

December 4, 2014

Notes from the all-families meeting of the Inspired Families Association

1. Welcome: Kalena Clarke, President
  
2. Gordon Dental Associates presentation: T.L. Butler
  - a. We provide school-based dental services
  - b. We will be in your school this month.
  - c. Portable equipment, disposable supplies, etc.
  - d. We come to the school and provide preventive care to students whose parents wish them to participate. We need a permission slip and your insurance information.
  - e. Licensed dentist and licensed hygienist
  - f. Once we see the child we send a letter to parents with results of exam, including possible referral to dentist for followup treatment.
  - g. Also educational materials for the kids on dental hygiene, etc
  - h. We will fill out the DC Dental Form for you (the one you need for enrollment).
  - i. We try to make it fun so the kids aren't scared or nervous.
  - j. Questions:
    - i. Is there a problem with you not taking insurance? Mr Butler: No, we take Medicaid, and we will not charge you if you have other insurance. The services are free.
    - ii. How is the program funded? Mr Butler: Medicaid and grants
    - iii. If we participate in the program does that mean we don't have to submit a new dental form? Answer from Deborah Williams: it depends on how old your current form is. The form cannot be more than a year old, so if your last dental visit was more than a year ago you will need a new form.
  
3. Update from the Head of School: Deborah Dantzler Williams
  - a. Building updates
    - i. Still not done. Working on finishing up.
    - ii. Security update: The security system is now activated.
      1. You will need to be buzzed in by the front desk using the buzzer at the right of the door.
      2. You will NOT need to buzz in at the front door between 8 and 8:45 a.m.
      3. The stairwell going to the second floor will also be locked at the ground floor level. That door will be open from 8:30-8:45 for kids to go upstairs.
      4. If you arrive between 8:00 and 8:30 (or 8:45) you should leave your children in the multipurpose room for beforecare and breakfast.
      5. The front door will be open from 3:10-3:30 for dismissal.
      6. Questions:

- a. What about the syncing of clocks, etc? A: try to be earlier, if possible. Arriving right at arrival time is stressful for everyone. Our rationale: DC school leaders have been discussing this, because DC schools have had problems with absences and tardies. We have to report tardies and absences to the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). When children are late to school, it impacts their learning, and DC has made a priority of emphasizing being on time. When you are late, you are catching up (this happens to adults too: when you're late to a meeting you're stressed out, etc.).
  - b. Is the tardy slip necessary? The kids who get the tardy slip feel bad. Answer: the system is that the teachers take attendance once and if the child is late Ms Douglas goes into the computer to change the status from "absent" to "tardy". This process keeps the teacher from having to re-do attendance multiple times every morning. The slip from Ms. Douglas is used to track those students whose "absence" needs to be changed to "tardy" for that day.
7. New School Newsletter: Starting this month, every other Thursday you will get a newsletter from the school.
- a. Calendar reminders
  - b. Announcements
  - c. Highlights of things happening around the school
8. Staffing updates:
- a. Trisha Parker, school psychologist, has left the school for another opportunity closer to her home.
  - b. DC Dept of Behavioral Health CSW: Jasmine Tingling-Clemens. She will be here every Tuesday and every other Friday. Presenting programs (Good Touch, bad touch, etc) and small groups (grief, etc).
  - c. Fourth Grade Teacher, Mr. Jasnosz, has left the school and we are recruiting now for a new teacher for fourth grade. There is a long-term sub and the teaching assistant Rachel Magruder remains, and Zoe is supervising closely.
9. Questions:
- a. What's going on with those stairs out front?  
Answer: We are trying to get the construction team to finish. There will be plantings and a drainage system.
  - b. The door out there at the lower level – is it secure?  
Answer: It is on the security system but with the construction it's not on the timer right now. Once

construction is complete it will be added to the timed door locks.

- c. I have heard concerns from other parents about the stairs not being safe.

Answer: Please invite parents with concerns to bring their questions to Deborah/Zoe/Latisha directly. We want to hear people's concerns.

Kalena: I have also observed some children on the playground after school behaving in ways that are not safe, so please try to watch your children carefully. If you see a child trying to jump over the rail, I hope we are able to work together to be sure to keep kids safe.

- d. Is it harder to find good teachers in the upper grades? Answer: no, but it is sometimes hard to find good teachers, especially because we have really high expectations for teachers. Please help us spread the word about the good things going on here.

#### 4. Principal's Update: Zoe Duskin

- a. Recent highlights

- i. Changemaker days – kids choose projects to improve the community (clean-up projects, community-building projects, etc). It sets a nice tone for the end of the calendar year.

- b. Upcoming events

- i. Intersession

- 1. Finally have the space to do what we've wanted to while also continuing relationships with old neighbors
- 2. Kids get to choose – may not choose what parents want them to! But also they might not get their first choice, depending on demand.

- c. YMCA partnership has grown recently too

- i. YMCA staff are subs in classrooms
- ii. Science/STEM programming is being brought over to us too

- d. Learning Showcase

- i. Middle school had a higher participation rate than lower school, and second grade had 100% attendance at the learning showcase
- ii. We appreciate your feedback, and especially when you let us know about something that you especially liked at the showcase

- e. Phillips Collection

- i. Field trips are starting
- ii. Theme of Phillips Project this year is "home"
- iii. Phillips projects this year are being led by grade-level teachers (not art teachers); we are getting serious about art integration in the classrooms

- f. In the Art Studio, the students get to choose a center (which medium, what project, etc), and this week we are opening the 3D sculpture center, so we need your recyclables – toilet paper rolls, egg cartons, etc – clean, and no nut containers please!
  - g. Amazon Wishlist: we will be sending those out again this year. We have been able to expand our collection of outdoor play, tools, books, etc with these wishlists, so thank you!
  - h. Recruitment: First open house is this weekend: December 6. EdFest was last week. Recruitment committee is hard at work. We want to especially strengthen our presence in this neighborhood but also throughout the city.
  - i. Questions:
    - i. Q: Phillips Collection relationship – was supposed to be only two years, right? How are we getting to still do this in year four? A: because we are really committed to the arts integration model at this school, the Phillips wants to continue to work with us and has extended the partnership beyond the typical two years.
    - ii. Q: I heard that the aftercare program might taking kids back to the Anthony Bowen for swimming, etc – is that happening? Zoe: you'd need to ask the Y about that. For intersession the school is providing transportation back to the old neighborhood for intersession projects at the Y and at Beta.
5. Middle School Update: Latisha Coleman
- a. Learning Showcase: thank you for your support of the middle schoolers at the learning showcase. The students got to answer questions from you all about what they are working on and they were able to demonstrate what they know and were empowered by demonstrating their knowledge.
  - b. Fifth Grade Camping Trip – three days in March, due to a grant from DC DOE that we were just awarded.
  - c. Arts integration: partnering with the Pulitzer Center – learning photography techniques. The students will be putting on a photography event at the Pulitzer Center. They have had the experience with the Phillips, and now they are taking that experience and applying it to a new art form, photography.
  - d. Chess program: four students are going to Florida for a national chess competition. The kids are here practicing at 7am. Thank you to the IFA for supporting this.
6. Family discussion:
- a. Kalena Clarke: Who do you think of when you think of IFA? The IFA isn't me, or Allison; the IFA is all of us. Thank you for supporting us with your money and your time.
  - b. Meaghan Mountford, Social Committee:
    - i. Winterfest: thanks for volunteering! There will be various contests (marshmallow igloo building, trivia, chili, etc) with prizes.
    - ii. CD/books/DVD sale
    - iii. No tree sale

- c. A couple more social events coming up
  - i. Family game night and potluck – February 21. If you want to help, please let Allison Acosta know.
  - ii. Talent Show – If you want to help plan a school talent show in the spring, please contact Ana Rodriguez. Not a competition, a performance where kids can show what they can do.
- d. Box Tops and Rewards Programs: Renata Ko
  - i. Please register your grocery store loyalty cards and your Target Card with the links on the flyer.
  - ii. Please use the Amazon link to shop at Amazon
  - iii. Box Tops – please turn in your box tops sheets!
- e. School Photos (Kalena Clarke)
  - i. Anyone who is interested in running the school photo project in the future please let Kalena know. We want to do sibling photos in the spring.
  - ii. If you have questions about the photos you should address them to Beverlie Lord.
  - iii. The photographer will give the photos to us by December 12.
  - iv. Make-up date for kids who were absent? Kalena will follow up with Beverlie.
- f. Recruitment (Zoe Duskin)
  - i. We do need families to sign up to help with open houses and flyering
  - ii. Flyers and postcards with open house dates will be at the front desk for families to hand out
  - iii. There is a signupgenius where we can sign up to come to open houses
  - iv. School will also send around sample language for us to use to send to community listservs
- g. Request for feedback from families on communication (Kalena Clarke)
  - i. Is the google group working for people?
  - ii. Kalena tries to send out an email once a month with updates, calendar info, etc
  - iii. The school administrators don't use the google group for communication – they send emails to the email addresses they have on file for families, not via the google group
- h. Question: what's going on with the enrichment committee?
  - i. Answer from Karla Adams, one of the cochairs: some of the holdup has been related to building issue, but we are working on chess, music, etc. We will be meeting with the school in January to see what we can do in the spring.
- i. Campus beautification update (Allison Acosta)
  - i. Status of the building has been a holdup here too.
  - ii. We are looking at furniture, etc.
- j. Next IFA meeting is February 4