Waters Elementary School

LSC minutes for Feb 18, 2020

JR called to order 6:35pm

Quorum:

Parent Reps: Kirstin Bacon (KB), Chris Brannan (CB), Greg Foster-Rice (GFR), Jason Rieger (JR), Erica Smith (ES), Lydia Schmidt (LS)

Community Reps: ~~Zach Koutsky (ZK), Lauren Niedespol (LN)~~

Teacher Rep: Rielly Wall (RW), Ms. Ballasch (MB)

Non-Teacher Rep: Mr. Williams (MW)

Principal: Titia Kipp (TK)

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda, KB, ES Seconded. All in favor. No absentsions or nays.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes from the January Meeting, RW motion, TK second.

Public Comment

*Please note: This period is dedicated for questions/comments that directly pertain to the 3 functions of the LSC: Budget, CIWP, and Principal Evaluation. Other questions/comments will be directed to administration (general school operations), teachers (specific classroom/grade level questions), or WatersToday (fundraising and volunteering).*

Cameron Rich – representative from Senator Sarah Feigenholtz’ Office. Thanks for having me this evening. Feigenholtz took Sen. Cullerton’s seat until the election in April. I’m here to make ourselves as available to you as possible. Wanted to give a brief update on happenings in Springfield.

* Veto session was last fall.
* Made progress in pension consolidation (Police and Fire Fighters, which was a big step in right direction).
* Recreational marijuana was passed
* Insulin – out of pocket costs capped at $100/mth
* Ethics reform
* Child welfare
* Work ahead for 2020 – would welcome your input

Tess – I’m here tonight to speak for children who have been victims at this school. The children who have been treated unfairly by this administration. Enough is enough. I’m not here to attack or single out bullies. Bullies I’m here to hold the administration responsible. I demand this administration address these issues. I demand anti-bullying curriculum be taught daily, not once a year. Suicide remains the leading cause of death among young children. I’m beggin for programs like Sandy Hook’s Know the Signs. I am also calling for Ms. Bricker to be held accountable for victim shaming my daughter. Our children deserve better. For those afraid to speak up I will be the voice for your children. Bullies were once vicitms themselves. I demand a change and I demand it tomorrow.

Michelle Higa – I’m a long time Waters parent. One student graduated and another student in 4th grade. Over past few weeks I’ve heard a number of disturbing complaints. My student was stabbed with a pencil, I talked to the office. A second time this happened I submitted a report downtown. On subsequent occasions there were fights. Spent three months submitting forms and talking with people before there was a safety plan for my student. I met with Ms. Kipp last week and she made a good faith attempt to address the situation, but I’m concerned about my student who is a diverse learner. I am requesting Ms. Bricker’s resignation because of how she failed to address the situation.

Special Presentations:

Presentation on CPS Fine Arts Education Strategy - Julia DeBettencourt, Director of Arts Education, CPS, and Jeff Waraska, Manager of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Visit http://www.cpsarts.org

JD - Has anyone communicated with our department before? No one. Ok, that’s why we are here! We all know there is a shortage of CPS arts instructors Dance is most in demand. We are creating a teacher residency program to help with that demand.

Fortunately Waters has been a bastion of arts access. If there’s something that we don't see that is a barrier to your students receiving arts access. So that’s the first major component.

Having a full-time arts teacher on staff is the most important change a school can make.

Access builds quality.

What do you want students to know in the arts class? There are brand new standards in the state of Illinois. The old standards were about the discrete acquisition of knowledge. The new learning standards don’t get rid of that but focus on the artistic process, interdisciplinary learning and connections to the common core. In order to achieve this we are expanding our professional development. Six hallmarks – process based, collaborative (see color wheel in attached PDF) none of it is about the virtuosic interpretation of a thing. For schools it's a change in what arts programming offers.

You may have heard about the Curriculum Equity Initiative – Skyline – for which we are embarking on building a full scope and sequence in the arts, PreK-12. What are the units that take into account new arts standards? There will be a full scope and sequence available for arts teachers written by arts teachers. We will work with local museums like the Art Institute or Red Clay dance (African dance). It will live in a digital platform. To our knowledge there are no other large districts that cover such a scope and sequence with supports. This is not mandated but we are hoping it is a resource and support. We also want to work with our vendors to support the new initiative.

How do we support your programs. District wide performance and arts showcases. Starting an internship program for juniors and seniors working at Gallery 37….all of this is about making our student programs more student centered.

With Skyline we are not seeking to come in and tell every school what they must do, but we sat down with 50 Fine and Performing Arts teachers and talked to them about what they wanted to put together FPA school standards for success. There are six major domains. Working with schools to do self-reflections with many stakeholders. Lots of holistic measures we want to make sure are saturating the school.

We have built our first ever student arts advisory committee who are sending out surveys. We would love to work with your students so please send them to us. The genesis of this was that a student reached out and talked to them about it.

Question: parent Darian Martyniuk – can you explain certification of arts teachers.

Julie DeBettencourt – You have to be certified by the state to teach the arts.

Parent Question: What about band?

Jeff Waraska – when the variables come together, we want students to get the most robust experiences that represent the school community. But we cannot mandate that every school will have a band.

Julie DeBettencourt – All city band program is grades 3-12 and offers a centralized opportunity for students who don’t get it at their school. Visit us at chicago.artlookmap.com

Karen Riggs Nevatti – As parents we pay for half the music teacher. How can we get that paid for my central office?

DeBettencourt – you get one full-time employed arts teacher. I don’t know how the rest are funded. Happy to help talk to you about creative budgeting.

ES – we used to have two full-time employed arts teachers, but CPS downgraded every arts magnet cluster school to one full-time employed art teacher several years ago.

TK – In order to continue the level of arts programming we had before the cuts, we have figured out how to pay for the extra teacher with creative SBB budgeting and help from Waters Today, as you said. (SBB = Student Based Budgeting)

GFR – Thank you for the presentation. It was wonderful and I especially appreciated your development of the “school standards for success” with the “six major domains” and the offer to work with schools to do self-reflections with many stakeholders about how the school can improve even further in its arts successes. I would argue that our school is ripe for this conversation and that we have a lot to offer you in some of our areas of arts programming, while there is room for improvement in other areas. For example I want to point out Ms. Vecchionni’s wonderful Pop Art pop-up exhibition. So I’m wondering if we could possibly include you or your staff in our CIWP discussions on this topic and in self-reflections that would include diverse stakeholders. And since Ms. Vecchionni is here I hope she can help coordinate something.

DeBettencourt – that would be great!

Old Business

Vote to approve allocation of money raised at Big Night paddle raise towards class libraries

KB – can I ask if this is for every classroom to get the same kind of library or for select classrooms?

TK – it is the expectation that funds raised would impact every classroom

KB – this is aligned in the CIWP with the varied reading levels?

TK – yes, that is correct.

Karen Nevotti – We are aiming for a total of $15,000 as the paddle amount.

CB – how will we be purchasing these? I’m just suggesting we think about how we most efficiently purchase those books.

TK – Can Ms. Booczko elaborate?

Ms. Booczko – there’s options based on gradebands, themes, etc…It’s a matter of making sure it will enhance what is in your classroom.

TK – Scholastic would be a major provider.

Booczko – use their Buy One Get One free.

Ms. Soto – Scholastic might not offer every title we need. Need some flexibility from teachers. My other questions is planning for the storage and organization of the books.

Ms. Ballasch – Middle School uses particular books aligned to new curriculum as well.

TK - if we need to use amazon, we can spend the money through Wters Today since they’re not a vendor.

Carolyn Dean – is this for next year?

TK – If we can tackle getting the books ordered and organizeed then that is the intention.

Motion – KB, RW with second. All in favor, no abstensions, no nays.

New Business

a. Checks to approve

1. Meredith Digital Check #2455 $1126.15 Toners and Ink
2. Hallagan Check #2456 $1294.00 Riso ink

JR - Motion to approve?

ES – what lines are they coming from?

TK – 2799 epay account.

Motion from MW, RW seconded. All in favor. No abstensions or nays.

b. Approve budget transfers

Transfer fund for July Step Increase

Transfer fund for

ES - We are taking something allocated for one thing from within a line

CB – We need to sign off on these in advance but in good conscience I cannot approve what has already been done (the transfers happened between Nov and Jan). I have no concern about their use, but it’s odd to approve something that has already happened.

ES – Since it’s already happened, motion to address in a budget subcommittee meeting?

LS – what’s the office that is helping us with budgeting?

TK – It’s the School Support Center.

LS – how often are they on site?

TK – Once a week. It’s intensive training support for the office personnel who are covering the clerk role.

LS – I did not realize they were a CPS vendor.

KB – In the December meeting we approved consumables to the essentials that were the same for each of the three essentials. In my brain it’s not equal between the three essentials and it came out of Ms. Vecchionni’s extra fundraising. I requested and would still like to see how the consumables are being spent across the three essentials.

ES – We wanted to know that but we still don’t have the answers.

JR – I move that we move the transfers to next month so that the budget subcommittee group can look at this a bit more. CB seconds. All Approve. No abstensions, no nays.

Reports

1. Chair Report (5 min)

Want to call out Pop art show by Ms. Vecchionni, Big Night, which is 80s themed. Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

1. Principal Report (10 min)

Thank you to Ms. Vecchionni for the art gallery. Great representation of the hands-on authentic work being done. All our Fine Arts teachers are attending the arts intensive workshops discussed by Julia this evening. We recognized Ms. Vecchionni for Chinese New Year. Will follow up with the Principal Report to everyone.

See report.

1. BAC (5 min)

Alicia Mayorca – I am wondering if we have any strategies or plans for offering anything other than workshops.

LS – have there been any BAC meetings since October?

AM – there was just a workshop since October. No meetings. We had a schedule but haven’t had any meetings.

Nilsa Alvarez – Ms. Beza

LS – we also haven’t seen the president at any LSC meetings.

TK – it’s the opportunity getting the people on the BAC together.

AM – My concern is not just about the cultural activities of servicing the community, but its how the students are being serviced. We’ve been trying to alternate between mornings and evenings.

GFR - If Ms. Beza is the staff coordinator for the BAC, could we get a presentation at the next LSC meeting from Ms. Beza and the officers of the BAC to talk about the roles of the BAC, the challenges, and how the LSC can support them? (nods of affirmation)

JR – can I ask about the workshops? Are we presenting what is happening? What are they workshops about?

AM – I think there is poor communication. The parents are missing information. Attendance at the meetings is very low.

LS – Is there a way to reach out to families rather than having them come to us? What strategies do we have for passing information from the school to families, beyond asking them to attend a meeting?

1. Budget (10 min)

CB – we need to do a budget subcommittee meeting. More information next LSC meeting.

1. Facilities and Grounds (5 min)

TK – no updates but there’s a steel structure.

CB – any update on the nature playground?

JR – we have a contract that is winding through CPS, as soon as it is signed then they can start staging

1. Principal Evaluation

LS – we just had a PE committee meeting. We have an overview of the process and many sources of data. The anonymous survey to parents, teachers, and staff will go out at end of March. So please look out for that survey – electronic and available at report card pickup.

1. PPLC

RW – we had parents at our first public meeting. We talked about 6th grade piloting an IXL test practice for reading and math. Might be used in 7th grade. Walking math has been going well for 1stgrade. 2nd grade did black history month projects that were powerful. We talked about STEAM week March 23-27 when makers will be coming to school. Second week is student presentations of STEAM projects Possible cardboard challenge day on April 3.

1. Fine Arts

No report because no meetings of the subcommittee. See presentation by DeBettencourt and Wasarka.

1. CIWP

No report.

Public Comment This section of public comment does not require having signed up to comment in advance. Please note: This period is dedicated for questions/comments that directly pertain to the 3 functions of the LSC: Budget, CIWP, and Principal Evaluation. Other questions/comments will be directed to administration (general school operations), teachers (specific classroom/grade level questions), or WatersToday (fundraising and volunteering).

Carolyn Dean – Is there any difference in student fees collected this year versus next year? Second question is wether we are hiring new teachers to fill the space.

CB – We will look into the students fees as Budget Committee and get back to you

TK – in terms of any new staffing, we will not get new staff just because we get the building. We will only get new staff for certainty with the PreSchool program which we are not opening until Fall 2021.

Darian Martyniuk – are they on schedule for the building?

TK – that is what they say.

Parent – because of the building we won’t have summer camp which is a significant source of funding. What are the plans for making that up?

CB – it’s about $12k.

ES – will we also miss the church rental?

TK – yes, we will miss it too.

ES – these are big sources of revenue.

Tess – (Direct questions to Principal Kipp requesting new anti-bullying curriculum, removal of staff, committee to address anti-bullying measures. Demands action now)

TK – no comment.

Michelle Higa – (Direct questions to Pricnipal Kipp requesting new anti-bullying curriculum, removal of staff, committee to address anti-bullying measures. Demands action now)

TK – no comment.

Mike Fourcher – I’m sorry for the pain these families have experienced. I’m disappointed that the LSC has failed to acknowledge the pain of these parents. It is shameful.

ES – I too am sorry for these families. I’m sorry that we weren’t responsive. Can we look into the new anti-bullying curriculum suggested by them?

GFR – I appreciate Mike Fourcher’s comment. He’s right. It is shameful that we responded with silence when these families are in pain. I’m sorry for that. I’m sorry that this happened to them as well. We cannot respond to the direct allegations as this is a matter between the families and the administration and CPS. But we can respond as a school to the concerns about bullying. At the least, the administration needs to respond directly at the next LSC meeting with a report on current anti-bullying policies to acknowledge that this is an issue of concern and educate our community about best practices/steps.

Parent Mitch Langeler – Will you adopt the Know the Signs, Sandy Hook anti-bullying curriculum?

TK – I cannot comment and will not say wether we will or not…

Ms. Soto – I too am sorry this happened to you and your children. I’m a parent and I understand how it must feel. We follow anti-bullying practices here at Waters but before we bring on new policies we need to evaluate them as a PPLC to ensure we are bringing on new policies and curriculum that is appropriate.

GFR – We cannot let this discussion go without responding immediately. We can continue this in the presentation next LSC meeting but we have other direct means of communicating with our community to acknowledge the concerns about bullying and that the school will respond to parental concerns. We have Green Notes, backpack notes…

Parent – what about an anti-bullying committee? Other schools have them.

Back and forth discussion about ant-bullying curriculum and future steps. See action steps below.

Adjournment:

JR move to adjourn. RW

List of action Items before next meeting (chief agent for instigating action is underlined):

**Complete Action Item list**

1. TK and Nilsa Alvarez - coordinate with the BAC on having Ms. Beza and BAC Officers do a presentation at the next LSC meeting about a) services to ESL students and the BACs role in that, b) communication between the BAC and ESL families, and c) the status of proposed cultural affairs events that were proposed last year by Ms. Mayorca (ie, multicultural fair, etc).  The purpose of the presentation is to clarify the BAC's role, foster BAC and LSC communication, and find ways to help support and grow the BAC as an anchor for our ESL community.

2. TK - coordinate with appropriate staff and offer a Principal presentation at the next LSC meeting about a) Waters stance on bullying, b) the current school and CPS protocols for addressing bullying), and c) possible future programs that could be implemented to support our student population and resolve issues of bullying with the community.

3. TK, LSC Fine Arts Committee, relevant teaching staff - identify mechanisms and timeline for engaging with CPS Arts “Standards for Success” (and possibly for incorporating into CIWP). Establish more regular schedule of meetings of this committee.

4. TK and CIWP team — Identify CIWP team for 2020-22 CIWP. Which non-teacher LSC members will be involved? When will they meet with the PPLC (assuming they are the primary teacher component of the CIWP team)? What is the timeline and dates for the mandated two public meetings to get public feedback before approval of the CIWP by the LSC? And what is the date for that final LSC approval?

5. TK and teachers - identify timeline and mechanisms for accepting, organizing, sorting, and distributing books that we assume will arrive as part of the Big Night Paddle Raise for Classroom Libraries

6. TK and teachers - identify and begin to organize plan for occupancy of the new building (which grades go where, what’s going on with Digital Media Classroom, etc) and communicate to the community the steps in that process even if it is not complete.

7. TK and Budget Committee - meet and go over budget, including providing greater clarity on the past transfers that have been pushed to the next meeting

8. TK and Budget Committee - in response to parent question, identify funds raised from Student Fees in 2019 and compare to previous years. Establish a plan and goal for Student Fees in 2020.

9. TK and Budget Committee - in response to questions about lost revenue from space rental due to construction, identify the projected losses and how we will address those losses going into the 2020 school year

10. TK and Budget Committee – in response to questions about consumable costs within the different arts essentials (each of which got the same amount approved for them in the Fall), please provide information on both the exact amount approved for each essential and how much has been spent by each essential to date.

11. TK, CIWP team, CPS data analyst - in response to the request at January LSC meeting for data analysis of the test data, we need to identify an opportunity to analyze and communicate the latest school data. Ms. Vechionni has suggested that Ms. Kipp would like to have a CPS data analyst assist with the process by looking at the data that Erica Smith generated. This may need to happen in a separate public CIWP meeting depending upon upcoming LSC agendas.

12. GFR and RW - ensure website is up to date with latest minutes (currently good, but must keep monitoring). GFR following up with CPS Arts for PDF of presentation.

13. TK and F&G Committee - follow up on Nature Playspace contract as it winds its way through CPS. Identify timing and locations for staging so we can start communicating to school and garden community.

14. TK and PE Committee - continue collecting data from TK, school community and teachers/staff (survey), and Network Chief Mr. Segovia

15. Facilities & Grounds will try to get a weekly meeting with Construction Crew to provide updated information to the community. *Zack Koutsky is following up with Alderman on this issue.*  At the very least we need more regular update son construction at next LSC meeting.