

Inspired Families Association Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2016

7:15-8:30 PM

www.inspiredfamiliesassociation.org

<https://www.facebook.com/inspiredteachingIFA>

Edgewood Field Renovation:

The Edgewood Field/Rec Center renovation is moving forward and will likely begin in the fall of 2016. The renovation has a budget of more than \$15 million and will include the construction of a new rec center as well as new playgrounds and additional upgrades to the field and sports facilities. The architects of the project are mindful of the school's use of the field and appear to be trying to design the construction schedule to maintain use of some parts of the field, even while the construction is ongoing. There have been two community meetings about the field renovation so far; another meeting is expected to be held in late winter or early spring. Through coordination with the IFA Beautification Committee, the architects of the renovation have also expressed interest in attending the school's winter chili cook-off to seek input on the renovation plans from ITS families.

New IFA Board member:

The IFA welcomes Clifton Durant to the IFA Board, filling a seat that became vacant in late November. Clif has a 3rd grader and a PK4 student at ITS.

Social Committee Update:

CLASS WINTER PLAYDATES: All families should have received information from your class about upcoming playdates in coordination with White Apron's offer to donate 25% of weekend sales to ITS. White Apron is located at 445 11th Street NW in Penn Quarter (<http://whiteaprondc.com/>).

FAMILY GAME NIGHT AND CHILI COOKOFF – February 20. The social committee's next event will be a chili cookoff and family game afternoon/night on Saturday, 2/20. Volunteer sign-ups will be going out soon to solicit chili cooks and adults to supervise game tables. The chili cookoff will be an IFA fundraiser – if chili isn't your thing, families are also welcome to bring their own dinner/snacks.

Recruitment Committee Update:

We have had two Saturday open houses and will have two more on February 6 and 20, from 10-11:30 am. If you'd like to volunteer at an open house or help with ITS flier/postcard distribution in your neighborhood (or elsewhere in the city), please contact Mary Pitts (mary.messick@gmail.com) or Johanna Olexy (joebner@gmail.com). The lottery deadline for families to apply via MySchoolDC is March 1.

Girls on the Run: seeking coaches and participants

Brandi Gardner (brandi.gardner@inspiredteachingschool.org) is the school's coordinator for Girls on the Run (GOTR) again this year. The club is open to girls in 3rd-7th grade; however, due to GOTR policies, ITS will need to be able to field two teams in order for 7th graders to participate. If the school can only support one team with parent coaches/volunteers, the program will be open to 3rd-6th graders.

GOTR is a 10-week program and will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:45-5pm beginning in late February. Students can sign up to participate on 2/1. Coaches are needed to support the program; new coaches must attend a training session either 2/6 or 2/20 at 9 am or 1pm. Contact Brandi if you are interested in coaching or for more information. **You DO NOT need to be a runner to coach or participate!**

Traffic and Safety Update, Clarise McCants (K parent, clarise.c.mccants@gmail.com) and Deborah Dantzer Williams

Please sign the online petition (https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/its-needs-a-crossing-guard?source=direct_link&) to ask for a crossing guard for ITS at the intersection of Lincoln, Douglas, and 2nd Streets NE. Share with others. Even if you have already signed the paper petition, please sign the online petition as well! We will be presenting the petition and signatures to DDOT officials at the Traffic Safety forum at ITS on 1/20.

Clarise is an ITS parent and neighbor of the school and is working with other neighbors on a variety of potential traffic mitigation measures around the school. One measure that they are considering is asking DDOT to do a traffic calming assessment for the intersection of Lincoln, 2nd, and Douglas and the 200 block of Douglas Street to determine if there are structural changes that could help with traffic calming and safety; potential traffic calming measures could range from signs to help guide traffic to adding a traffic light to making Douglas one-way in the morning.

Ms. Dantzer Williams stated that parents persist in parking by fire hydrants and in other illegal, and unsafe, areas around the school. The school's neighbors are upset and attended the Public Charter School Board meeting in November to oppose ITS increasing its enrollment cap for the 2016-17 school year (which will allow for the school to continue its planned growth). The PCSB directed ITS to work with our neighbors to address traffic and safety issues around the school and postponed a decision on ITS's request to increase enrollment for the next school year.

Traffic Safety Forum, January 20, 7-9 pm in the multipurpose room: Please attend!

ITS will host a traffic safety forum on 1/20. Families and Edgewood neighbors are invited to attend. There will be representatives from WMATA, DDOT, the Deputy Mayor for Education's Office, the ANC, and MPD at the meeting to discuss traffic and safety issues around the school in a coordinated way. If you have concerns about traffic, driving, and parking around the school or suggestions for improvements (such as a bus line from the Rhode Island Ave metro to the school or increased signage in particular places), please attend and make your opinions heard. ITS leadership recently learned that there was a neighborhood traffic survey compiled in August 2015; they will be reviewing the survey and its results.

Ms. Williams has also been asked to serve on a citywide school transportation committee to discuss transportation and traffic safety issues related to schools.

Basement buildout plans, Ms. Dantzler Williams

The Board of ITS has issued a tentative approval for buildout of the school's basement, which would be completed over the summer of 2016. If the buildout moves forward, Lee Montessori will move into the basement space for the next one to two years, after which Lee will relocate elsewhere in the city and ITS will be able to use the space. Building out the basement was initially part of ITS's plan for the building, but we could not afford it as part of the initial renovation in 2014. Renovating the basement will be expensive, as the floor is concrete which always increases construction costs.

ITS administrators and the Board are taking steps to ensure that the school is making financially conservative decisions as the buildout is contemplated. There are a number of issues with zoning, parking, and legal issues that need to be worked out.

ITS's current enrollment is 363 students, and next year the growth plan calls for an additional 44 students. The growth plan for the school will not change with the addition of the basement space.

Because construction plans for the basement and Edgewood Field are still uncertain, ITS cannot commit to hosting summer camps on site at the school this year. If you would like more information about the Y summer camp schedule and sites, please reach out directly to the Y.

Lower School Principal Search, Ms. Dantzler Williams

The search committee and advisory committee are hard at work, as alluded to in several emails to families from the Head of School. The school has received a good number of applications and is in the process of screening those applications to decide which applicants the search committee would like to interview. Ms. Dantzler Williams emphasized that the committee is not looking for a change agent with this search; instead, the ideal candidate will be someone who is already philosophically aligned with ITS and will continue moving forward on the school's current path. The search committee's goal is to be able to wrap up the hiring process and announce the new principal in the spring (but by no set date). The committee is moving at a deliberate pace to be thorough and careful with the search process.

Lice Policy and Updates

Schools in DC have a variety of methods by which to secure a school nurse. Schools can hire a nurse directly or can receive the services of a nurse free of charge from the DC Department of Health. ITS has chosen to receive nurse services from the DC Department of Health. In the October newsletter, the Head of School provided an update about the DC lice policy quoting directly the language sent by the DC Department of Health (see http://doh.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/page_content/attachments/Lice%20Factsheet%202014%2008.pdf). The Department of Health policy is based on new epidemiology guidelines that were passed by the city in 2014 (see: <http://doh.dc.gov/release/communicable-diseases-contracted-students>), and ITS will abide by the policies of the city in order to have a nurse free of charge from the DC Department of Health.

Per DC policy, ITS teachers and administrators are not allowed to identify to a classroom when an individual case of lice occurs. The school nurse's directive (from the DC Department of Health) is to identify cases of lice, notify the families of students presenting with lice, and inform the DC Department of Health, Epidemiology Department. The professionals there determine if there is a pattern according to

their criteria. The Department of Health informs the nurse when it is appropriate to notify the school community and the school sends out the letter when received from the Department of Health.

The school nurse has agreed to let our Head of School know when cases of lice are present. ITS families will know when lice occurs in their student's classroom. If you receive a report that your child has lice or nits and you want to proactively notify other families in your class, you are welcome to do so and it would be helpful. The DC Department of Health policy is designed to contain the spread of lice in schools and protect the confidentiality of parents and children.

Lower School Principal Update, Ms. Duskin

- Ms. Duskin thanked families for their generous Amazon wishlist purchases – lots of the gifts are already in use. Some gifts, such as large sets of blocks, are used to create more exciting play opportunities for children – for example, you can build more interesting and complex things with 400 blocks as compared to 40. Plus, blocks are expensive and last forever!
- ITS has been selected for a Google Expeditions demonstration project, and students in grades 2nd and higher will be going on digital field trips on 1/19. Individual students will get to experience a 20-minute 3D interactive scenario that will supplement topics, such as civilizations, that students are learning in class.
- The last classes are attending their Phillips Collection field trips this week. The theme for the Phillips collaboration this year is Art and Sciences. Half of the lower school classes will exhibit their class artwork at the Phillips Collection in the spring and the other half of classes will exhibit their art at ITS.
- There have been a few staffing changes in the lower school. There is a new 2nd Grade resident and a new floater early childhood resident.

Middle School Principal Update, Ms. Coleman

- Ms. Coleman thanked families for supporting the middle school wishlist, especially because many of the gifts are being used on days when students have indoor recess.
- Jim Dann, a lower school parent, has volunteered to lead the Girls Who Code club and the students are very excited to be learning to code.
- Eric Albert is laying the groundwork for a middle school debate team, which will likely be up and running for the 2016-17 school year.
- The school is seeking a girl's lacrosse coach – if you are willing/interested, contact Ms. Coleman.
- The middle school Pulitzer showcase is 1/28 at the Pulitzer Center. All families are invited and encouraged to attend.
- There are several upcoming family education nights for middle school families.
 - The high school education night for 7th grade families will be 2/11.

- There is also a sex ed night for families January 21 at 6:15 pm in room 309. This education night is designed to support families as they talk to their children about sex and sexuality.
- There will be a 3rd and 4th grade family education night for families to learn more about middle school at ITS in March – Ms. Coleman is still working on a date for that event.



Inspired Families Association

www.InspiredFamiliesAssociation.org

info@inspiredfamiliesassociation.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY

- 18 Martin Luther King Day — no school
- 19 Google Expeditions comes to Inspired Teaching School
- 20 Community meeting about traffic calming, traffic safety and parking in the neighborhood around the school
7-9 pm ITS multipurpose room
- 29 Half day

FEBRUARY

- 6 Open house
- 15 Presidents' Day — no school
- 20 Open house AND
Family Game Night and Fourth Annual Chili Cook-Off
- 26 Half day

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