

Audubon Elementary Local School Council
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 19, 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
Sarah Gallagher, Community Representative
Patty Jones, Community Representative
Barbara Kantrow, Parent Representative
Jill Bass, Parent Representative
Maria Griffith, Parent Representative
Nick Hardgrove, Parent Representative, Secretary (4 mins late)
Brendan Gilboy, Parent Representative, Vice-Chairman
Alex Pramenko, Parent Representative, Chairman
John Price, Principal

Approval of Agenda

Brendan Gilboy moved that the Agenda be approved as amended, Jody Ebstein seconded the motion.

The Agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of July Minutes

Phyllis Ryan moved that the July minutes be approved, Nick Hardgrove seconded the motion.

The July minutes were unanimously approved.

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.

Congratulations

Chairman Pramenko announced that Audubon had officially been awarded the Blue Ribbon Award, and congratulated Principal Price and the staff for receiving that honor. Audubon was featured on Channel 2's evening news program in recognition of that award.

Translation Available

Ms. Valenzuela was available to translate the meeting to Spanish speaking parents, if desired.

Audubon Reading Challenge

Chairman Pramenko announced that 126 students completed the 10 book Audubon Reading Challenge. Anne Turner organizes and raises the funds for this challenge on her own, and we would like to thank her for those efforts. 70% of the students read the book given to them at the end of the Spring semester and there are over 1200 leaves in the "Dramatic Forest" in Audubon's 1st floor hallway.

Extended School Day

Principal Price gave a powerpoint presentation summarizing the issues surrounding the "Extended School Day". The main issues he touched on were:

1. The extended school day is coming. Whether it is now or in September, is a question.
2. We are not attempting to extend the school day for this semester. If Audubon does opt for the longer school day, it would begin January 9, 2012.
3. The school would get \$75,000 and the teachers would get an \$800 stipend.
4. The school day would still start at 8:00, but would end at 3:30 (instead of 1:45).

FOR STUDENTS

5. Students would get 45 minutes for lunch and recess (rather than the current 30).
6. The school day would be technically 60 minutes longer (currently school day ends at 2:30, teachers simply take their free hour at the end of the day – Closed Campus).
7. Thus there would be 80-90 minutes of additional learning time
8. There would be an additional "Special" class each week (likely Art)
9. There would likely be less After School programming

FOR TEACHERS

10. Their 45-minute duty free period would be moved to the middle of the day
11. Teacher start time would move from 7:30 to 7:50 am.
12. They would get some additional prep time during the day
13. There would be significantly less time in the afternoon for planning

FOR THE SCHOOL

14. Would likely need to hire additional staff to supervise the longer lunch/recess periods.
15. Teachers prep time would need to be scheduled (again needing additional supervision for the additional prep time).
16. Significant impact on After-School programming. Contracts with Redmoon, Merit Music, YMCA, etc... would need to be addressed/amended.
17. There are many unresolved issues regarding specifics.

OTHER ISSUES

18. There is currently a legal challenge pending concerning the early adopter schools.
19. Classroom, lunch room and gym space is limited
20. The middle school's block schedule would have to be amended
21. We don't want to jeopardize our current performance gains and momentum with a complete upheaval of the schedule and programming
22. The early adopting schools are new and mostly bussing schools (Stein, Disney II, Skinner North), or on probation and/or are decreasing in size (Melody, Mays, Fiske, Howe, Brown). Howe is the only one of these schools that is trending up.
23. We would have to re-write the IEP's and 504's for the 80 kids at Audubon who have them.
24. Related service staff schedule would have to be addressed
25. The preschool schedule would remain unchanged
26. We would have to figure out how to best use the additional time

Then the floor was opened up to the LSC Members and then the audience for questions. Summarily, the questions (and answers) were:

1. Proposed schedule is just for the Spring right? (Yes, we don't know what is coming in September)
2. What is student "prep time", when they have to get out of their teacher's classroom? (Same as "Specials" Gym, Science Lab, Computer Lab, Jiji, etc. - likely would add Art)
3. Would all additional time be for enrichment? (50 minutes per week of it would – teacher prep time increases from 250 minutes/week to 300.)
4. Did they say where the money might come from? (No)
5. If \$75,000 comes in January, would more \$ come in September? (Don't know yet)
6. What percent of students use the after school programs (75 kids at YMCA, 120-150 kids utilize pro-clubs each week, 50% of all kids do something)
7. Is Audubon still an autonomous school? (There are no longer autonomous schools – we are in the Ravenswood Ridge Network)
8. How much more learning time? (350 minutes per week)
9. What is plan if it doesn't go back? (Great question, we do not have the answer currently)
10. Is the 25 minute lunch mandated? (45 minutes total between lunch and recess)
11. Do teachers get paid for after school? (Yes)
12. Would the after school programs still be available? (Likely yes, but would all have to be addressed)
13. What/how would teachers get paid? (One time, non-pensionable stipend)

14. What is the deadline, why did we decide not to try for the Fall? (Our decision to not try for the Fall, too much to consider and too many moving parts. Deadline for Spring is November 25.)
15. Considering the number of IEP's, is there any benefit to doing it in January, rather than in September, when everyone will need to be re-writing IEP's (IEP's are re-written every year anyway)
16. Who decides the school hours, etc. (CPS has mandated 8:00-3:30 to qualify for this program)
17. Any other financial or other benefits to the school? (No)
18. Who decides on this issue? (Teachers)
19. Who asks the teachers to vote on the longer school day issue? (Principal)
20. Are we working toward Track E scheduling? (Track E is different school schedule, same number of days, spread out differently. Don't think we are going that way.)

TEACHER STATEMENT

Jody Ebstein read a prepared statement concerning the teachers' thoughts on the issue. To summarize:

1. This seems like an old debate, with some new issues. The new debate has new elements that must be considered.
2. Teachers are not against a longer school day. They have met with Principal Price to look at what the 90-minute longer day would look like and want to be sure that if we extend the school day, we do it correctly and after thoughtful consideration and planning.
3. Concerns the teachers have about extending the school day at this time:
 - a. We would be on the Inclement Weather Schedule
 - b. It is bad timing for the students because teachers are currently planning for ISAT preparation and a full schedule upheaval might negatively affect that preparation.
 - c. After school participation would drop
 - d. Voting for the waiver could weaken our union. A lawsuit has been filed by the CTU.
4. Due to changes in Illinois law, CPS can extend the school day, but teachers can still negotiate other issues.
5. "Raise Your Hand" advocates "doing this thing right".
6. Should this not happen this year, please remember that our test scores continue to go up and our great after school programs start up September 25th.
7. Our main concern is your children

Final Questions

1. How about doing a survey of all Audubon parents?
2. September 27, Raise Your Hand is announcing the results of their survey of these issues.
3. Why are we taking these notes (to get the LSC and parent input that this process needs)
4. Nick Hardgrove presented a summary of parent comments that he and other parent representatives had received via e-mail, including:
 - a. All people that commented were in favor of the longer day, at some level, not necessarily in January, but in general.
 - b. Most common points were don't use the additional time for ISAT drilling, not for more homework, and not on the lounge kids.
 - c. Longer lunch and longer recess were definitely desired. Others supported more gym and specials. Some supported more straight instruction.

- d. Other concerns raised were staffing and teacher compensation – teachers deserve to be compensated fairly for the additional time. Also teacher burn out was a concern, as well as potential strain on parent-teacher relationships.
- e. Other comments:
 - i. It has worked elsewhere, why can't we do it here?
 - ii. It is well settled that kids who exercise learn better
 - iii. Kids need to socialize and take time eating and have a good recess in their learning process
 - iv. It's inevitable why not do it now?
 - v. We are a blue ribbon school, why not lead the way on this issue, as well?
 - vi. Audubon's philosophy is inclusion and differentiated instruction for the kids. It's all about the kids, so let's make this about the kids
 - vii. Some kids even want the longer school day
 - viii. Process seems rushed
 - ix. Quality beats quantity any time
 - x. Principals and teachers should be the ones leading the change
 - xi. Make sure CPS treats teachers fairly (they've already skipped a raise and diverted TIF funds)
 - xii. The ARS program may (by its own success) be getting less vital and needed by fewer students
 - xiii. Rotating specials to give classroom teachers more time to prepare
- 5. What do you want Principal Price? (I'd like to start a longer school day in January)
- 6. How does the vote work?
- 7. Generally we're in favor, but "one size fits all" rarely works and "moving too quickly" is usually bad
- 8. We're in favor, and sooner rather than later. Issue of TIF funds has merit
- 9. My Primary Concern: starting in January would be difficult, teachers' concerns should be heard
- 10. Quality of the teachers is huge. It's better for the kids. Let's do it.
- 11. Increase social/emotional learning as well. (stress management and conflict resolution)
- 12. Concern for starting in January is that more teacher face time is not necessarily good. Our teachers are doing a great job. Adding more face time only hurts their prep time, and could burn them out.
- 13. Property taxes (TIF) are going to large corporations
- 14. We should wait until the end of the year
- 15. We respect the teachers and the comments, but I don't know if it has been stressed enough today that our parents want the longer school day
- 16. I'll start the \$1000 club to give the teachers appropriate money for this

Final LSC Comments (summarized)

Maria Griffith: Rushing this issue is bad. Let's do it right.

Jill Bass: Let's make sure we are putting enough thought into how we would implement a longer day. This process has been disrespectful of the teachers. The \$800 stipend is offensive.

Nick Hardgrove: Let's do it in January and work out any kinks before it is mandated next fall. Could the Teacher Representatives ask the teachers what it would take for them to vote for it in January.

Phyllis Ryan: For the record, in the way of teacher instruction time, we are in the middle as far as average face time goes. Yes we have a shorter school day, but the actual instruction time here, is not at the bottom as compared to other schools across the country

Note: In the middle of the Longer Day discussion, Anne Turner walked in, prompting an appreciative round of applause.

Principal Report

We have had a change in AMP status. There is no longer such a thing as AMP Status. We are in the Ravenswood Ridge Network, and are overseen by a Network Chief. They are talking about autonomy for high performing schools.

We still budget on a per pupil basis.

Funds Transfers

Principal Price requested that the LSC approve 2 fund transfers:

1. \$10,000 from Account 2-8113 (Gust Foundation) to Account 2-4005 (Student Field Trips)
2. \$2,000 from Account 2-1320 (Parking Lot) to Account 2-9103 (Staff Development)

Brendan Gilboy moved that the LSC approve these transfers, as presented. Phyllis Ryan seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Rental Agreement

Principal Price asked that the LSC approve a rental agreement between Audubon and Selective Prep Testing Company. No rent, but Audubon students get preference in enrollment. (20 kid maximum, \$395 per kid, we get 1 scholarship per 10 kids enrolled)

Barbara Kantrow moved that the rental agreement be approved. Nick Hardgrove seconded. The motion approved by unanimous vote.

Committee Reports

The Bilingual Committee has met.

Principal Price and Jody Ebstein have spoken to work on scheduling a PPLC meeting.

Announcements

Thank you to Anne Turner for Audubon Summer Reading Challenge.

Audubon received the Blue Ribbon Award, as stated earlier. Principal Price will be going to Washington DC in November to officially receive the award.

The Father-Daughter Dance will be February 17, 2012. Alex Pramenko is also organizing a Mother-Son outing to a UIC Basketball game, on January 21, 2012.

Roscoe Village Shop for Kids day is October 6, 2011. There are 18 schools competing for the top prize. And schools get 15% of total purchases for which the buyers indicated a preferred school.

The Hawk Walk is October 7th.

Adjournment

Jody Ebstein moved to adjourn, seconded by Barbara Kantrow. By unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:29.