

Whitehills School Association

Agenda

February 9, 2016

7:00 PM

7:00-7:05

- Call to order with welcome and sign-in
- Approval of January minutes/Old Business
 - Motion to approve by Angie, seconded by Jen G. Motion passed.
- Approval of Agenda
 - Nothing to add; agenda approved.

7:05-7:30

- Teacher Report
 - Lynne Clyma reports that the books from the Book Fair sales have arrived and will be processed soon.
 - August-September start-up thoughts
 - The earlier we can put on calendars events related to kindergarten, like dates for playground play dates, it would help welcome new families and help them feel like they knew what was coming up.
 - New kindergarten parents feel overwhelmed with how start-up works, have concerns about being able to visit their child's classroom, and having a cohesive welcome planned and publicized well in advance would be helpful.
 - At Marble they had blocks by different letters of the alphabet so parents could visit the classrooms in an organized way during the first week of school. There used to be half days for K children with parents in the classroom with them.
 - This is a district decision; one school wouldn't be able to deviate from the district schedule. Could be brought up at District Parent Council.
 - Add popsicle play date for whole school (not just DK-K) before school starts.
 - But important to remember that DK-K also need an opportunity to have the playground to themselves and acclimate to Whitehills.
 - Possibility of Red Cedar opening with pre-school and K in the fall is another potential change.
 - Kindergarten registration date may be as early as the beginning of March this year (much earlier than in the past) so the board of education can take action on school of choice slots in their first April meeting.

- Kindergarten screening might then be able to move as early as June.
 - 5K was a great event to build community spirit, welcome people to the school. It will be held again this year, on August 27.
 - Possible days for play dates week of August 29?
 - Jump Rope for Heart – children have already raised about \$1500 according to Mrs. V. Kids are very excited about it.
 - Two upcoming gym sessions will be devoted to some of the educational materials sent out by the American Heart Association. Some activities will involve measuring out amount of sugar in soda, making predictions, learning to read nutrition labels.
 - Parents thank Mrs. V for her holistic approach to physical education and self esteem.
- Principal Report
 - Superintendent mentioned Embrace the World in a recent cabinet meeting and is looking forward to attending.
 - Stacy Criswell is now a full-time reading interventionist here at Whitehills (was part time before). This came about due to numerous conversations and data analysis.
 - First and second grades will be going to the Wharton Center to see *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* on February 26.
 - Had another round of data analysis last week. A group of teachers went to the high school to look and see where we are in terms of math and reading, then staff here were able to talk to their colleagues and go over their own data. Each teacher wrote an action plan that included how they were going to address specific needs.
 - Students come to us from different backgrounds and situations and our teachers are very good about addressing the needs of all of their students.
 - Teachers came to Whitehills from all over the district and brought many different talents and Mr. Wells points out that children bring their own talents and creativity as well.
 - Mr. Wells reminds the group that there are true educators here at the school who are working tirelessly for the kids. Parents don't always see it because they are not here all day every day, but it's important to know that our teachers are awesome. There is a lot of power in being a pure educator – it's truly a calling.
 - M-STEP – every third through fifth grade student will take the test online with laptops. A point person for the district will be available to troubleshoot, and our librarian Mrs. Hosbach will be on site helping as well.
 - Mr. Wells has given the list of high-frequency words to the teachers so they can start introducing them to the students.

- Special Guest Keith Hagen, East Lansing Forward (ELF)
 - As a parent of children at this school, he feels we are all extremely fortunate to be here at Whitehills. Teachers and staff inspire our kids every day, and parents could probably do a better job of inspiring and helping the teachers.
 - ELF is a group of people from the community (be they business owners, MSU students, Whitehills parents, retirees in Glencairn, whatever).
 - If we do not take part in the discourse in the community, we may not be hindering it, but we may not be helping. Personal connections are critical in giving someone the benefit of the doubt in a situation where we may not agree with someone on the surface.
 - We shouldn't be divided into Pinecrest or Whitehills or Donley, we should all think of ourselves as Trojans. We should celebrate being part of East Lansing and the community.
 - We try to be proactive instead of reactive.
 - Keith has met with four of the five presidents of the elementary parent councils and everyone seems to be excited about what ELF is doing.
 - Event/outreach possibilities
 - Make Field Day for fifth graders a celebration of fifth grade. Make it something to look forward to through all of their elementary years.
 - Holiday Helper program in the elementary schools allowed ELF to help 25 families last Christmas; program will happen again this year, maybe for 50 families.
 - Kids decorate bikes and have a summer parade through East Lansing neighborhoods and have a picnic at the end.
 - MSU professors and others have a dialogue (like TED talks) with community.
 - ELF is not only about schools, but also East Lansing. They are a sponsor of the pop-up ice rink in Valley Court Park.
 - Get involved via Facebook (East Lansing Forward), or <http://www.eastlansingforward.org>. They are redoing the website right now and it should be up again soon. They will publish their calendar soon.

7:30-7:45

- Playground committee update – upcoming fundraising event called Playgroundpalooza will be March 4
 - Looking for donated items for silent auction
 - Taco theme
 - Fundraiser but also fun for the kids and school

- Don't know about pricing yet, but looking at tiered pricing with family rate, presale price, day-of price, and also a dance-only option with no dinner.
- Angie will extend an invitation to the Board of Education and the superintendent.
- Embrace the World Feb 18
 - Planning is going well. We have 17 tables so far.
 - Possibility of volunteers from ELHS National Honor Society?
 - Mrs. V is off the last hour of the day and can help set up tables
 - Mr. Wells will check with third grade student teacher, Ms. Deng, who is starting a Chinese club to see if she wants to do a table.

7:45-8:00

- Marco's Pizza Feb 18
 - Decorating boxes in May – kids decorate clean boxes and family receives pizza in their own box.
- Science Club Feb 19
 - Topic for this month: Robots
- 4-week Italian Program starting after school
 - See Joy Campbell for details
 - Begins February 10
 - Partnership with CeLTA Language School at MSU
- March Mad-Science-Ness Science and Engineering Festival March 24
 - Planning is going well with getting labs to participate.
 - Debbie purchased 30 trifolds in case some children need one and can't buy one.
 - Groups and partners will be encouraged.
 - Planners trying to find prizes for participation (no judging)
 - Maybe one large science-y prize like a static ball or a lava lamp and all kids with posters are entered in a drawing to win it.
- Conferences March 15 and 17- Teacher Luncheons
 - Chrissy Gentilozzi will organize this.
 - Need to set up Sign Up Genius
 - Soups/salad/sandwiches
 - Baked potato bar
- Teacher appreciation week May 4– 8
 - To be discussed later.
- Carnival May 6
 - To be discussed in more detail later.
- Book Fair May 23-27
 - To be discussed later.

8:00-8:20

- Treasurer's Report
 - Not many changes since last month, just a few teacher reimbursements. Big Zoo Lesson invoice also came.
 - School counselor Chris Anderson will be offered the same \$100 grant that all the teachers got. Motion by Joy, second by Angie, motion passed.
- Other Officers' report
 - None, all items covered elsewhere.
- School Board Meeting
 - Clarification question asked on what occurred in board meeting last night: earlier motions were rescinded, then a new motion was made to start a committee to explore feasibility of starting new programming for pre-K and earlier programs in Red Cedar, still potentially for September 2016.
- District Parent Council?
 - If anyone is available to go, Debbie can't make it this month. It's at 9:00am tomorrow, Wednesday, February 10.

8:20-8:30

- Round Table Discussion (miscellaneous questions/comments)
 - Chrissy Gentilozzi read a letter she wrote to the superintendent praising a number of teachers in multiple schools and Mr. Wells and stating her opinion that schools need more interventionists, support, and support for teachers because her own three children have benefited so greatly from the care of educators in this district.

SIGN IN

Angie Smith
Joy Campbell
Nico Gisholt
Hilary Owen
Chrissy Gentilozzi
Jen Gorchow

Andy Wells
Lynne Clyma
Marie Volovsek
Sarah Cole-Blankenship
Keith Hagan