Meeting Minutes

Waters Elementary Local School Council

Tuesday, September 9, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 4:05pm. John Neyer, Chairman, took roll call. All members were present with the exception of Emily Haite who arrived later. Present: Principal Titia Crespo, Parent Representatives: Greg Foster-Rice, Emily Haite (arrived later), Jessica Blomquist, John Neyer, Melissa Rojas, Terri Versace, Community Representatives: Jacqueline Gaines, Joshua Kalov, Teacher Representatives: Carla Barta, Sean Rabiola were present. 18 Parents/community members and teachers attended the meeting. Those participants who were able to access the sign in sheet were: Erica Lauf, Mike Davis, Melissa McGowan, Josh Baru, Fernando De Maio, Lori Kraft-Shores, Christine Knox, Jeff Sullivan, Erica Smith, Kate Prince, and Rick Bollinger.

John Neyer motioned to approve the agenda, Greg Foster-Rice seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the agenda was approved. John motioned to approve the minutes from July 14, 2014, Emily Haite seconded the motion, all were in favor, and minutes were approved.

John noted questions from last meeting (old business). *"What does Waters do as a school to fulfill the best practices as outlined in the SCC on pages 38-41 of the document?”  The conclusion as Hovious recalled is that Ms. Versace and Principal Crespo were going to gather the student expectations and communicate them to parents at the beginning of the year.*

*Ms. Hovious also asked for the 2012-2014 CIWP data and numbers and how we performed against our goals? Did we meet our goals? Principal Crespo has 2012/13 numbers, but not 2014 and agreed to get those numbers out to the public by the next meeting.*

Terri explained the new trial format for LSC comments which will be posted on the Waters website. John asked for General Public Comments & Questions (two minutes each).

Erica Lauf, Parent, noted that she has some suggestion on SEL development and group projects. She asked where to direct her questions on SEL, where to make suggestions?

Mike Davis asked what the pedagogical standards for field trips? How do we decide where the children go, what part of the curriculum it supports and how is it funded? Mrs. Crespo responded that the trips are generally aligned with the curriculum, but you can have conversations with classroom teachers to provide suggestions.

Jeff Sullivan, Rick Bollinger, Josh Baru and many other parents voiced their concerns regarding the overcrowded classes for Kindergarten. There is one teacher for 33-34 students in each Kindergarten room and no aides or assistants. Mrs. Crespo responded that Heather Neyer and Rebecca Atwood, Kinder parents, met with her and sent around an email explaining the situation.

A parent asked why that an email did not come from the principal and another noted he had not received an email? *(It has since been sent to him*) Mrs. Crespo responded that she could not send an official correspondence to parents because she cannot discuss fundraising for a kinder teacher. She added that she is in discussions about how to address the issue and noted that this was the first year we have not accepted children outside our attendance boundaries. She stated that a 3rd Kindergarten classroom will not be created and they might have to develop K-1 splits. She assured the group that the kinder teachers are doing a fantastic job and she has been monitoring the classrooms and awaiting what will happen with the budget on day 20.

A parent asked if the LSC or Principal could post the kinder email Q&A? no response given.

Vanessa Herman, Treasurer of Waters Today, asked to fundraise for ecology, school improvements, the music program, Right At School for Recess and Lunchtime supervision and other items. She noted that Waters Today for volunteers and there are dozens of parents who volunteer for Waters Today and for other activities. We all extend our appreciation. She said there is always a need for more volunteers and to contact Waters Today for information. Emily Haite motioned to allow Waters Today to fundraise, Melissa Rojas seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion passed.

Asst. Principal Alvarez asked the LSC to approve the proposals for student fundraising for Camp Duncan, DC trip, and Springfield via events like, Walk-a-Thon, school dances, popcorn and or chocolate sales. She also asked for approval of activities by Ms. Bricker for sale of yearbooks, Mr. Kurz’s for sale of school gym uniforms, Ms. Vecchioni for online fundraising via Artstonia to support the art program for materials and 20% of sales goes to art program. Emily motion to approve, Neyer seconded the motion, all were in favor, motion passed.

There were 2 Special Presentations on SEL and Writing Curriculum. Ms. Nissim, Literacy Coach, email: VRnissim@cps.edu, began by discussing her background. She covers K-8 with a focus on writing and research throughout the curriculum, using Lucy Caulkins, by and is working on resources for 8th and 6th grade and on-line programs. With regard to research, especially science, teachers and students reported students could not correctly or easily research a topic. Presentation is posted online. Mrs. Crespo noted that literacy was part of the CIWP priorities. Emily suggested explaining CIWP to new parents. The continuous improvement plan was for social studies, fine arts, math, etc. with input from parents and with new standards and we shifted the focus to address this.

Mrs. Rizutto, Mr. King, and Mr. Gil, presented some tools they have used or will begin using that week in the classroom to address Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Mrs. Rizutto noted that she would be using a behavior chart in her classroom, students would start on ready to learn and move their clothes pin according to choices and behavior, pink- extraordinary, don’t expect kids to always be on this, purple=excellent choices, blue=continuous good choices, truing their best, Green= neutral and Yellow= reminder of classroom rules, Red=note home, parents contacted.

Mr. King uses the process of asking what tools teachers used before with kids in the lower grades, what they talked about in Professional Development (PD) meetings, and shared best practices. He uses “superstar,” “great job,” “keep it up,” “warning,” Think”, etc. and tries to have consistency in all the grades. Speaking overall about SEL, Mr. King, will also teach the units on health, how to make healthy choices, respect of self, physical health, have healthy relationships with others.

Mr. Gil,7+8th grade teacher, gave parents outstanding examples of how to teach manners, show and develop mutual respect and create rules that everyone would like in the classroom. He engages the students by allowing them to develop their own expectations, writes them down on a board and asks them to sign it. He gives consistently gives reminders about the rules and how to adapt them to the magic 3, as a life lesson, 1) be the reason for someone’s smile, means you can’t be the reason for making someone sad, 2) be proud of something you did on your own 3) plan for better tomorrow.

The Reports followed. Principal Crespo gave her report and said we have a reason to smile today because our NWEA Reading was at or above grade level for our network (Ravenswood Ridge, formerly Area 2) and went on to discuss other scores. Updates can be found on <http://www.waterselementary.org/nwea-map-assesments.html> and The test scores of all schools are available online at <http://www.cps.edu/SchoolData/Pages/SchoolData.aspx> then scroll down to 🡪Assessment Reports 🡪 NWEA Measures of Academic Progress. They are not presented in exactly the same format as Mrs. Crespo’s presentation as her presentation focused on how we compare from one school to the next. The data on the CPS website is the raw data for each school.

The Principal reiterated that at Waters, we focus on the whole child; we do not focus on the test. She noted that at the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) meeting they look at our curriculum and have a delegate from each area represented so they can talk about data. A parent asked, “If we don’t care about scores then why take them? Why use them to support /not support a particular track?” Mr. Gil responded that they get detailed school test data and then look at how to attack the deficiencies. He does this by meeting with parents and do a lot of teacher to teacher, teacher to parent, etc. collaboration, but involve the children in the growth plan goals. Mr. King noted that the tests are the tests, but they fail to address what is in a kids heart and how can we really use the data. Why give the test? He showed a MAP class view, and how it guides his instruction and how he looks at what your child is doing. Ms. Nissim said they look at formative data, not summative data; teachers have weekly meetings to find how to help these differentiated groups of students.

Mrs. Crespo noted an excellent start to school year with good math and reading test scores. She is focused on safety and security. No one should be in the school that doesn’t belong and everyone should try to sign in at the main office. We have air conditioning, a new floor in room 108 and the gym, and security cameras have been installed. We have not moved on installing lockers, the science lab, or bike racks at this point. She is working on the bike racks with Alderman’s office. As of today, student count was 630; we know we have very large kinder classes. Based on 20-day count for enrollment we will lose/gain funding. Last year we were able to set aside $93,000 if we fell short of enrollment target, and these funds have not been allocated. The budget was based on 683 students. John Neyer, noted that as a kinder parent he is also concerned about the large kindergarten class size, but trusts the administration is working on it and that we will be all right with this.

Subcommittee Nominations were held. The following individuals agreed to serve on the committees.

**Communications** - Terri Versace, Melissa Rojas

**CIWP** - Greg Foster-Rice, John Neyer

**Budget** - Emily Haite, Joshua Kalov

**Principal Evaluation** - Jacqueline Gaines, Jessica Blomquist, and \*Carla Barta

**PPLC** - Carla Barta, Sean Rabiola

(\*see Mrs. Crespo’s request to add Mrs. Barta in Oct 14, 2014 minutes)

A parent asked what PPLC was? The purpose of the committee is to develop and formally present recommendations to the principal and the LSC on all matters of educational program, including but not limited to curriculum, school improvement plan development and implementation, and school budgeting

John called for any Old Business. Discretionary Funds Approval for $4910.01 for the book fair. Gym floor and AC installation report was given earlier.

Terri Versace asked about getting outside basketball leagues in to utilize the space and how to set it up and the cost.

There was no New Business on the agenda and John asked for additional Public/Parent Comments.

Greg Foster-Rice began by acknowledging the hard work of the teachers, staff and students, as reflected in the 2014 scores. As clarification, he then asked whether our trajectory of success on the MAP scores would factor in the computer issues we had in 2013, which may have contributed to the low scores that year. For example, given the relatively low scores in 2013 when compared to 2014, will there be an issue with comparing growth from 2013 to 2014 and then 2015? Also, while the scores reflect great overall progress, they also reveal that we are better in reading than math – what strategies will we implement to grow math scores and attainment? Mrs. Crespo responded that we had some concerns last year with 48.1 in math, so there is room to grow, may not see huge gains because we closed this gap, we may still be at the top, which is the risk you run with huge gains. She noted that MAP was not a test that was used for past accountability. We were focused on ISAT. We targeted the students who haven’t made the gains and continue tutoring program. Mrs. Crespo also clarified that the analysis of gains will be limited to Spring-to-Spring, so that our spring 2015 scores will only be compared to spring 2014 scores, and not spring 2013. See link online http://www.waterselementary.org/nwea-map-assesments.html

Jessica Blomquist asked how are students selected for the tutoring program and when is the math and reading tutoring program begin? Mrs. Crespo said this is predicated on the budget for this year and that teachers select the students to participate.

Megan Wade asked when you talk about the differentiation, is there a policy about this in class? Mrs. Crespo responded that everyone should do this as part of the CIWP.

Kate Prince asked how do I find out what they do for differentiation and how my child is doing in the classroom? Mrs. Crespo answered to ask your teacher specifically how they are differentiated in the classroom. Mrs. Crespo said she would like to use the leftover substitute teacher money so that 10 teachers can go to training workshop 2-day on differentiation. Ms. Nissim said she was also forming a book study on this.

The meeting adjourned at 5:39pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Blomquist, Secretary of LSC