

Audubon Elementary Minutes of Local School Council
Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 24, 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
Jill Bass, Parent Representative
Maria Griffith, Parent Representative
Barbara Kantrow, Parent Representative
Nick Hardgrove, Parent Representative, Secretary
Brendan Gilboy, Parent Representative, Vice-Chairman
Alex Pramenko, Parent Representative, Chairman
John Price, Principal

Members Absent:

Patty Jones, Community Representative
Sarah Gallagher, Community Representative

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Pramenko indicated that he had received a copy of a letter being circulated by the Blaine Elementary PTA in opposition to a Mandatory Breakfast proposal that the Chicago Board of Education is considering. John Price motioned that we add an agenda item to discuss the proposal. Nick Hardgrove seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Pramenko also indicated that 32nd Ward Aldermanic Candidate, Brian Gorman, is also attending tonight's meeting, in addition to Bryan Lynch and David Pavlik. Phyllis Ryan motioned that we add Mr. Gorman to the portion of the agenda dealing with the discussions with the Aldermanic Candidates. Maria Griffith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jody Ebstein moved that the Agenda be approved, Phyllis Ryan seconded the motion.

The Agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of December Minutes

Phyllis Ryan moved to approve the Minutes of the December 13, 2010 meeting. 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.

32nd Ward Aldermanic Candidate Introduction and Presentations

Chairman Pramenko thanked the three Aldermanic candidates in attendance for taking their time to attend our meeting and discuss their positions and ideas on education in the ward and in the city.

Candidates Brian Gorman, Bryan Lynch and David Pavlik were present at the meeting. Incumbent Alderman Scott Waguespack declined multiple invitations to attend, but did ask that a letter be read into the record. In that letter Alderman Waguespack detailed (read: invented) various actions he has taken (read: not taken) in support of the Audubon High School concept. That charade having been completed, the meeting moved to the candidates that actually attended the meeting (and actually supported the Audubon High School).

The format for the Aldermanic Candidate presentations was that each candidate would have a couple of minutes to introduce themselves, followed by a 3 question Q & A, wherein each candidate would have an opportunity to answer each question. The questions were provided to the candidates ahead of time.

The first candidate to speak was Bryan Lynch. Mr. Lynch introduced himself and described his background and qualifications. He then indicated that when thinking of how to improve education, it is meeting the needs of the students that is of paramount importance. And that means a school by school analysis of what the students of each school's needs are, and working with the administrators and teachers of each school to ensure that their students' needs are in fact being met in creating the curriculum for the particular school.

The next candidate to speak was David Pavlik. Mr. Pavlik introduced himself and described his background and qualifications. He then indicated that when thinking of how to improve education, we need to find the funding, by re-visiting concepts like tuition reimbursement, and re-allocating money that goes to 911.

The final candidate to speak was Brian Gorman. Mr. Gorman introduced himself and described his background and qualifications. He indicated that a very important issue to the people of the 32nd Ward is to know where their kids are going to high school, adding that no one wants to be an urban pioneer at the high school level. They want to know they have good high school options in the city.

The first question asked of all three candidates was "What is the Role of the City Council in supporting education?"

Bryan Lynch indicated that money is the key, but you can't just say "more funding", you actually have to have an idea of where those funds would come from. Concepts such as Privatizing the fleet management of city vehicles, reforming the pension system and minimizing upper management salaries by cutting salaries and people. The City Council has to address these items in their budget process.

David Pavlik suggested that we use some of the same strategies that raised millions and millions for the Olympic bid be applied to raising money for Chicago Public Schools. The City Council should have advice and consent authority on the appointment of the top positions within CPS. Also, that schools with involved parents should be rewarded.

Brian Gorman spoke of TIF funds as a source of additional education funding, and is in favor of an elected Board of Education. The Board should work with the Local School Councils to determine what is best for each school, and not city-wide mandates.

The second question asked of the three candidates was: "What will your role be in supporting public schools in this Ward?"

David Pavlik indicated that the Alderman's office should help to garner resources to help LSC's implement their plans, should facilitate parental involvement, and should concentrate on finding money to invest in public safety and education in the ward.

Brian Gorman proposed something similar to a Small Business Advisory Council for the schools in the ward. The Elementary and High School Advisory Board would meet to discuss ways to help each other improve their various schools and together to improve all of the schools in the ward.

Bryan Lynch proposed a collaborative effort bringing in different people and getting their input. The Alderman's Office should sit down periodically with the principals of each of the wards school to help ensure that they are all moving in the right direction. The Alderman's Office should partner up with the LSC's and should share the best practices from the various schools with the other schools.

The final question asked of the three candidates was: "Parents of Audubon students are concerned about the current high school options available to their children and what can and should be done to improve the high school options in the ward?"

Brian Gorman is excited about the Audubon High School concept, acknowledging that starting a new high school is very difficult. We need new leadership in the ward that will be open to different possibilities for improving the high schools in the ward.

Bryan Lynch indicated that unfortunately the urgency of Audubon High School's timeline does not allow for waiting beyond the election in hopes of a new, supportive alderman. However, he indicated that he was absolutely in support of the Audubon High School concept. Supporting Lakeview, though very necessary, will take time. And the fact that there is a proposal in place (and almost up and running) that will immediately improve the north side high school options for students, makes support of the Audubon High School a no-brainer.

David Pavlik suggested that it shouldn't be an either-or. The Audubon High, which he supports, should go forward as it immediately improves the educational options, but that much effort should also be put

forth to improve Lakeview High School. It is a matter of making it a priority and then finding the money and using it.

Chairman thanked the three candidates for their willingness to appear and share their ideas on education. It speaks volumes as to how much each of them cares about education in the ward, and the alderman's office speaks volumes, as well.

An audience member from the Roscoe View Journal, Samantha Abernathy, indicated that there was a candidate forum on Thursday at the Belmont Library, as well.

Brendan Gilboay motioned that we adjourn for five minutes. The motion was second by Nick Hardgrove. The motion passed unanimously. A five minute adjournment was taken at 7:16 pm.

Re-Call to Order 7:21 pm.

Principal Reports

Principal Price presented the January SIPAAA Progress Report.

Principal Price distributed a worksheet outlining Audubon's progress in the 8 SIPAAA categories:

1. Learning Climate / Safety - class sizes remain low, NWEA scores indicate significant student growth, the faculty, staff and administration are continuing to work together to improve Audubon, and After-School participation is extremely high.
2. Mathematics – A Walking Math program has been initiated for struggling 5th-8th grade students, some secondary intervention is also in place for certain students, the Gigi program is available to 2nd-4th grade students, there are pull out groups in grades 1-4 for accelerated students and there is a new program for accelerated math among upper grade students,
3. Science – All grades have a science notebook and are incorporating additional assessments in the way of quizzes, tests, etc...
4. Core Classroom instruction – Audubon is concentrating on improving its social studies curriculum. New Social Studies units have been implemented in Pre-K, and \$20,000 was spent to replace the 6th-8th Social Studies Program. Principal Price is instituting a “common language” program to ensure that students receive consistent feedback and instruction. Also, Audubon has instituted a “no excuses” grammar expectations program, whereby students are expected to use proper grammar, diction and punctuation in all writing, and not just on writing assignments.
5. Technology – The 3rd grade teachers are schedule to observe the use of I-Pads as teaching tools at another school. Compass Learning (“Child U”) is being implemented in all grades to supplement classroom math instruction.
6. On Track to Graduation – No real progress has been made to track Audubon graduates' performance at the high school level and beyond. Though, from information gathered it seems

that 60% of Audubon grads are still on track to graduation at non-selective enrollment high school. (Energies have naturally been focused on the creation of the Audubon High School.)

7. Bilingual / Multicultural Education – The Spanish language program was cut. A “Cultures” class teaches an understanding of cultures around the world, focusing primarily on Latin America. AYP targets for Hispanic ELL students have been met.
8. Operations of Schools – Due to a couple of dust bunnies in the gym and a couple of milk cartons the ever-elusive “A” on a CPS Blitz Inspection once again eluded Audubon. We got a B.

It was suggested that SIPAAA should be re-addressed in September.

Principal Price then gave a brief update on the Audubon High School Proposal. There may be a short-term location for 2010-11, farther from Audubon than earlier efforts. But a survey of 8th graders indicated that families are not bothered by the location or the bus transportation between Audubon and the potential location. Some discussion was had concerning the lottery and when students can pull out of selective enrollment high schools. (Not after June, unless released by principal) But students can pull out of neighborhood schools later. It was also noted that 79% of Lakeview High School Students are not from the neighborhood.

Mandatory Breakfast Proposal

Chairman Pramenko read a letter from the Blaine Elementary PTA to Terry Mazany, Interim CEO of CPS. The gist of the letter was that a mandatory breakfast program, though perhaps very helpful in some schools, was certainly not necessary in all schools and that schools should have the right to opt out of the program. There was an urgency to the issue as the CPS Board was going to vote on the proposal two days later (Thursday, January 24, 2011).

Much discussion was had among the LSC members and audience members, all in support of the Audubon LSC joining Blaine’s PTA’s efforts. Nick Hardgrove was drafted to pen a letter in support to be submitted to Mr. Mazany. (Editor’s note: The letter was in fact drafted and submitted the following day.)

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

Old Business

The turf project continues to await CPS approval. The CPS facilities person is back from maternity leave and was to come to Audubon over Winter Break. She did not show.

Public Participation

Mark Ahlheim expressed concern over the type (or # of layers) of paint on the stairs of the school, indicating that a very real slip hazard exists on snowy, and even rainy days.

Announcements

Chairman Pramenko indicated that the Daddy-Daughter Dance was scheduled for February 25th, 2011.

Principal Price indicated that the Spelling Bee winners were Ian McCann (4 years in a row), and Avery Kain.

Adjournment

Jody Ebstein moved to adjourn, seconded by Jill Bass. By unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:24.