusion. The policy was last updated in 2009.
	+ The Committee is going to put together a list of guidelines and best practices for schools to successfully include all students into school events (including students with different needs and abilities).
	+ Park School is in the middle of a big mural project, and may be reaching out to other schools to have students help. There was also discussion of having a PTA Council meeting at the Rice Children’s Center (akin to our meeting last year at Park School), and all were in agreement that that would be a good opportunity to introduce people to Rice.
	+ *Disability Awareness Fair (Access Living)*: Access Living has run this event, where disabled adults answer kids’ questions about their wheelchairs and other assistive devices, at Bessie Rhodes. They are interested in expanding to other schools, and cost is relatively minimal. Kristin has invited their director, Gary Arnold, to come to our next meeting for a brief introduction and to learn about Access Living.
* ***Curriculum Forums (Karen Young):*** There was discussion about having a Forum regarding the results of the PARCC exam when they are available.
* ***Arts Education Coalition (Sarah Laing):*** Instead of being the focus of a PTA Council meeting, the Evanston Arts Education Coalition is putting together a separate Arts Forum with District leadership on the State of the Arts in D65, to be held on November 23. Sarah also mentioned that Foundation 65 is in the midst of a Strategic Planning process right now.
* ***STEM (Hillary Coustan and Andrea Mainelli):*** Kirby Callam (Evan-STEM initiative coordinator) will attend the next PTA Council meeting to talk about the goals of Evan-STEM. He is trying to catalog all the current STEM activities in the District, whether staff initiated, after school, or parent run. He has e-mailed PTA Presidents to gather information on all of the out-of-class STEM enrichments activities.

**8. Discussion**

* ***Topics for PTA Council Meetings:*** There was a general discussion of topics people would like to address at future Council meetings:
	+ Invite new Interim Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction Stacy Beardsley to a Council meeting for questions (no presentation)
	+ Social-emotional learning (perhaps including the new community engagement coordinator Izzy Nunez): (1) mapping among the schools (the impression was that there is a lot of inconsistency among the schools), (2) is PBIS effective at reducing incidents?, (3) what are parent/PTA-led social emotional learning opportunities at various schools?
	+ Recess issues: (1) withholding recess as a punishment (on agenda for January policy meeting), (2) indoor recess issues
	+ Support staff training policy (also relates to recess)
	+ Update from Cradle to Career (how are parents engaged in this process?)
	+ Community Schools update
	+ Discussion of Whole Child Council and School Climate Committees
	+ Professional Development – what is schedule for half-days?
	+ Half-day programming (PTA-sponsored v. community v. District-offered)
	+ SIT (School Improvement Team) v. Parent Advisory Committees
* ***Mission Statement***: One exists for the PTA Council (on the website): information, communication, advocacy are key goals. We are valued by D65 administration for our feedback and ability to raise issues and facilitate getting information out there.

**Upcoming Events:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Monday, November 16 | Navigating Diversity & Inclusion Series #2 | Family Focus |
| Tuesday, November 17 | PTA Council Meeting/STEM | Bessie Rhodes |
| Monday, November 23 | Arts Forum (D65 and Evanston Arts Education Coalition) | TBD |
| Thursday, December 3 | School Climate Committee Informational Meeting (6:30 p.m.) | JEH |
| Tuesday, December 8 | D65 Wellness Committee (4:00 p.m.) | JEH |
| Tuesday, December 15 | PTA Council Meeting/F65 Responsive Grants | Orrington |

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.