

Van Hise Elementary PTO General and Business Meeting Minutes February 3, 2015

Present: 11 parents, 4 board members, 4 faculty, Principal.

NEXT MEETING: March 3, 2015, VHE Cafeteria (Informational meeting about the upcoming school referendum)

General meeting:

At the general meeting, Kerry Motoviloff from MMSD presented about math instruction in the district. After her presentation, parents split into groups by their children's grade and had a chance to hear from a teacher about math instruction at VHE specifically.

Business Meeting:

Principal's Report

Read your heart out will be on Friday, February 27. This is the second year VHE has done Read Your Heart Out. All parents are welcome to volunteer as readers, but there is a special emphasis on African-American family Involvement. Fabu will be a special guest again.

The MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) tests for grades 3-5 reading is done. Proficiency is looking good: we've already met our goal for end of year.

Benchmarking for K-5: staff looked at each child and put together Google doc to see everyone's progress fall-winter. The Google Doc allows the teachers to easily see which kids need more challenge; who's doing fine; and who specifically needs help.

Questions for Peg: How often are standardized tests done? CogAT is for grades 2 and 5, in fall. It is a district-level advanced learning plan screener, to see if they're missing anyone who is an advanced learner. Lisa Friend-Kalupa can answer questions about it. In some cases, the score is way lower than what they see in school, in some cases, score is higher than expected. The test shows thought processes that kids are having. The School-Based Leadership Team is working on communication with families about testing. The grade 3-5 state test is the WKCE (Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam); science and social studies are done in the fall; the Badger exam (formerly known as the Smarter Balance exam) will replace the WKCE in May. Other tests are more formative. Aims Web is given to kids in grades 1/2 to see how they are doing, and it informs instruction. Someone commented that it would be helpful to have a list of what the tests are and when they're done. Assessment was suggested as a possible discussion topic for April PTO meeting.

Registration: Registration brought in 13 kids that are new. We don't yet know how many 4k are assigned to VHE. Siblings of out-of-district students are not being automatically admitted to VHE because of space concerns. Transfers are also common mid-year.

Event Updates

Science Night: A flier has been passed out. Someone is contacting community volunteers, also parent volunteers. We are going to try having it all in the gym and the hallway outside the gym. Afan will contact Ann about the location. The timing has also been moved it up a half hour, to 6:00-7:30.

Other events: Dance recap. Overall, the dance went well. This will be Danielle's last year organizing the event, Tien is on the fence and might not dj next year. Miss Chanel will take the lead next year. She has dj friends; the dance will happen next year. It was in the Middle School gym this year, because of logistics, but will probably go back to elementary gym next year to reduce the amount of running around in the hallways. Too many kids got dropped off without their parents this year; we will try to address that next year.

Great Dane Night: Monday, February 9. The 5th graders will be performing on the pool table side. Dana will sell the ipad raffle tickets there. It will be an all day event.

Multicultural night: March 20. Daniella Sponselar is not doing it this year. Anjali Sridharan will be working with Rosemary Barrientos.

The box top contest is going on right now. The teachers are into it. It is ending next Friday. The reward is carnival tickets, based on how many box tops each class collects.

Art Fair: May 2. The planning has just started for that. Robin Stephens is doing it this year. Local vendors and students will both be invited to participate. The price for a table is \$10 for a kid booth, \$50 for an adult booth. The bake sale will happen, plus a Barbeque, and the garden will be open.

A note about the garden: We have green team that has received an \$8,000 grant and are looking for builders for a pavilion and an architect. They would like a sheltered area with picnic tables, etc. Hawthorne and Lincoln elementary schools both have pavilions that are possible examples of what the group is thinking of. The outdoor classroom is expanding to the area by the playground. We'll need design and build help. The pavilion will need to be big enough for a classroom. Someone asked if there will be cement footings. Peg said the group is open to anything, but cost is an issue. The grant is part of Sustain Dane; there will be a sustainability session in Feb., where the garden group will develop and present plan. The grant money has to be used by 6/30. The original estimate for the pavilion was high, \$21,000. The group has now heard it might be as low as 9k. Depending on teacher grant process and the

final cost of the pavilion, the PTO may have some money left over to cover the difference between the grant and the cost of the pavilion.

Playground expansion: The playground group decided to wait until after the referendum to work on the playground. The idea is that the playground and garden will be linked.

Carnival: The committee held a meeting last night (2/2), everything is on track. They will add an extra track to Sign-up Genius to get parents to man the ticket sales. Stuffed animal donations are a bit slow. LèAndrea will be getting volunteers from the UW athletic department, and one of the service fraternities/sororities. Classroom reps should tell their classes it's ok to help with another classroom's game if your classroom's game is full. There will be floaters, but it is still better to have parents/kids volunteer for games. In addition to Sign-Up Genius, there will be email signup and a physical sign up outside classrooms (for games) and by the office (for ticket sales).

Silent Auction Baskets are going well. Most rooms have their themes picked. Classroom reps are invited to encourage people that the baskets don't have to be crazy big.

Referendum Update

Representatives from the school district are willing to come to the March 3 PTO meeting. It will be at 6:30. Someone from the district will talk about the barebones logistics of the referendum. Carousel sent out email about Communities and Schools Together (CAST) the advocacy group. School district employees can't advocate for the referendum. CAST is trying to reach the larger community. Anyone interested in helping get the referendum passed should contact Carousel. There was a kick-off meeting for CAST last week. They have materials about the referendum and want to reach different communities. They are interested in contacting seniors in our neighborhood, basically spreading the word. 80% of Madison doesn't have a child in school. But, some probably have grandkids. Are there going to be materials in other languages? Peg thinks the district will provide materials in multiple languages; our families especially need Chinese; also Arabic, Spanish, Hmong. We might want to request the district to translate their materials into those languages.

Shelby will look into putting information into the Hill Farms newsletter and the Facebook group about the March 3 PTO meeting.

Why not open the 3/3 meeting to the neighborhood? The question is how to advertise it. Facebook page. What about Midvale Heights? They also have a Facebook page. The school district is having an open house at Midvale about the referendum; the kids will show the building, etc. There was some discussion about whether we could or should do a similar open house on our own at VHE. It was pointed out that there is a video on the MMSD website about VHE. We should link to the video from the PTO page, our Facebook group, etc. We can't do a virtual open

house because of rules of how to do/show videos of schools/classrooms. We want to open up to greater neighborhood.

Shelby will get childcare for the March PTO meeting. We'll post announcements about it to the Hill Farms Facebook page, Midvale Heights newsletter, websites, listservs, newsletters if possible. We could also post flyers at Sequoia library, Metcalfes, etc.