

**Waters Elementary Local School Council
Draft Meeting Minutes -
Tuesday, March 10, 2015, 4:00-5:00pm**

Found online at <http://www.waterselementary.org/review-the-meetings.html>

John Neyer, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm and Jessica seconded.

Jessica noted meeting would be recorded.

Members of the LSC introduced themselves

1. Titia Crespo, Principal

Parent Representatives:

2. John Neyer, President
3. Jessica Blomquist, Secretary
4. Greg Foster-Rice, Vice Chair
5. Emily Haite
6. Terri Versace
7. Melissa Rojas, Not present

Community Representatives:

8. Jacqueline Gaines
9. Josh Kalov

Teacher Representatives:

10. Carla Barta
11. Sean Rabiola

Staff Representative:

12. Taureen Whiteman

John motioned to approve the agenda, 2 items were added; the Urban Preserve Fundraiser and approval of Webcasting solution added, Jessica seconded. All were in favor.

Mrs. Crespo asked that the previous minutes indicate the Budget has been in front of her on the table at LSC meetings. Jessica noted that was the first she was made aware the budget was there, but could not amend the past minutes to include new information that was not presented in the meeting. She asked if the budget is also available to the public in the office, as many people cannot attend LSC meetings. Mrs. Crespo responded that it has always been available in the office.

Minutes approval from 2-10-15, Jessica motioned, Emily seconded all were in favor.

Greg asked John to note the Class Size letter will be addressed later in the meeting.

7 parents/community members and teachers attended the meeting. Those participants who signed in were:

LSC heard a presentation on Urban Preserve Fundraiser by Lester Palmiano, Founder and Board Member of Peterson Garden Project. Info is available at www.urbanpreserve.org.

Parent asked how we could incorporate this into the Waters Garden. Lester responded that there is some cost, but is happy to donate seeds to the garden. Plants are delivered June 5, 2015 at the school or to home deliver option (for a fee).

Terri motioned to allow Urban Preserve to do a fundraiser with Waters Today. Emily seconded. The 11 members present were in favor.

PARCC presentation: Greg noted that two of the biggest common core tests going on in the US now. *Smarter Balance* was the other administered in the CA coalition, other states, etc. To date, no precedent for any loss of funding (student-based or otherwise), but those states/districts with low percentages of students who opt out of taking the test have not lost funding as a result. He commended our teachers for their very humane treatment of the students opting out and of those taking the test. Greg attended Ravenswood Elementary LSC meetings and they are doing the test over the week, using multiple computer programs and they don't have someone like our Mrs. Termini for technology or dedicated technology teacher.

Q: Terri – What was the number of opt outs 3-8th grade?

A: Mrs. Crespo: 40 students opted out.

Q: Those who opted out this time do they have to opt out in the next testing extension in May? (5 hrs. in March, 5 hours in May, which are 2 summative and non summative, but we don't know if CPS starts PARCC Counts to replace MAP)

A: Mrs. Crespo, cited code 15, we are not penalizing children for opting out. And students can opt out at any time during the week or jump back in. We are using Google Chrome books.

Q: ISBE or CPS moving from PARCC to Smarter?

A: Greg, No response yet, but it is only computer adaptive and harder to roll out here.

Q: How have students responded?

A: Mrs. Crespo, Good

Q: Will PARCC stick?

A: Mrs. Crespo, it is a network decision.

Q: If everyone does poorly, then how or do we change the curriculum?

A: Mrs. Crespo, Perhaps.

Q: Do we have all the materials for common core?

A: Mr. Rabiola: still no formal curriculum.

Sub-Committee updates:

President's Report – John noted Waters LSC YouTube channel (not available after the meeting)

Principal Report - Mrs. Crespo addressed the kinder teacher assistant. We have one, but awaiting 2nd position. Hoping they will start couple of days. Coffee w. Crespo last Friday was good, topics were kinder and class size concerns. Perhaps a budget 101 class is in order esp. with newer parents. Pushing kinder registration in April 20-24. PARCC anxiety.

Communications – Terri noted we need website help. We really want to keep the website alive. I would like to give feedback on the idea of the budget 101, and I have been working with Mrs. Crespo

for 10 years and I have schematics, etc. of why things can't be done and I can share that and bring digital info to help people understand

Budget – NONE

CIWP – Greg, the Math Forum Publisher-Teacher-Parent workshop may happen in April. PARCC derailed it. The Math Trailblazers textbook vendor has confirmed, 56 responses on survey.

PPPLC - NONE

Principal Evaluation - Jacqueline mentioned that we got approval on the parent and teacher surveys that are aligned to the standards and structured report is due March 15 to March 30 and asked that Jessica get the link out in the Green Notes. Jessica noted that the links will be posted on FB, newsletters and you can repost them wherever you like for community members/parents. Jacqueline added that we would close it March 31. Jessica said that the green notes are compiled this week, so the link is ready, but it will go out Sunday in the notes and some may not read about them is over 2 wks. to run the survey? Jacqueline will send info to the LSC to compile their individual scores and next LSC meeting we need to go into session.

Old Business: Terri motioned to vote on going live for the Webcasting solution. Seconded by Jessica. The motion passed with a majority, but after further discussion the council is considering the best implementation.

Yes - Parent Representatives:

1. John Neyer, President
2. Jessica Blomquist, Secretary
3. Greg Foster-Rice, Vice Chair
4. Emily Haite
5. Terri Versace

Community Representatives:

6. Jacqueline Gaines
7. Josh Kalov

Teacher Representatives did have a concern with the archiving the video, no problem with live video pull up, Carla voiced that she felt uncomfortable with anyone looking at the video and scrutinizing the recording of activity. Mrs. Crespo, Aside from the CPS board, we are the only LSC doing something this technological. Josh noted that this video solution would be word for word and if we have a better record, then issues come up over and over again. Mrs. Crespo noted like the survey for the math forum and we only have 50 responses and we are going to put together a workshop based on that. I know this is an ongoing issue, but I don't want my staff to feel uncomfortable to attend LSC meeting. Josh said that there is some compromise with how to place the camera or perhaps off camera. Jessica said I really sympathize. If you are concerned that our parents etc. would search the video to catch a teacher doing something wrong I am so sorry you feel that way or work in an environment like that, but I just don't think that would happen. If someone wants to find fault they can, they don't need the video in order to do that. John: I am just trying to make it easier for people at home to be involved. Greg, yes this could be the best way to address how to meet the needs of parents who don't have childcare so they can listen at home, but perhaps streaming the video without an archive.

NO Vote

8. Carla Barta
9. Sean Rabiola

Staff Representative,

10. Taureen Whiteman

Principal Titia Crespo (**Abstained**)

Not present – Melissa.

New Business

Jessica read the Public Letter to the LSC on Class Size

Dear Waters LSC and Mrs. Crespo,

We are grateful to have a shared teacher's aide in place for our two kindergarten classes and we look forward to an official update on the second aide's start date. Thank you Mrs. Crespo for securing a large portion of the funding to make these positions a reality.

Many of us continue to be concerned about class size. While attrition is certainly possible, several factors indicate likely class sizes well over 30 children for grade 1 next year. Other grades have also experienced overcrowding and with school capacity maxing out, incoming kindergarten students may also struggle with large student to teacher ratios.

Although kindergarten parents were able to raise \$17K for a second teacher's aide, general consensus points to a diminished appetite for additional rounds of fundraising specific to grade level.

Making Class Size a Priority

We are asking for class size to be highlighted as a school-wide priority for short and long term planning and budget purposes. Overcrowding at any grade level impacts the entire school. School building capacity issues, parent and student morale, and teacher burnout can affect everyone within the Waters community.

Open Communication

We also believe the school and parents would benefit from an open dialogue on issues surrounding class size. Regular updates sent by an appointed school official to parents as a collective would also go a long way to alleviate some unease. For instance, information on the second kindergarten teacher's aide would be helpful. The goals and makeup of the kindergarten task group mentioned at the last LSC meeting would be useful to know, including who is running the group, and how parents can get involved.

How Can Parents Help?

We'd like to better understand the opportunities, challenges and limitations that Waters faces in terms of both school capacity and class size. We want to know how we can help Waters navigate or overcome the obstacles impacting the school. Can we set up a kick off meeting with school officials and parents in the next few weeks to brainstorm some ideas and learn more from you? Can we have class size listed a regular agenda item during LSC meetings?

We look forward to your guidance on this challenging topic and hope to hear back from you soon regarding our requests. We know there is no easy solution but we welcome the opportunity to participate in the discussion.

Thank you for your dedication and hard work that helps make Waters a supportive learning environment for our children. We value and appreciate all that you do.

Sincerely,

Alison MacDonald Ryan, Amy Hogan, Andrea Garland, Andrew Katsoulos, Ann Hopkins Avery, Anthony Prince, Ariel Barbick, Ashley Fulton, Beau Sample, Bethany Carr, Caitlin Page, Cara Sample, Cathy Grable, Daniel Bjurstrom, Darian Martyniuk, Ellen Sullivan, Erica Smith, Heather Chase, Heather Norborg, Jack Garland, James Kennedy, James Ryan, Janice Panora, Jason Guralnick, Jeffrey Sullivan, Jennifer Katsoulos, Jessica Blomquist, Jim Barbick, Johanna Winter Harper, John Harper, Joshua Baru, Justin White, Kate Prince, Kathleen Matuszewich, Kelly Shermach, Kendra Crowe, Kevin Hogan, Lance Avery, Laura Johnston, Lisa Guralnick, Lisa Kearney, Lynn Baru, Lynn Fogarty, Megan O'Connell, Mike Fourcher, Pete Fogarty, Rachida Kechab, Rana Salzmann, Rebecca Atwood, Rick Bolliger, Sandor Weisz, Sarah Dearie, Sarah Hains, Sarah Weisz, Simon Elyaccobi, Teresa Fourcher, Therese Aragon, Victor Aragon (more names have been added to the letter after the meeting)

A: Emily, LSC I have issue with the part of this being tied to principal evaluation part of the proposed language. It is difficult with resources to have small class sizes. We have decided per the CIWP that it is more important to have no split classes

Terri noted that the budget 101 would help everyone understand such as combining classes, TIF districts for growth, incoming 2 years of all neighborhood kids, student based budgeting. Great idea to have a discussion as Allison noted a Waters 101

Crespo – doesn't make sense to have it on every LSC agenda before we have enrollment and budget. There is a commitment to the arts at waters rather than skill and drill philosophy.

Q: Does the class size hurt the school if there is overcrowding. What is the critical mass for a 3rd class?

A: Mrs. Crespo, we may have to open a 3rd classroom if our early enrollment numbers are high enough. This would be something to talk about in a welcome forum.

Mrs. Crespo – incoming kinder group will be formed.

Josh – we should be looking at class size more and it should be part of budget updates.

Kate, Parent- Could the whole LSC come to the incoming kindergarten meeting/forum?

Greg motioned to vote on the following statement. Jacqueline seconded, 11 members were in favor. Melissa Rojas was not present.

The LSC recognizes that the parents have concerns about class size for those students who matriculated in 2014 as well as going forward. While it is not within the LSC's direct purview to establish policies on class size, we will make this an issue for consideration in oversight of the budget and CIWP going forward. Specific decisions regarding staffing of classes at different grade levels are clearly the purview of the administration, working in conjunction with the rest of the staff and the budget given to us by CPS. That said, the LSC is committed to using the principal report, budget report, and CIWP progress monitoring as avenues for the clear communication of plans and

procedures for minimizing class sizes and/or ameliorating high class sizes through the use of teacher assistants within the budget and space constraints that exist at the school.

A: Jessica, LSC, could we consider this more of a school issue rather than just Kinder? I don't think it was just kinder parents who signed that letter. It is important to note, that like me, as a 3rd grade parent, I am also concerned about class sizes for other grades. It's a global issue; I don't want it to be pushed off onto only kinder parents as "their" issue.

A: Mrs. Crespo, I respectfully disagree. I have not heard this from anywhere else or from other parents in the school about class size. I have only heard from Kinder parents. Emily, I know you had big class sizes,

Emily, LSC, yes, we had 36-34, and we voiced our concern when my children were in 3rd and we had big class sizes, but instead they added another 1st grade teacher to make 3 classrooms there.

Crespo, I appreciate that kinder parents are voicing their concerns to me. But while you might have other kids in other classes, I am not hearing from, for example, 5th grade parents.

A: Allison, Parent, We are just asking that class size be taken into account.

Jessica, LSC, Has the group been formed to look at class size that was mentioned in the last LSC meeting. Have the met?

Q: Mrs. Crespo, no we are not forming this group. I think this is where the "newbie" session would be important. We should have this every year before school begins and we might help alleviate any concerns for new or entering.

Q; Allison, parent, Could Waters Today raise for aides in every classroom?

A: Terri/Mrs. Crespo noted the biggest part of fundraising was to make sure ecology and music are covered. Waters Today was formed to raise for the global impact of all the students.

Greg motioned to approve the class size statement above. John seconded. All were in favor with the inclusion of the changes mentioned. Mrs. Crespo asked that someone send the note to the kinder class. That it has been discussed but we don't have to wait until the minutes are approved. Jessica sent it out as secretary.

John asked if Terri could coordinate the next year's kinder 101 meeting can we put that together.

Joe McNichols from the Michael W. Frerichs - Illinois State Treasurer. Office promoting Bright Start Program. Brightstartsavings.com.

John seconded motioned to adjourn the meeting, Terri seconded meeting adjourned at 7:50pm