

Highcrest Middle School PTO

General Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2006

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the October 4, 2006 meeting were approved.

President's Report -- Maggie Belliel

Gift Wrap -- came in over budget, bringing in approximately \$10,000 in profit. The committee thanks those who helped distribute and deliver boxes.

Freaky Friday -- great success. Thanks to all of the parents who volunteered.

Make A Difference Day -- another great success. This may expand to include 6th graders next year.

Parent's Party -- Barb Shields is still taking RSVP's to the Nov. 3 event.

Kids Are Key Campaign -- 371 families have responded with contributions topping \$25,000.

Stock Market Game -- this opportunity presented itself after Dr. Rosen had completed her budget for this year. She needs \$3000 for all 6th graders to participate in this game which is intended to support math curriculum. In future years, this activity will be considered curriculum and will not have to be funded by the PTO. Motion passed.

Legislation -- Lori Goldstein is looking for members for a committee that will review and update the PTO bylaws this year. Email Lori if you are interested.

Superintendent's Report -- Dr. Max McGee

Dr. McGee distributed the results of the 2006 Survey of Parents (which included the opinions of 100 Highcrest parents).

Highlights:

- * Highcrest parents feel more comfortable in school now (96%) and the kids are "enjoying" school more (92%)
- * 92% of District 39 teachers said that this is the "very best" place for kids to learn and they gave "parent support" an 8.9 out of a possible 9.0 points

Areas for improvement:

- * Furthering the personal relationship between teachers and students
- * Preventing bullying and teasing on all levels, and for both boys

and girls

* Watching out for kids who might be “falling through the cracks” - kids who don’t have an IEP and who aren’t part of the gifted/talented program. Susan Kick, the Harper principal, is heading up a committee to address this.

Dr. McGee also presented his Superintendent’s Goals for this year:

* Student Achievement -- one area of note is that teachers outside of District 39 (local and national) will grade certain writing assignments to ensure external validity of our writing skills

* Progress Reporting and Conferencing -- the goal is to build a consistent system for report cards and conferences across the district

* Finance -- being a fiscally responsible district is a good example to our children on becoming financially astute themselves

* Gender Issues -- how can we better serve children both academically and socially from a gender-learning perspective

Director of Special Services Report -- Dr. Ray Lechner

Dr. Lechner stated that the district’s philosophy for special education is inclusion. He distributed a handout which included printed pages of the department’s website. He noted that across the nation, a high number of kids are labeled with “learning disabilities” (LD). He discussed some of the things he is working on this year:

* Building Intervention Teams (I-Teams) -- these are problem-solving teams at each school that try to find a teaching style to fit a particular child before referral to a Student Assistance Team (SAT), and subsequently special-education services.

* Identifying children that fall under the 504-plan -- this is a body of law that protects children that need extra assistance but fall outside of an LD description

* Reviewing school crisis plans -- looking at the physical security of each building and how each school functions in a crisis situation

Principal’s Report -- Dr. Cathy Rosen

Iowa Tests - taking place next week. Make sure that your child gets a good night’s sleep and a good breakfast.

Visit from Dr. Cynthia Mee -- Dr. Mee, a professor at National Louis University and author, is an expert on adolescent development. She is meeting with Highcrest staff to gain input and share her expertise on what makes kids in middle school “tick”. She will help review block

scheduling, homeroom advisory, bullying/teasing and other areas. There will also be a valuable parent's night with Dr. Mee on Nov. 16 at 7:00pm. Dr. Rosen is also gathering input from the students on how they would like to improve the school, from adding items to the school library to how to improve the school physically and aesthetically. Parent E-mail -- if you want to be included in the distributino list for Dr. Rosen's periodic emails , please send your email name to Dr. Rosen (rosenc@wilmette39.org)

Teacher's Report -- Hilary Harvey

Highlights include:

- * members of the Junior High orchestra came to Highcrest to perform -- Ms. Harvey distributed photos from this event
- * 5th graders are working on explorer units
- * PE electives start this week

Maggie reminded everyone that next month's meeting, on Wed. Dec. 6, will include a presentation on environmental awareness and a showing of the Monday Broadcast, which is done by the Broadcast Club.

Minutes submitted by Kathy Freedman