**PTA General Meeting**

**North Beach Elementary**

**April 24, 2014, 6:30 p.m.**

**It is the mission of the North Beach Elementary PTA to foster community inclusion, child advocacy and academic excellence by facilitating communications, supporting teachers and staff, & enhancing the educational, social & physical environment of North Beach Elementary School.**

# **Minutes**

Call to order and welcome at 6:45

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes from February 4, 2014 General meeting. Motion was seconded and carried.

BUDGET APPROVAL. Treasurer Rowland Morgan reported that the PTA budget numbers are very strong. The auction was huge success. The PTA has $121,000 in our checking account, plus a savings account of $50,000. The Academic Giving Campaign raised a couple thousand over budget, and we also haven’t spent as much as budgeted yet this year.

The revised proposed budget 2014-15 removed the $70,000 line item for Principal Discretionary Funds. It also increases professional development from $8,000 last year to over $10,000 this year and increases Library Upgrades from $3,200 to $12,000. The checking and savings account funds will be kept in the bank for now, and spending can be increased as the PTA sees fit over the course of next year

Tina Kliman commented that $70,000 is too great an amount to ever allocate to a discretionary fund. Cindy Ege inquired how professional development is spent, and someone commented that teachers can request professional development funds from the principal. The office supplies line item hasn’t been spent down this year, but that is because Cheryl usually orders supplies in June.

If a new Math program is implemented, we can remove the Saxon line item altogether.

The proposed budget will be shared with Incoming Principal Julie Cox, and changes can be made at the first General Meeting in the fall. The consensus was to be conservative with spending PTA funds until we know the strategic plan.

It was moved to accept the proposed budget with 3K increase in building supplies with a deficit carryover of $3K. Seconded and Motion carries.

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ELECTION OF 2014-15 BOARD MEMBERS

Karlie Savo, chair of the Nominating Committee, read aloud the committee’s proposed slate of officers and announced that all candidates meet the requirements of the WSPTA Uniform Bylaws:

President Jodi Somm

Vice President Shane Pierard

Secretary Beth Hardy

Treasurer Open

Legislative Chair Tim Dugaw

President Erika Hermanson asked if there were any nominations from the floor for each. Tim Dugaw volunteered to serve as Treasurer and after consideration asked to remove his name from consideration for Legislative Chair at this time.

President Hermanson read the revised slate of officers as follows:

President Jodi Somm

Vice President Shane Pierard

Secretary Beth Hardy

Treasurer Tim Dugaw

Legislative Chair Open

No further nominations were offered from the floor and President Hermanson declared the nominations closed. A voice vote was held, and the revised slate was elected unanimously.

Authorized check signers for 2014-15 are:

President, Jodi Somm

Vice President, Shane Pierard

Treasurer, Tim Dugaw

The 2014-15 authorized check signers will replace outgoing 2013-14 check signers:

Co-President, Mark Hardy

Co-President, Erika Hermanson

Treasurer, Rowland Morgan

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL APPOINTMENT

Erika reported that Incoming Principal Julie Cox has been asked not to attend this meeting due to the concerns surrounding her appointment by the Superintendent. Erika introduced Jon Halfaker, Education Director for the NW Region of the District to speak about the principal selection process. Erika explained that, following his presentation, the floor would be open to questions/comments by sign-up process. Questions and comments limited to two minutes each.

Jon started in October, 2013. His role is to act as a bridge between schools and the district. All Education Directors have been recent principals, and they all want to try and change the district culture. Jon has been with the district for 20 years.

In the past three years, 54 principals or assistant principals have been assigned to new buildings, and 22 of those were direct appointments by the Superintendent like Ms. Cox.

The process for principal selection begins in December of the year proceeding with a survey to existing principals asking about next year plans. Julie Cox requested a transfer and specified type of school and region. In March and into the first week of April, the first round of hiring took place. RJ had applied for Broadview Thomson, and his hire there was finalized approximately April 7. Shortly thereafter, Julie was contacted because she’d shown interest in North Beach Elementary. There were two openings available and the next day Julie selected North Beach (middle of the week before spring break). Her hiring and RJ’s move were announced to the North Beach parent community the afternoon of April 11, the Friday before spring break. Seven principal decisions were announced that day, including six other direct appointments. RJ was the only open hire. Hiring will continue until mid July when principal hirings become interim status hires.

The principal hiring process includes heavy screening by Human Resources and Educational Directors to make competent matches and find good fits. According to Jon, Julie’s strength as an instructional leader is amazing.

Julie worked in the Seattle School District as a District Curriculum Specialist in Literacy/Science/Technology before getting her administrator credentials and going to Minnesota to lead several schools. She was recognized over five years for fostering growth and closing performance gaps, even when her school was undergoing a change in socioeconomic demographics. She also led several schools internationally before coming to Catherine Blaine K-8 in Seattle. She has a strong literacy passion, an area North Beach Elementary is working on. She has elementary leadership experience with schools up to 1000 kids. Additional strengths are in systems and organizational thinking, data dash boards for teachers, data summits, individual action plans for students, MTSS systems (including grade level intervention), and incorporating common planning time for staff. She believes in character education and community service for kids, “restorative justice” v. consequences that would be demeaning to children. She believes in the arts and showcasing student artwork. She is big on 21st century skills, rigor in the classroom, and having students doing the thinking with support from the teacher. .

Jon has witnessed her work and leadership of her team and feels she is ready to lead North Beach. In addition, she requested the placement at North Beach. Her daughter will be enrolled and she lives in the Ballard area.

The reason for announcing the news on the Friday before Spring Break was to get the word out to parents before the Monday following Spring Break, when word could easily have leaked out informally with the beginning of Phase 1 hiring.

Jon has made a five year commitment as Education Director. He has two high school children of his own in the district. Jon is highly confident Ms. Cox will be a strong leader. Her school has been a showcase school for other principals. He has absolute faith in her as a leader.

Ms. Cox will be introduced to North Beach staff next week. Jon has four buildings that have new principals next year, out of his 20 schools. He will be here next year working with us.

See Exhibit A to the Minutes: Jon Halfaker, NW Education Director’s North Beach Presentation: SPS Principal Selection Process, Timeline for Recent Appointments, Background on Julie Cox

Q&A SESSION

Mark Hardy said the community is reeling from rumors and asked if Jon is willing to come back and speak to us again if needed. Jon said that he is.

Tim Dugaw said the problem is that the district doesn’t have a communicative liaison with the community about many important issues, such as bell times, boundaries, etc.. All the drama is reactive and could be eliminated by the district being proactive. Jon said the district is working to move the principal selection process to earlier in the year, so they can be more proactive.

Karlie Savo said a more detailed introductory piece to parents would have prevented “googling.” Jon said that the principal selection process/timeline will eventually be posted to the district website.

Other parents pointed out the existence of negative comments on the internet. Jon said that information on internet blogs often tends to be negative and that principals are lightening rods. Parents expressed that North Beach values having a gentle community, and Jon assured us this will continue. He is committed to being available and to help deal quickly with any issues that arise.

Cindy Ege asked that the district be mindful of its stated goal of transparency and address any concerns that can be addressed. Jon said he could not address a specific question about survey data from Catherine Blaine School, and that such a question would need to be addressed to the Education Director who was in charge of that region.

Diane Coyne shared an email from a parent with three children at Catherine Blaine who was very complimentary of Ms. Cox, stating that she is open with parents, conducts a monthly coffee chat, knows the names of the kids quickly, stands in hallway to greet/chat, kids love her, and students can have lunch with her. She applied for a grant to reduce class size numbers in third grade.

Beth Hardy commented that she has been with the district for 18 years and didn’t know the principal hiring process. She suggested that the superintendent’s letter to the North Beach community could have been more customized and offered a more detailed explanation of the process.

Bert Hopkins summarized that he hears Jon asking us to put our trust in him. Since the principal ends up being on the front lines, Bert asked how Jon will support Principal Cox with the big issues such as: possible implementation of a new math curriculum with very little notice, new state testing regimen for next year, etc. As for the math curriculum, Jon said the roll out will involve summer training for staff. He pointed out that the middle school math roll out went well with summer training or weekend paid training. There were also monthly studio days where teachers could watch a lesson, be observed/critiqued. As for the Smarter Balanced Assessment computer/adaptive state assessment rolling in next year, Jon is concerned that the required keyboarding and computer skills may cause test scores to fall and more students below grade level.

Shane Pierard asked how parents express concerns that may arise. Jon advised, parents first contact the principal directly. Next step would be coming to the Education Director. For a serious issue, anyone can come see the Education Director first, but generally Jon has experienced that “triangles are lousy ways for communication to happen.”

STATE OF THE SCHOOL ADDRESS

Even as he contemplates his move to become Principal at Broadview Thomsen next year, RJ will keep focused on North Beach this spring. This is bittersweet but a professional growth opportunity. RJ said he couldn’t have asked for better spot for his first principalship. During his tenure, he worked to increase collaboration and break down classroom island mentality. As a parent, it shouldn’t matter what classroom your child is in. Common expectations: grade levels collaborate weekly, academic alignment and planning standards, intentional professional development (rigor, differentiation, leveled questioning).

Locus of control shift – teachers as leaders to give students a voice.

Technology focus. 4 mobile SMARTboards, new computer lab, iPad cart, teacher laptops, programs and web-based resources/connection to home.

Common language. “I can” can statements. Give me five. North Beach Seals model excellence.

Common Goals. CCSS (Common Core). We started this work several years ago. School wide writing goal: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. Three school wide writing prompts.

Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing, and to interact and collaborate with others.

Data, Analysis, Action. Our School Report Card/Highlights: Growth in literacy/reading. Math scores are moving in the wrong direction. 100% of staff open to looking at new curriculum. Our BLT is going tomorrow to review and submit math recommendations. Science scores are amongst highest in district. Writing improved from last year.

School-wide common goals are not as common as they should be.

Our results. 2013 Washington Achievement Award Winner for Overall Excellence = top 5% of all elementary schools in the state.

Good to Great mindset. The staff read this book. Goal is not to be complacent.

Transtion plan. Schedules and staffing will be stabilized prior to summer. RJ and Julie Cox will have planning meetings/collaboration. Ms. Cox will progressively spend more time here this spring. Shared decision making.

Next year snapshot. Enrollment = 281. There will be staffing adjustments/cuts due to low enrollment. Community will be updated within the next two weeks. Our stable number is more like 310-315. We are down to two kindergartens. Development preschool – Rm 2. New math adoption – TBD. Will remain an ALO school.

APP Lowell at Lincoln has added 100 students in the 1/2nd grade for the coming year.

UPCOMING EVENTS.

May 5-9 Staff Appreciation Week

May 6 PTA Board Meeting

May 9 Movie Night

May 12-15 5th Grade Camp

May 22 K/1 Art Show/Concert

May 26 Memorial Day

May 29-30 Buy-one-get-one Scholastic Book Fair

May 30 Walka Jogga Movathon

At 8:55 it was moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded and carried.