

Waters Elementary School
LSC minutes for April 21, 2020

JR called to order 6:32pm

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 amended agenda, ZK, CB Seconded. All in favor. No abstentions or nays.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes from the March Meeting, ZK motion, RW second. All in favor. No abstentions or nays.

Report on Remote Learning

TK – This is a great transition to a discussion of remote learning since we've had some challenges getting everyone into this call. We want to address parent feedback on remote learning.

Good evening!

Welcome and I hope that all of you and your families are doing well and are healthy. There have been many questions regarding Remote Learning from parents, teachers, students and even Ms. Alvarez and I.

There is a guide and many documents that CPS has posted on the Remote Learning website. There is a link to that on our website homepage. This guide defines/outlines the model that CPS has chosen and what parents can expect. There is a remote learning guide for parents. It covers minutes expected per grade level, grading expectations, etc. We have also posted our overview plan on our front page. Ms. Alvarez and I, along with the teachers ask you to be patient with us as we figure out what will work best for our learning community. We are all new to Remote Learning.

“What comes so naturally during the school day when colleagues and resources are present, is much different alone at home with limited resources. Throw in the constant changing societal norms, family demands and threats of illness and you can imagine what teachers might be working with as we navigate this new teaching.

Two hours of daily instruction takes shape in many different ways. It doesn't mean the instruction will look the same in each classroom or even in the same grade level. There are whole group, small group, office hours, email contact, phone calls, etc.

Please know we are in this together and we are here to help. If you have questions, please feel free to contact your child's teacher.
Thank you.

JR dropped from the meeting. LS takes over while we await Jason's return. Public comments can come through via the chat.

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).

Vanessa Summer (parent): several questions – are there written expectations for remote learning. If so, can you point us to those.

KB – can I ask a follow up. Is there anything unique to Waters that complements the official CPS guidelines, that goes beyond what was sent out from CPS?

TK – with the remote learning guide, CPS had those initially, my conversations with our staff was to move forward with our curriculum, so to continue working from Pearson, Trailblazers, etc that we utilize here rather than throwing new and unknown curriculum at our students. So that is specific to Waters.

Q – are there written expectations from CPS about how much instruction a student should receive? And how should the teachers engage in direct instruction?

TK – , there's a 2 hour engagement minimum per day, which doesn't mean face-to-face. It's all kinds of mechanisms, but we supplement with optional office hours, phone calls, and other mechanisms for contact.

(In the chat, Melissa Resh added the direct link to the documents:

[http://www.waters elementary.org/uploads/1/2/0/5/120563212/waters_es_school_remote_learning_plan_for_families - google docs.pdf](http://www.waters elementary.org/uploads/1/2/0/5/120563212/waters_es_school_remote_learning_plan_for_families_-_google_docs.pdf)

Stuart Lange – what is the plan to spend down the Student Based Budget?

JR – we will address in the Budget Report.

TK – We don't have the budget yet; it is coming.

CB – is there any timeline for

Stuart Lange – do we have an idea what we will do with next year's surplus.

JR – that will be determined by the next LSC.

JR – that concludes first section of public comment.

Reports

- a. Chair Report (5 min)

JR – this is not normal It's a difficult time for the teachers as much as the kids and parents. They are having to teach while having their own families at home, living with the same stress of the pandemic. I want to thank the teachers and admin for their work. It's not going to be perfect because no one has done this before. I'm struggling with my own daily activities because its stressful. If everything isn't going the way we want then we need to understand that's the case for everyone. Assume best intentions at all times. Everyone is working very hard for all our kids. I want to thank admin, staff and teachers for looking out for the kids who are more at risk. It's really essential that they don't get left behind in a situation that is stressing existing inequity. So making sure everyone has access to a computer etc...Anything that is hard for those of us with advantages is doubly hard for those with disadvantages. I see your hard work. I get that it is difficult but I appreciate that your're doing this.

b. Principal Report (10 min)

Thank you so much. Lots of teachers here on this call. If your families need access to chromebooks please reach out to us. We are blessed that we have a lot of technology. We continue to pass out chromebooks. Everyone should have gotten an invitation to do parent-teacher-student conferences tomorrow. As already mentioned the budget spend down is ongoing. We are looking at making purchases of consumables for next year. Technology for next year. Creating a teacher wishlist. We are talking with teachers about selecting library books, and various items to help with classroom environment.

One of the positive sides of the pandemic is that construction has proceeded apace. The report is that construction is 50% complete. [\[See Full Principal Report on website\]](#)

We had a meeting with regards to furniture for the new classrooms. Have started working on a move matrix for determining classroom placement in the new building.

We are moving forward with all the work. That's really exciting to have going on.

We are here. One of the goals is making sure we have made contact with every family in every classroom. Touching base with staff. We have weekly meetings and share with one another. Sharing our positive experiences (some of which will be shared by PPLC in their report). The CIWP is still under way. Things came to a halt as we put remote learning together. I want to thank the teachers for their due diligence. This is brand new learning for everyone. While we are here supporting one another remotely, it's a new experience.

JR – any questions from the LSC?

JR – has there been any changes with progress on the CIWP? Or is it just resuming after the remote learning transition? At our March meeting we had any changes to the CIWP since then? I'm speaking about development of the next one.

TK – No, our staff had a flex day in March. We did meet with our staff and did identify some things that were in progress. We talked about the present CIWP and a little about future CIWP.

Nilsa Alvarez – We talked about Problems of Practice and how we would translate those into Theories of Action. We will pick up steam and reach out to community to further develop action steps.

JR – the committee will be meeting remotely, then?

TK – yes.

KB – are the deadlines the same or have they been pushed out?

NA – they are giving extensions and there is more flexibility. We are going to share out what happened in the flex days

KB – is there a plan to still include non-teacher voices, members of the LSC and other members of the community.

NA – yes, that will definitely be part of the conversation. We will work on doing that virtually. So we will be working on that.

TK – there will be those community meetings as we had in the past. It will most likely be a virtual one. Similar to this, open to the public, using google meetup. With a presentation as an attachment.

KB – so have the priority areas been determined? Was that already due? What is the timeline?

NA – those have been given to us. They are focused mostly on the SQROP goals – growth on math, MTSS, and ACCESS results.

KB – has there been a virtual meeting?

TK – no, we've been focused on remote learning.

CB – How are you recognizing and including the comparison to the current CIWP and how you are progressing in the current CIWP.

TK – the current disruption will affect how much monitoring we are able to do, but we will pick that up soon.

ES – Can you hear me? IN terms of planning for next year, I would imagine that planning for the next CIWP is a higher priority than monitoring this year. Also, is the district planning on how the current situation might bleed into our plans for next year. As much as we'd like to go back to normal, I wonder if there's any discussion for how to prepare for this if it rears back next year.

TK – honestly we haven't heard anything as of yet. No information from the district at this point.

GFR – Is there any way that the new building will allow us to spread students out?

TK – it's more complicated and involves the need for more teachers and that space is already going to be utilized. So it's not that easy.

GFR – understood.

c. CIWP (5 min)

JR – that covers CIWP.

d. Budget (10 min)

JR – thanks to Erica and Chris for the budget info. We need to think more about what to do with our surplus. There is also money allocated to the playspace. And the SBB. Erica, would you mind walking us through the spreadsheet.

ES – there was a discussion at the Citywide LSC meeting about getting the money left in official CPS budget to roll over, but as of now that has not been accepted by CPS. So as of now, anything that remains in CPS budgets needs to be spent down this year. Because of changes in staffing we have about \$270,000 left in our SBB, so there's a lot of potential for spend down before the end of the school year. Some of

that money is in CTU mandated lines like the Sub Line that we are seeking to spend down because we cannot use subs during the remote learning period.

Tk – your numbers and mine are a little different. I'm being told it is more like \$150,000. So I need to talk with Central Office to figure out the discrepancy.

CB – This money is direct from the export in Oracle that we got last Friday.

TK – Maybe some extra money showed up.

KB – Whichever number it is, that's a lot of money. What will we do with it?

TK – As mentioned in my report, we are working on that as teachers and staff.

Promethean boards, new tech to replace old , consumables furniture for classrooms, new teacher desktop computers for the teachers since they are not compatible with the current software... That money will go fast.

LS – can I get clarity on the sub policy.

TK – There's money set aside for subs. Currently all the subs that were working are still getting paid. Central office is paying them.

LS – what happens if a teacher gets sick and cannot teach?

TK – We haven't had any issue on this

LS – I'm just anticipating longer term absences.

MB – One of the things we are discovering is that as we work in teams is that we can co-teach and pair up so there's lots of ways and more freedom to do that than we did in the classroom.

LS – internal coverage makes a lot of sense.

JR – So you're compiling a teacher wishlist? When will we know the full pool for this spenddown?

TK – we will hopefully have a full wishlist by the end of this week.

JR – when do we have to do the spend down?

TK – sometime in early June. But want to get ahead of that.

GFR – 8th grade funds – what

TK – I've been working with the Middle School team about how we can celebrate with our 8th graders. I know our staff has been talking about that. The caps and gowns have come in. We're looking at virtual ways to do graduation. That money sits in a special account that is protected and could not be offshored to WT or somewhere else. It is safe and will be utilized or the 8th graders in some fashion that we are still exploring.

JR – we need to corroborate the figures between ES and TK, need to get the wishlist finalized, then need to plan the spend down before the money gets swept. The last thing to touch on is the \$15,000 in WT technology money. But I wanted to flag that if there's any need to use that for resources with Remote Learning. Sounds like we are ok.

TK – So far we still have inventory on chromebook distribution. We have distributed 90 chromebooks. That's a rough estimate.

JR – just to reiterate that people should reach out, even if it's just to make life easier because they have multiple kids. Thanks ES and CB for your work on that spreadsheet.

e. Facilities and Grounds

GFR – Alex and the nature playspace?

JR – he is working with a crew of 1 right now because of social distancing concerns

TK – I have put him in touch with Central Office because they had questions about ADA compliance regarding his materials. We will follow up with that.

JR – he can only work when there are no kids in session, it would be great to fast track him so he can work now. That is being followed up on and you're in touch with Alex?
TK - yes

f. Principal Evaluation

KB – Survey will go out in the next couple of weeks. We will brainstorm how to get it to more folks since we are missing the report card pickup times as an opportunity for some folks to fill it out. We will try to schedule some virtual meetings as a PE committee in which Tk will fill us in on progress towards her goals.

LS – the timeline has been extended through June 30, which is good because it gives us more time. I sent the survey to the PE committee and to CPS legal to get authorization on those so we can get them out next week to parents. We will find ways to get them publicized.

JR – when do we need to get the scores in.

LS – that's what has been extended to June 30. I am awaiting confirmation about that from Luis at OLSCR.

g. BAC

NA – we are connecting with families to make sure they have devices and helping with instruction.

Current BAC president – Danny (Hugo) Siguenza

h. PPLC

RW – read off some of the celebrations. 50%It has been adorable watching second graders do google hangouts. This has been strange, but its great seeing the kids virtually. Another thing I wanted to note from our meeting with Ms Kipp. The staff have gone into this with little or no training, so while I'm comfortable with this technology, that isn't the case with all the teachers or even with parents.

MB – we got 20 responses. The 7th graders made cell projects in 3D We are reinventing new was of doing things we did in the classroom. We are trying to continue where we were at in the classroom. For the teachers, we are all on a more level playing field at school, but at home some people have space and time, but others have kids at home, elderly parents at home, sick people at home. So it's been challenging. There's been a lot of talk about sustainability – it's challenging to sustain what we were doing. We want all our teachers to be healthy, physically and mentally.

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).

LS – I have a list in the order they appeared.

JR – WT would like to make a verbal comment, and so would Ms. Soto. We will call on your name and unmute.

Jennifer Davidson, co-communications chair WT – wanted to cover a couple of things. WT had a piece of our budget that we were holding for a community event, so we ended up donating it to Circle of Help to assist our most vulnerable students. Walkathon is canceled. Too hard for us to figure out how to do it virtually. So just as an FYI, that's about \$20,000 that is normally raised that won't be in our budget this year. I think LS had mentioned the principal survey, so we can distribute that via Green Notes (currently going out every other week). Looking for content. Submit via the WT website or WatersElementary.org website. Mr. Wall, if there's any celebration worth celebrating to the wider community, that might raise the spirits of the community, please share them with us.

Ms. Soto – having technical difficulties. What I wanted to say as the CTU delegate, I really appreciate all the support we are getting from the admin and one another. I wanted to address the 2hrs.day of remote learning and how it looks different for each grade level. So it will look different for different grades. Sometimes it is via email, apps like CESA, google meets. The point is to connect with all of our students in some shape or form. I know it may be frustrating for parents bc it looks different for each classroom. Would ask for everyone's patience, but for the most part working well. Please reach out to teachers if you have questions.

KB – I've gotten a lot of personal emails from teachers. We understand lots of hurdles. A lot of the questions have come up about what instruction should look like. A lot of concern I've heard has been simply the instructional part, which seems a little missing. It might be assignments given but lacking guidance – whether that is videotaped instruction or face-to-face instruction. I do understand this will look different in each grade level. The concern is that the kids need more guidance on their assignments. Maybe that can be something we can consider as we move forward.

Ms. Soto – I appreciate your honesty. It's an honest concern that is being shared. So thanks for that. But I think at the same time, as we navigate this, everyone's situation is different. What may be lost here is that we are in the middle of a pandemic. That for the most part the way it is being handled is unique. The connections may not be possible. Contact a teacher directly if a kid isn't getting something. Sometimes I will call the student directly. It looks different depending on the ages of the students. So I'm asking for patience. There's definitely still kinks. But we are striving to make families feel supported. Reach out to teachers. But I do appreciate the comment and the honesty.

KB – we are on the same page. My point is that parents should reach out to teachers. There are some families that feel like the scaffolds for learning new skills aren't there right now. My point is that as we move forward, as teachers talk about these ideas that the staff consider how to provide instruction and not just exercises.

Ann Williams – wanted to say thanks to everyone for all you're doing in this challenging time.

Vanessa Summers – what Kirsten said summarized much of what my question was about. Does giving an assignment out without instruction count as engagement?

RW – I can address part of it. It's a tough thing to answer. Some teachers will count that. It doesn't just mean posting it. It's follow up emails etc. If there isn't enough instruction or explanation then they can follow up in other ways. I would definitely reach out to the teacher – I'm realizing that I can improve upon things myself so this is constantly evolving.

Vanessa Summer – Teachers should be teaching new material. About two hours of direct instruction?

TK - no, not live instruction.

Vanessa Summers – asks for clarification.

MB – different grade levels have different minutes of what students are expected to do. The teacher time won't match up to the student time because the students are expected to do work outside of face-to-face instruction. Will look different from grade to grade. There is a greater emphasis on reinforcement and not new learning.

Ms. Soto – so essentially what would happen on instructional time is that you might meet with 6 kids a day, each day of the week. So you wouldn't meet with every student every day for two hours. It could also happen over email or a phone call. So there's a lot of communication. We don't know what we don't know. So reach out to the teacher first. Also, a lot of time is spent taking into account the different social emotional needs of different students.

Mary Gallery – would like to know if we can identify our needs earlier in the year to service kids who need additional help, rather than end up with large surpluses like we currently have.

TK – I can speak to that. It's not enough to just hire a staff person for one year, and typically a staff member is \$100,000. I also need to check with the business service staff because yes, \$270,000 surplus is alarming, so we need to clarify that and plan for it.

Abigaile Kelly – asking about 4th grade opening.

TK – there is not an absence in 4th grade. That teacher remains on our payroll on leave of absence.

JR – so we won't be hiring for it?

TK – Ms. Yoder is on the payroll and will be assisting Ms Mermuys and Ms. Raman going forward.

Abigaile Kelly – we are witnessing a lot of stress on the part of the two teachers in 4th grade who are taking on so much work in this tough situation. A lot of parents aren't feeling like Waters is taking on this challenge at this time.

TK – Your'e right than Ms. M and Ms. R are taking on an extreme amount. And we've been on conversation for how to help alleviate that additional workload. You should be seeing that soon with Ms. Yoder assisting in those classrooms.

Abigaile Kelly – this is wonderful, but it's been a long time. At some point, a lot of us have reached the limits. I appreciate it and hope that true steps will be coming and will get communicated to the parents.

KB – as of the last meeting the TAT position wasn't on the portal. Was it posted?

TK – yes it was.

Liz Blaire – can students borrow hard copies of textbooks.

TK – I’m the only one in the building and our focus is putting technology into people’s hands.

Mike Heneghan – Thank you for the flexibility of teachers and staff during this time.

Jeff Conway – is there a way to survey families about what is working and what are the opportunities in remote learning. I think there’s an opportunity to help all boats to rise in all grades. It’s always good to understand the mood and view of the constituents?

LS – I like that idea.

JR – we can follow up on that.

Parent – can the excess funds from chromebooks be used to help teachers with technology deficiencies?

TK – we are taking care of that and we are supporting our teachers.

MB – it’s not just chromebooks, its document cameras, internet speed, etc...

TK – LSC elections have been postponed. We are waiting to hear next steps. No date yet.

ZK – to change the election process would require a change in state policy, and this is not a major issue, and since the legislature is not in session due to social distancing.

ES – my concern is whether there will be a big gap in various schools and LSCs across the city. No one knows the ramifications of all of this.

JR – thanks to everyone for participating

LS – motion to adjourn.

Adjournment:

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

Remaining Action Item list (not all are major, and many will be different due to Remote Learning for remainder of 2019-20 School Year, but all are documented as of the end of the March meeting for future purposes)

1. 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.
2. 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
3. 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.

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. TK and PE Committee - continue collecting data from TK, school community and teachers/staff (survey), and Network Chief Mr. Segovia

New Tasks relevant to Remote Learning circumstances:

1. Identify new timelines and procedures for CIWP (deadlines, what is the mechanism for meeting, are the goals any different given circumstances, etc)
2. Identify new timelines and procedures for Principal Evaluation (community and teacher surveys, timelines, procedures, etc)
3. Identify new timelines and procedures for implementing Restorative Justice model of SEL schoolwide for presumptive return in Fall 2020 (deadlines, mechanisms for disseminating information, professional development, parent/teacher academies online?, etc)
4. Coordinate with WT about fundraising (what has been delayed because of Covid19? What are expectations for next year?)
5. More?