

Inspired Families Association Meeting Minutes

All Families Meeting

May 25, 2016, 6:15-7:15 pm

Contents:

Recruitment and Announcements

Campus Beautification

Fundraising

Head of School

Middle School Principal

Lower School Principal

IFA Elections and Announcement of New Board of Directors for 2016-17

Recruitment and Announcements:

There will be a playdate for incoming PK3 students on Saturday, June 4 at 3pm.

In the late summer, the IFA will organize “back to school” playdates for all grade levels. They will be announced on the Google group.

The Pride Parade will take place on June 11. Carmen Rottenberg and Corey Perkins will donate their vehicle again this year for the parade. The IFA is seeking a few volunteers to help put together banners and swag for the parade. Charmaine Brandon volunteered to help. Others should contact Lucy Newton if you’d like to help.

Campus Beautification and Edgewood Field Renovation:

Campus Beautification: The campus beautification committee would like to build garden beds this summer on the Douglas Street side of the school that can be adopted by individual teachers/classes. There is a company that helps nonprofit organizations do similar construction; the IFA would like to get a group of adults/parents together over the summer to help put together beds.

The existing benches had tulips that bloomed in the spring and the benches are now planted; however, they are not practical for long-term use (and are in places that aren’t particularly safe for little ones). The wood from these may be able to be repurposed. Additionally, when Lee Montessori relocates, they are planning to leave their garden beds on the 3rd Street side of the school. The IFA hopes to help build 1-2 beds this summer as a demonstration project. Current plans are for the IFA to fund this effort. Rusty Wilson volunteered to help with construction. Perhaps families can sponsor a bench or garden bed as a fundraising opportunity.

Edgewood Field Renovation: In case you missed it, Councilmember McDuffie announced that he has secured an additional \$4M for the field renovation project, which will fund a gym on-site at the rec center. Construction timelines have been extended; construction might start next spring.

Additionally, the architects have agreed to relocate the adult exercise equipment that was initially proposed to be just outside the rear entrance/exit of the school. They have also said that they might be able to reconfigure the proposed rain garden/bioretenion area into a type of outdoor classroom. The playground will stay in the rear/far north portion of the site. The next meeting on the field renovation will be in June or July. Lori will keep the Google group posted when that meeting is announced.

Fundraising Committee:

Current tally for Inspired Giving 2015-16: \$129,600

Huge, huge thanks and congratulations to the fundraising co-chairs, committee, and all who participated in the campaign. Two years ago, the Inspired Giving drive raised \$60,000. This is a huge increase and accomplishment. The numbers on the giving drive break down as follows:

Small change drive: \$130.71

Online auction: \$16,440

Class experience live auction: \$17-\$18,000

Art silent auction: \$1,700

Raffle: \$1,385

Individual Gifts: \$71,000

Number of individuals who gave on High Five Monday: 114

Number of sustaining donors: 57

ITS Board of Directors gifts: \$19,000

Thanks also to Dori and Shemaya Klar who underwrote the printing of the Inspired Evening program book, which allowed us to raise additional money via program sponsorship ads. Rebecca Kahl will stay on as a fundraising committee co-chair next year, with Lucy Newton helping out as well. Merry Alderman Ritsch has co-chaired the committee for the past two years and is stepping down as co-chair, but will continue to help with fundraising efforts. We are looking for someone to step up as a co-chair of the committee for next year, preferably someone who's willing to take on a two-year co-chair role.

Head of School Updates:

Strategic Planning: The ITDPCS Board and the Strategic Planning Committee are in the final stages of work on the strategic plan. It will be shared with families in a meeting on June 10 at 6pm. We are tremendously appreciative of the time, care and investment made by the community and especially grateful for the leadership of John Leibovitz, who chairs the strategic planning committee.

The plan affirms the work of the school over our first five years, articulates our direction for the future and ensures that we adhere to our original mission, ensuring that a diverse group of students achieve their potential as accomplished learners, thoughtful citizens, and imaginative and inquisitive problem solvers through a demanding, inquiry-based curriculum.

200 Douglas Street NE: We will expand our program across the building as originally planned in July and Lee Montessori will move to the St Paul's campus very nearby. This is very exciting for us! There will be modifications on all three floors to make it possible for us to make the best use of every space as we continue to grow. The early childhood program, Preschool through Kindergarten, will be housed on the first floor. The second floor will house all elementary grades, 1st - 4th along with a large gallery/assembly space, library/media space and working space for teachers. The third floor will house the middle school, 5th - 8th, including a science lab classroom. Yes! We will have 8th graders next year!

Welcoming our new Lower School Principal, Suriya Douglas: We have already begun the process of engaging Suriya. Many of you helped us welcome Suriya during our recent Inspired Evening. Suriya and Zoe have already connected and the leadership team has sketched out an orientation. Suriya officially comes on board July 1 and she will be meeting with teams of faculty throughout the summer. We are planning opportunities for her to meet with families and look forward to starting the 2016-2017 school year together.

Questions from families (answered by Latisha Coleman and Zoe Duskin):

Computer lab: Right now, there are no plans for a computer lab in the building. Currently, there are laptop carts on the second and third floor and Ms. Coleman stated that it continues to work well for classes to be able to flexibly incorporate computers and laptops into lessons when needed rather than having a dedicated space just for computers.

Media center/library: The current priorities over the summer are to get the school library up and going (first and then to figure out how to best make use of a flexible media space (second)).

Timing of construction: The construction plan is to have everything done in July. There will be lots of moving (of teachers and classrooms) this summer, but not a lot of formal construction need - when the school renovation happened two years ago, it was designed in such a way that it will be relatively easy to reconfigure the building as ITS moves into all of the space. At this time, there are not plans to have a librarian on staff at the school.

Elementary school use of the science lab: The science lab will be located on the third floor of the school. It's possible that elementary classes will be able to use the lab, depending on its availability; it will largely be a question of scheduling. As of now, there is no plan to hire a lower school science teacher.

Middle School Update from Ms. Coleman

Fifth graders are going camping in June. Stay tuned!

Standardized testing this year went very smoothly; much more smoothly than last year. Testing lasted for two weeks and a day; most students tested every day for those two weeks. The location of specials that are on the 3rd floor was impacted for some of the non-testing grades; however, most classes still had their specials in their own classrooms or in other locations. During the testing period, teachers and administrators worked hard to keep lots of the regular elements of the school day in place and to keep testing confined to a small portion of the day. Kids still had recess. The third graders did Shakespeare. Testing was part of the days, but not all-consuming.

Teachers and administrators were so grateful for all of the wonderful treats for teacher appreciation week, which happened to coincide with testing this year.

Check out the Middle School Newsletter, for more information about all that's going on in middle school. It is always posted on the school's web site: <http://www.inspiredteachingschool.org/calendar/school-newsletters/>

Lower School Update from Ms. Duskin

The raffle was really fun for lower school students; they enjoyed roles including being Mr. Thomas for a day and Head of School for a Day.

Every year, Ms. Duskin meets with families who are concerned about the school's participation in the Pride Parade. We march in a family friendly section of the parade, but parents who participate should expect that some things that their kids might see at Pride (the parade and surrounding events) might spark questions that they should be prepared for. Ms. Duskin emphasized that the school community and administration believes in the kind of diversity that supports disagreement and decision-making; there is a place for all families at the school, whether or not families agree with the school's position on particular issues. She also emphasized that all beliefs are welcome at school, but not all behaviors are welcome, and

that finding the balance between inclusiveness and respectful disagreement is a work in progress. Ms. Coleman added that middle school and some lower school teachers are exploring starting a gay/straight alliance at the school.

The next few weeks will be filled with wrap-up and planning for next year, including putting together class rosters, making recommendations for room parents, spring concerts, and the last Learning Showcase of the year. The middle school spring concert will be at 6pm on the night of the Learning Showcase - all are encouraged to check out the efforts of the middle school choir.

Information about teachers for the 2016-17 school year and their grade assignments is generally shared with families in August. Rosters and class lists are shared on Meet Your Teacher day, typically just before the first day of school. The school's hiring process is rigorous and thoughtful; all residents at the school have the opportunity to apply for lead teacher positions, and there are a number of lead and master teachers who were hired out of the resident community.

IFA Board Election Results

Thanks for the terrific service of the 2015-16 IFA Board of Directors:

President: Lucy Newton

Vice President: Carmen Rottenberg

Secretary: Mary Pitts

Treasurer: Stephen Sipos

At-Large: Johanna Olexy, Ana Rodriguez, Sherrita Rogers, Clifton Durant, Yashika Okon

Welcome and congratulations to the IFA Board of Directors for the 2016-17 school year:

President: Lucy Newton

Vice President: Mary Pitts

Secretary: Charmaine Brandon

Treasurer: Stephen Sipos

At-Large: Clifton Durant, Melissa Cross, Emma Cummings, Vanessa McNeil, Joyce Stringfield