

MINUTES

Spoede Elementary School Association General Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Amy Rich.

In Attendance

SSA Executive Board Members: Stacey Acree, Dr. Connie Brawley, Jennifer Deutsch, Sarah Friesen, Rebecca Goldman, Jill Hunt, Maureen McGinnis, Amy Rich, Kari Vincent, Kristen Wild

Other Members Who Signed In

Please see "2/2/09 SSA GMM Attachment A" for the sign-in sheet

Approval of the Minutes

Jennifer Deutsch made a motion to approve the minutes from the 11/17/2008 SSA General Meeting, Jill Starr seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

I. Principal's Report – Dr. Connie Brawley

- A. Dr. Brawley welcomed everyone to the new library and commented that the students are really enjoying the new space, especially the window seats. The official dedication will take place 2/18 at 7:00 pm and is open to the community. The library will be named the Linnie Logan Library and the dedication will be a celebration, not a memorial. The construction company has donated a plaque and an artist has donated an oil painting of Ms. Logan.
- B. Love & Logic. Two speakers from the Love and Logic program will be in St. Louis on 2/13 to train the staff. Additionally they will be doing an hour-long program for parents the evening before, 2/12, at 7:00 pm.
- C. RAVE. Parent volunteers are needed to assist with a program called RAVE which is a reading intervention program. Parents will volunteer one day a week for one hour. Sarah Cockerline will train the parent volunteers. The children will get help every day, but not from the same volunteer every day. At least two more parent volunteers are needed.
- D. Construction update. Construction is basically finished. The sinks in the new bathrooms by the gym have been installed too high for kindergarteners and other younger students. The construction company will readjust the sink heights. Automatic shades for the library windows will also be added. The learning cottages will remain until at least until July 1. Carpool will not change next year but hopefully some improvements will be made that are in the works.
- E. Security. New equipment will be installed. All doors except the very front and very back will require a pass card to open. All teachers will have pass cards. Everyone else will have to buzz in through the office. Cameras will be installed throughout the school and outside. Different parts of the building may now be locked off on evenings when there are community events taking place. Changes to take place by the end of the month and additional information will be sent home.

II. President's Report – Amy Rich & Kristen Wild

- A. The SSA will be making a donation to the new library in honor of Linnie Logan. Most likely this will be in the form of artwork - possibly frames that would hold a rotating display of student artwork.
- B. Grants Passed by the Executive Board
 1. Submitted by Mrs. Picco, a Royal Reading & Writing Center. Literacy instructional program to benefit her students. The grant was for \$324.21.
 2. Submitted by the Spoede Diversity Committee, a storyteller for the Martin Luther King, Jr. assembly to benefit all students. The grant was for \$385.
- C. Pending Grants – The Executive Committee has approved the following grants but they require an additional vote as they are in excess of \$500.
 1. New Kid Assembly for character education/anti-bullying message. Non-competitive drama that encourages respect to benefit all students. Amount requested: \$575. Kari Vincent made a motion to approve the grant, Sally Heller seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
 2. Mad Science Assembly focusing on gravity, weather and rainbows to benefit all students. Amount requested: \$600. Gary Davis made a motion to approve the grant, Sara Bernstein seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- D. Green Gazette
1. The Gazette will be changing to an online format. The goal is to get a large majority (80%) of families to make this cost effective. A link will be emailed each Friday and you can click on it to immediately go to the online Gazette. If you have not yet signed up, there is a form that went home and others available at the meeting. Rebecca Goldman came up with the name Green Gazette. The Gazette will continue to be published in both formats for a few weeks and then in March will go paperless. Sharon Goldberg already has about 100 families signed up to receive the online version. The email addresses provided will be kept completely private and used only for school business. Thanks to Katie Otto we are back to a weekly Gazette format.
- E. Past Events
1. The Winter Party was a parent-free event organized by Jessica Spielberg. Frilly & Miller performed at an assembly focusing on character building. Kari Vincent commented that it was nice to have a parent-free event at such a hectic time of year. Feedback from parents was similar - they were happy that this event was just for students.
 2. The School Skate was organized by Leslie Wolf. There was some miscommunication about the length of skate time but it was all worked out. If anyone has photos of students on the ice, please submit for the yearbook.
 3. The Hospitality Committee has served another meal and the staff enjoyed it very much. There will be one more hospitality event this spring in addition to Staff Appreciation Day.
 4. Kathy Lang reported that Passport Night was a great success. This year the event was more spread out and people seemed to enjoy this. Monticello's donated all of the key chains given out. Looking for another chair for next year to work with Kathryn Lysinger.
 5. Ashley Schneider reported for the Staff Appreciation Day Committee. So far they have done coffee and sweets. This month is the biggest event as they will cater lunch for the Staff Development Day next week. This year they are bringing in Gourmet to Go.
- F. Upcoming Events
1. Events at the High School. Laura Fedder, a 5th grade parent and secretary of the parent association at the High School reported that some upcoming events at the High School are community-wide events and she encouraged everyone to attend. The Dad's Club is hosting a chili supper. The Dad's Club provides food at football games and is a way for the men to be involved. There will also be a Trivia Night to benefit the Ladue Scholarship Fund (which is need-based, not academic-based). Trivia night will be 4/18 at 7:00 p.m. at Temple Israel. These events are a nice way to meet parents we will get to know later at the Middle School and High School. She stressed the importance of parents staying involved. Additionally, they are selling recycle bags to benefit the Ladue Parents Association.
 2. Book Fair. Sara Bernstein reported that the Book Fair this year will be held the week of 2/24 – 2/27 as we wanted to wait to hold it in the new library. This year's theme is "Lights, Camera, Reading Makes You a Star". Family Night will be 2/24 and the students will return during their regular library time. Another family time will be right after the Parent-Child Breakfast on 2/27. Teachers will have wish lists that will include more paperbacks this year as well as gift cards towards books. There will also be a bucket where students may enter their names every time they read a book – a drawing will then be held on family night.
 3. The Parent-Child Breakfast will be held the last day of the Book Fair, 2/27 from 7:45- 8:30 am. This has been a great event for working parents. It is very important that parents stay with their children until 8:30 am and students may only enter the family time at the Book Fair if they are accompanied by a parent. Parent volunteers are needed. Contact Charlotte Kelley if you would like to volunteer.
 4. Parent Social & Fundraiser. Ashley Schneider reported that the event will be held 4/3 at 6:30 pm and will be a dinner/auction held once again at El Paisano Mexican Restaurant. People like the venue as it is close by, casual and fun. Katie Otto and Ashley Schneider are chairing the auction and Jill Starr and Sabina Pugh are chairing the party. Everyone is encouraged to go places normally frequented in the community and ask for donations of goods and services for the auction. Anything of value will be accepted. If we don't get enough auction items, the event will not raise any funds. Parties are very good sellers if anyone wants to get together with other parents to host a party. We will also have a live auction with items like a parking space, Principal for a Day, perhaps a "Day in the Life" videotape of your child. New software has been ordered to expedite checkout. Next meeting of the committee is 2/11 at 11:30 at El Paisano.

III. Treasurer's Report – Sarah Friesen & Maureen McGinnis

- A. Updated Treasurer's Report (see "2/2/09 SSA GMM Attachment B" attached). Year-to-Date we have been doing very well. The Sprit sale category is a negative because they just bought a lot of inventory and haven't sold it yet. Still have yet to do two of our biggest fundraisers – the Parent Social and the Book Fair.
- B. Grants. With tonight's approvals, we have spent about a third of the budget allocated to grants.
- C. We had an incident where cash disappeared from the mailbox in the office. In the future, when turning in money, especially cash, please make sure that you give it to Maureen or Sarah directly as it is not Cindy Marlow's responsibility.
- D. Tax Letters. Currently working to get tax letters out. Per IRS rules, donations of \$25 or less do not require a tax letter - you may just use your cancelled check. Only donations larger than \$25 will receive tax letters this year.

IV. Corresponding Secretary – Jennifer Deutsch

- A. SSA Website. Jennifer Deutsch reported that the new SSA website is currently under construction. The District wants school associations to begin maintaining their own websites. We will begin paying \$12.95 per month for a host site for the new SSA website. There will be a limited amount of people with the authority to update the website content. If you have something to post on the website, please submit it to Jennifer Deutsch.
- B. The Turtle Tribute Fund had additional donations this month. All money raised helps fund the teacher's grants. Tax letters go out this month for those who made donations.
- C. Thank you notes. Jennifer reported that she receives thank you notes every week from the staff and that they are very appreciative of all that the parents and SSA does. Gary Davis asked if the SSA has considered accepting credit card payments. Sarah Friesen said that we do accept them for the auction and the Book Fair but do not do it for other things as there is a 2% charge per transaction.
- D. Boxtops. Kristen Wild added that there is another boxtop competition coming up. Our goal is to earn \$2000 from boxtops this year. The class at the end of the year bringing in the most will earn a pizza party.

V. Past Presidents' Report – Kari Vincent

- A. SSA Bylaws. Kari Vincent went over proposed bylaws changes, (see "2/2/09 SSA GMM Attachment C"). Most of these changes are to allow more flexibility in dates of where and when we hold meetings. The proposed changes are located in the following sections of the bylaws:
 - 1. Page 2, Section 1
 - 2. Page 2, Section 2
 - 3. Page 2, Section 3
 - 4. Page 6, Section 2 (1)
 - 5. Page 6, Section 2 (2)
 - 6. Page 7, Section 8
 - 7. Page 8, Section 10
 - 8. Page 9, Section 3
 - 9. Page 9, Section 5
- B. Ashley Schneider made a motion to approve the changes to the bylaws, Rebecca Goldman seconded, the motion passed unanimously.
- C. Nominating Committee. Kari and Janie Spirtas are chairing the nominating committee and are looking for volunteers interested in serving on the committee. Nomination forms will be in folders soon. Members of the nominating committee are not eligible to serve on the board next year.

VI. Parent District Council Representative – Rebecca Goldman

- A. Dr. Benson. Rebecca Goldman reported that Dr. Benson will be leaving for a new position in Iowa. The District is looking for a new superintendent and would like input from parents. There is a survey on the district website and parents are encouraged to fill it out. Focus groups will also be held 2/4 from 7-8 pm at the High School, 2/5 from 7-8 pm at the Middle School and 2/12 from 7:30-8:30 pm at Old Bonhomme. Parents may also email board members directly. We may not get an opportunity to speak with finalists as candidates often want to keep the process confidential so as not to jeopardize their current positions.
- B. Calendars. Calendars for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years are now on the website.
- C. Community Survey. The District conducted a random telephone survey of Ladue residents in January to get community feedback. They will conduct another survey in the spring and would like to do this 4 times per year. If you receive a call, please take the survey to contribute your feedback.

- D. Assistant Superintendent Donna Jahnke is very impressive and has been sitting in on the meetings.
- E. New Construction. Everything is going smoothly.
- F. Ladue Early Childhood Center. There are plans for a new building. In late January there was a meeting with the architect. Next year a learning cottage will be moved to LECC to be put in the back for extra space.
- G. A question was asked by Sarah Martin regarding the article in the paper about falling revenue. That issue has not been brought up at PDC. There will be an increase in enrollment due to the current economy. The economy will cause some people to switch from private to public schools. Dr. Brawley added that each school's budget is being cut by 10%. Currently we are 11 students away from 500 and have been getting 2-3 new students per week since the beginning of the school year. Dr. Brawley and Tony Arnold have been doing many tours for parents interested in the school for next year.

VII. Outdoor Learning Center

- A. Sharon Buchanan and Sarah Martin gave us an overview of the Outdoor Learning Center and did an exercise demonstrating the value of touching during learning. They also are asking for help with the vegetable garden and other gardens
 - 1. The first Saturday of each month from 8 am – 12 pm will be volunteer days beginning 2/7. Raindates will always be the following Saturday. This is not groundskeeping and lawn mowing. Volunteers will help with the outdoor learning environment. From 8-10 am a gardening group will be meeting on Saturdays to share their knowledge. Sarah is a master gardener and Sharon will become one soon.
 - 2. Sharon Buchanan spoke of the importance of teachers integrating the Outdoor Learning Center into the classroom curriculum. They have organized things to make it easier for the teachers. The Middle School will be offering a nature study course. The government is considering a "no child left inside" program to encourage outdoor education. The Outdoor Learning Center is funded primarily with proceeds from the Mum sales so please buy your spring plants from the Spode plant sale the first week in May.

VIII. Miscellaneous

- A. Karen Knoll asked if the SSA could fund the DARE program for the 5th grade as the program has been cut. There are no school funds for this as it costs \$5,000 per grade level. Paula McMasters is currently teaching parts of the DARE curriculum to the 5th grade. Research does not support that the police make that much of a difference. It can be better for the students to have it taught by someone like Paula who the students know and who is at the school consistently. Katie Otto spoke about the National Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse and will look into their programs.
- B. Another question was raised as to what would be cut with the 10% budget cut. Dr. Brawley answered that when she knows more she will let us know. She also mentioned that they will be working with the SSA. No positions at any level will be added except to maintain class sizes.
- C. The winners of the attendance raffle were Christy Eilerman and Monica Moeckel.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 by Kristen Wild.