

Audubon Elementary Local School Council  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, April 25, 2011 – 6:30 pm – Community Room

**Call to Order 6:30 pm**

**Roll Call (LSC Members introduced themselves)**

Members Present:

Phyllis (O'Hara) Ryan, Faculty Representative  
Jody Ebstein, Faculty Representative  
Abby Levin, Staff Member  
Maria Griffith, Parent Representative  
Barbara Kantrow, Parent Representative  
Jill Bass, Parent Representative  
Nick Hardgrove, Parent Representative, Secretary  
Alex Pramenko, Parent Representative, Chairman  
Patty Jones, Community Representative  
Sarah Gallagher, Community Representative  
John Price, Principal

Members Absent:

Brendan Gilboy, Parent Representative, Vice-Chairman

**Approval of Agenda**

Principal Price asked to add Technology as Agenda Item 6c. Chairman Pramenko asked to add a discussion of Alderman Elect Pawar's education committee between Public Participation and Announcements. Nick Hardgrove moved that the Agenda be approved as amended, Barbara Kantrow seconded the motion.

The Agenda was unanimously approved.

**Approval of March Minutes**

There was a clarification of an account number from the March 21<sup>st</sup> Expenditures / Transfers. Patty Jones moved to approve the Minutes of the March 21, 2011 meeting, as amended per that clarification. Nick Hardgrove seconded the motion.

The Minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

**Approval of April 14<sup>th</sup> Minutes**

Barbara Kantrow moved to approve the Minutes of the April 14, 2011 meeting (Principal Evaluation). Jill Bass seconded the motion.

The Minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

### **Review of LSC Procedures**

Chairman Pramenko indicated to the audience that participation at LSC meetings will be the same as it has in previous years:

- i. Agenda Item introduced
- ii. LSC discussion is had
- iii. Audience members who signed in to speak get 2 minutes.

At the end of the listed agenda items, audience members who have signed in to speak on non-Agenda topics get 3 minutes.

### **Principal Reports**

#### ***Magnet School Application / Admissions:***

Principal Price reported on the number of applications and admissions for next Fall.

For the incoming Kindergarten class, we received over 350 applications. There were 6 kids who were siblings of K-7<sup>th</sup> Graders at Audubon. 3 of them were admitted, 3 have been wait-listed. We have 17 kids (not currently at Audubon) from the neighborhood that are early-registered. 30 current Audubon pre-K students are staying at Audubon.

No 1<sup>st</sup>-Graders were admitted, as the current Kindergarten class is already overcrowded.

In 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> there were a total of 15 new students admitted. (Including all siblings)

The incoming 8<sup>th</sup> Grade class will consist of approximately 40-42 students.

#### ***Mandatory Breakfast in the Classroom***

Principal Price indicated that we are sending our own letter to parents informing them of the beginning of the Breakfast in Classroom Program, and asking them to indicate whether they intend to participate in the program.

Allergies are a real concern, so we will be using the lunchroom as a classroom, to avoid bringing those allergens into a classroom. CPS' Implementation Group came to Audubon April 14<sup>th</sup>, and indicated that they would shop individually for kids with allergies, if it would help.

Principal Price is going to MacPherson to observe their program. CPS is also sending a letter to each family explaining the program.

Our kick-off date is May 9, 2011. We will vigilantly monitor the program and weigh the benefits versus the drawbacks. Some of the issues raised by schools that have already implemented the program are: waste of time; waste of food; change of custodial staff and inconvenience.

The program will be implemented via tables being set up at the top of the stairs and staffed by lunchroom staff. Students cannot be in the classroom before 7:55, so any student coming for breakfast before then would have to go to the lunchroom (just as they do currently).

## **Technology**

Audubon parent Mark Ahlheim submitted a paper to the LSC at the close of the February 28 meeting concerning technology related issues and ideas. Thus, we have added an agenda item to discuss technology at Audubon. Principal Price gave a short presentation on Audubon's current technology strategy, and then the topic was opened up for LSC and Public discussion.

Principal Price began his discussion with an overview of potential technology strategies:

1. Schoolwide Initiative – Every classroom will do a certain thing, use the same hardware, instructional strategy or technology application. (Advantages: Greater support, collaboration, Disadvantages: Might not work for everyone, wrong idea then everybody loses)
2. Ad Hoc Strategy – Small sets of teachers use the technology that they think best fits their teaching (Advantages: easier to monitor, more manageable cost-wise, teacher autonomy, experimentation, Disadvantages: Infrastructure problems, can't do that schoolwide, successes are little successes)

Principal Price prefers the Ad Hoc approach to technology implementation. We do, however, do some things schoolwide. 3 years ago, there was a successful schoolwide program, wherein each teacher received a laptop to use in the classroom, and a media cart and a projector.

Non schoolwide initiatives include: a. Four Promethean Boards for the teachers that wanted them (and spent the time getting trained to use them), and b. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade teachers expressed a strong interest in using I-Pads in the classrooms, and have observed their use in other schools. We have 16 (soon to be 30) I-Pads for use in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms.

Technology Improvements in the school include: 1. We now get parent e-mail addresses on the emergency forms to facilitate communication between school & home via e-mail, 2. Professional Development for teachers who don't teach reading, 3. Gigi Program, 4. Compass Learning, 5. Constant Contact will be the new e-mail system, 6. Technology is now listed in our SIPAAA, 7. Grades are now available on-line (per CPS), 8. Wireless accessibility throughout the building, 9. NWEA assessments and excel spreadsheet analysis, and 10. The laptop carts.

Hurdles to technology integration: 1. We do not have a free technology person all day. Ms. Bowens has a full teaching load, so all support and professional development is done after school, 2. The Principal is admittedly not incredibly tech-savvy, but is working on it, and 3. There are other pressures on very limited professional development time.

In our most recent parent survey, 97% of our families had internet access in the home. Teachers can e-mail students starting in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (CPS Policy), but only through the CPS e-mail system.

We are a Technology Magnet School. This gives us some extra technology professional development funds (\$4,000), but does not require that we offer any additional or unique technological curriculum. Meredith Broschius, CPS's Technology Magnet Cluster Lead offers more integrative support, such as a preference for putting technology in the classrooms as opposed to in a stand-alone computer room.

One recent innovative use of technology was when Ms. Tavorsky and her 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade class Skyped (video conferenced) with an Army Captain in Iraq and discussed what it felt like to go through the sound barrier in his jet. The students were totally fascinated by both the use of technology and by the discussion itself.

One way we are trying to use technology to increase the real time communication between teachers and students is through the use of hand-held "voters". Students can use the voters to select an answer to a multiple choice question that a teacher is presenting, and the teacher could get instant feedback as to whether students are grasping the subject matter. We have 3 sets of the voters.

Other programs at other schools that we may consider using: One-to-one – a laptop for every student; Computer Loan – where students can take laptops home at night, I-Touch use in classrooms, as well as a couple of web-based programs that help with reading as ST Math and Gigi help with math.

The Gigi program seems to be successful. Generally, there is growth in the students that have used Gigi. We do not have sufficient data at this point to fully analyze the effectiveness.

Audubon's Technology Goal is to help teachers and students do things using technology that they could not otherwise do (without using technology). Maria Griffith asked whether schools that invest heavily in technology, as opposed to reading and math, see gains in reading and math anyway, even though their main focus is technology. Principal Price explained that we are hesitant to throw huge amounts of money at certain cutting edge technologies (as we learned when the ELMO's we bought for \$250 began selling for \$60 each). And we don't have the extra \$50,000 or so to toss around.

Having a place that teaches valuable computer skills is important. (Logging on, supplying a password, opening and saving documents correctly) But if this is taught in the classroom, it would take away from the teaching time of reading and math, etc. Thus, the stand alone, set aside time working on computer skills is something we value. This continues to be looked at and discussed with the PPLC. Through discussions with the PPLC, we decided not to buy the 20 desktops we intended to use, instead bought 8 laptops to fill the laptop carts.

Teachers who do not teach reading were required to attend 2 large scale professional development technology sessions (reading teachers were concentrating on Reading Alignment, one of our top SIPAAA goals for this year). And teachers who were looking to use specific technologies were required to get trained in those technologies with Ms. Bowers.

There were several comments from the audience and LSC in support of the Ad Hoc strategy: Robin Kain indicated that the incoming 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents got together and through [www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org), raised enough money to put I-Pads in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. Jill Bass indicated that laptops, projectors and

ELMO's in each classroom was pretty high-tech versus other schools, and favors allowing teachers to choose the technology they use. Phyllis Ryan indicated that she personally would want no part of a smartboard, but would love to be able to give each student a laptop to take home at night.

Teachers submit wish-lists to Principal Price and those requests are analyzed and prioritized versus the funds available. Sarah Remijan mentioned that it's important to keep up with the latest technology, so the teachers driving it is great, but we need to be flexible and be exposed to where technology is moving. Additionally, students need to be able to discern the credibility of authority (for information) and what they can trust and what they cannot trust. Finally, it was suggested that Audubon / Ms. Bowens should mandate a baseline technology skillset that every teacher should have, and that that baseline should progress as technology progresses.

The teachers share their experiences with each other. One of the June Professional Development Days will be partially devoted to teachers sharing their ideas and discussing what is and is not working.

Ann Turner asked how close (cost-benefit wise) we were to being able to supply laptops to every child. What are the costs involved and is it something we could do by way of raising of funds, or an increased supply fee? And what are the benefits, as far as the skills the students will need in high school and beyond are concerned? This moved the discussion into what it would take to put a laptop in every student's hands. It was noted that the current supply fee is \$65. And after much discussion, the question of whether to try to do this and how to fund it was tabled until the next meeting when costs might be able to be more fully investigated.

### **Principal Announcements**

Principal Price explained that the Inclusion Committee (Mary Kirschner, Barbara Kantrow, Kathy Argentar, Jeffrey Taylor, Judy Sickle, Ashley O'Halloran, and Susan Gust) organized a Cyber-Safety Day that was very well received.

Mr. Fay was going to be taking a short paternity leave, as his wife and he were currently at the hospital expecting their first child (today). Sarah O'Dowd will fill-in for Mr. Fay part time.

There is a Kindergarten meeting for parents of incoming Kindergarteners on April 27, 2011.

There is a Roscoe Village Neighbors meeting on May 11, 2011, at which RVN's continuing support of the Audubon ARS will be requested by Principal Price.

The budget for next year is not yet known, and will therefore need to be discussed at a future LSC meeting.

### **Committee Reports**

High School Committee:

Ms. Rebecca and Mr. Hackman are putting together spreadsheets looking at outgoing 8<sup>th</sup> graders (correlating NWEA scores, Explorer Test results and selective enrollment high school test scores). We

want to see where our students are strong and weak, and what we need to work on for our students to be more successful on the selective enrollment high school exam.

### **Public Participation**

Robin Kain mentioned that it is Staff Appreciation Week May 16-20 and we are looking for volunteers. We are looking for people to purchase things, bake things, takeover teacher's duties, and to look at teachers' wish lists.

### **47<sup>th</sup> Ward Education Transition Team**

The 47<sup>th</sup> Ward Education Team is meeting on April 27, 2011, from 6:30-8:00. Maria Griffith and Jill Bass were going to try to see if one of them could make it (in addition to Principal Price and Kathy Argentar).

### **Announcements**

Sarah Levens announced that June Jam is scheduled for June 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> and we need volunteers for that, as well. Additionally there is going to be an FOA meeting May 18<sup>th</sup> with elections (that meeting may be moved to May 25<sup>th</sup>).

May 18 is also the date of the Redmoon program at Peggy Notebaerdts Nature Museum, for which Audubon has organized some busses to take students to the program that evening.

### **Adjournment**

Jody Ebstein moved to adjourn, seconded by Maria Griffith. By unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15.