

## Minutes of the October 1, 2014 meeting of the Inspired Families Association

### 1. IFA presentation (attached powerpoint)

Presentation from Jennifer, representative of DC DOT, about safety around the school

Let your child off on the school side of the street

No U-turns

Don't block crosswalks

Bike parking, new signage

(15 minute parking signs, block off area for kiss and go)

School has submitted a request for a crossing guard

Will meet with safe routes to school committee to discuss further needs

Kiss and go (Gayle Wald)

How it works: drivers can drop off kids in front of the door and parent

volunteers help kids get out of car and into school

Parents decide whether child is ready to go inside alone.

We will not walk child to classroom

Time frame will be 8:20-8:40 every school day, only in the morning.

We need volunteers!! Please sign up

Punctuality is really important for volunteers.

It's really fun!

We want people who can consistently volunteer for one day a week or one day

every other week so that the schedule can be consistent. Hard to do on an occasional basis but we will try if that is all you can do.

Q: safety patrol? Not now.

Special call to those who are within walking or biking distance to help with filling in.

### 2. Presentation by Head of School (Deborah Williams)

- a. Expansion of the admin team: Latisha Coleman is new middle school principal, also still teaching this year (will fill both roles).
- b. Zoe Duskin is expecting twins. Zoe's commitment to the school remains very strong and she intends to return after the birth of the children.
- c. We are in the fourth year of the school, with a larger enrollment (320 students enrolled this year), in our third (and final!) location. Lots of expansion: now have two teams of PHD teachers, a full time Spanish teacher, two art teachers (one full and one part time), and of course the new building

- d. We will be sharing the building for two years in order to make space affordable, but in two years we will take over the entire space.
- e. This year we have two classes for each grade up through second grade and one each for third through sixth. Eventually we will have two classes for each grade through eighth.
- f. August 16 was move in day. School was packed up in June. Faculty started planning August 4 (at the Phillips, which donated space because the school wasn't ready). They worked on curriculum as well as orientation to the Inspired Teaching method and disciplinary philosophy.
- g. Building was supposed to be completed August 1. We are as frustrated as you are by the construction delays.
- h. Playground: Kaboom called in late August and said can we be ready in three weeks, and we said yes, and you all showed up in huge numbers to help out. Thank you! Also, the President showed up. [laughter.] The hardest part for us was to figure out how to share this with the entire community. They told us we could only have four people present, but we insisted on involving kids and faculty.
- i. Yesterday we got a new timeline for construction:
  - i. We are told that everything will be finished soon, but we are not happy with the timeline we have been given and we are pushing back hard
  - ii. Right now the kids are eating in their classrooms. But we are promised that the multipurpose room (cafeteria) will be finished by end of next week. The kitchen will not be done by next week.
  - iii. Art room is done. IFA room is done.
  - iv. Small things need to be done: bridge to field, steps to playground
  - v. Elevator is being worked on.
- j. We are getting a school nurse. There is a lot involved in the process, and we started the process last spring. We have been told that we qualify for at least half time. We will keep you posted. Part of the reason we are delayed is that the kitchen is operating out of the nurse station (because there's a refrigerator there) right now, so that's even more reason that we are pressuring the construction team to finish the kitchen so we can move out of the nurse space.
- k. The Charter School Board will review our charter in year 5, next year. We are already preparing. We take this really seriously. But you will see that we have made some changes from last year to this one, in part to tighten up our policies. You will be getting a copy of the Family Handbook in your child's orange folder soon, but in the meantime here is a handout which summarizes some of the changes.
  - i. "My child is talking about rules a lot." – As your child matures, we have higher expectations. But also, we have heard criticism that our disciplinary procedures are unclear or inconsistent. So over the summer we revamped our discipline policies, and you will see in the handout a tiered disciplinary structure. The policy can't cover everything, but we tried to anticipate the range of choices students might make and to think about what a developmentally appropriate response should be and who should respond. We approach discipline from a

stance of kindness and respect. We may need to tweak as we go because we want to be sure children and families know what is expected and feel confidence in the fairness of the process.

- ii. We are constantly learning and growing, and sometimes that means we modify our policies or practices. In the first year, we thought, children who are taught this way will do well on a test without lots of prep, but in the first year we realized that the students didn't know that they couldn't talk to each other about the test. So the next year we explained to kids ahead of time that there are some assessments that they can't discuss with their peers. The point here is that you have signed on to a charter school that is growing and changing, and we sometimes realize we make mistakes and we need to change things. But high-stakes testing is something we have to do, and we take it seriously, but we don't want to take our focus away from what is important: teaching the kids how to demonstrate what they know and then returning to the job of learning. We can't promise that we won't make mistakes, but I promise you that we are strategic and intentional about everything we do.
- iii. We use the Responsive Classroom model: the first six weeks of school is getting to know students and clarifying expectations. After the first six weeks, you'll see more of an indication of how the teacher has assessed your student, what sort of learner he/she is, what he/she needs. They'll be doing more creative things, but they also have to memorize things: we want them to understand multiplication but they also will need to memorize the times tables. But memorizing without understanding is not enough.
- iv. Our classrooms focus on creation, opportunities to problem solve, opportunities be guided by the teachers...
- v. New things in the handbook, coming home in backpacks on Friday.
  1. Discipline
  2. Attendance: DC has a truancy problem, and there are laws around this. New legislation was passed last year. We don't have a choice. If your child is absent, you have to tell us. And you can't do it after the fact; we have to report monthly, and OSSE won't let us change it afterward. You need to tell us within 24 hours of the return.
  3. If a child has 10 unexcused absences we are required to call Child and Family Services. It's the law. As you know from the media, there have been times when students weren't in school and the school didn't report that and bad things happened to the child.
  4. If your student is absent, email [attendance@inspiredteachingschool.org](mailto:attendance@inspiredteachingschool.org) or bring a note when you return.
  5. Note from DOCTOR is only required if child is absent for more than three days.

- vi. Be on the lookout in the first week of November: parent education night. Inspired Teaching model, especially how it applies as children grow and move into upper grades.
- vii. What is the “model” for ITS? Master teachers and teacher residents.
  - 1. We get our residents through the Center for Inspired Teaching, which provides training and the residents get a Masters from Trinity University.
  - 2. This year CIT is only providing elementary residents. We do not have them for middle school.
  - 3. We also have some classrooms without master teachers because we have been told by teachers new to our school that the most difficult part about being at ITS is being new to the school and also juggling the mentoring of a resident. So, we have decided that teachers new to the school will not supervise a resident, regardless of the teacher’s level of experience. New teachers also do not supervise residents. Our priority is serving the students, so we want to be sure that students are being well-served before adding residents to the teacher’s responsibilities.
- viii. Question: Emergency drills? We do have a lockdown procedure. We have a system to alert people to who is in each room and who is not, even when doors are closed and blinds are drawn. We have not yet had a lockdown drill this year.
- ix. Question: Do we need to renew our registration with the text alert system? The text alert system is still in place. Not sure whether you need to reregister if you registered in the past. We will look into it.
- x. In closing, I am in my office most mornings between 8 and 9 to be available to families, so please come by if you need me. But please also feel free to stop me in the hall. I am always happy to hear from you.

Submitted by Lucy Newton, Secretary, and approved by the Board of the IFA on October 7, 2014.

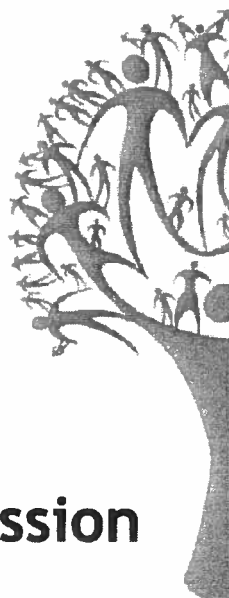
**\*Inspired Families  
Association (IFA)**

2014 - 2015



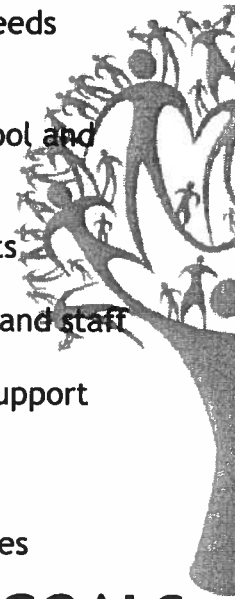
**\*The Inspired Families Association (IFA) is dedicated to supporting the Inspired Teaching School. We strive to promote the school's mission by fostering collaboration between families and staff.**

**\*Mission**



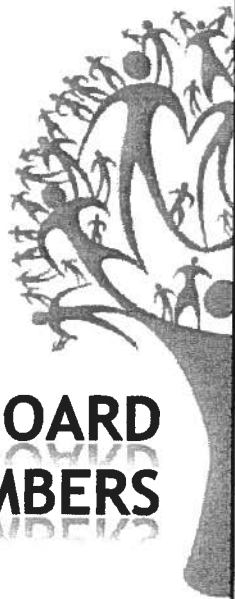
- \***Goal #1:** Raise and expend funds to meet needs identified by the school
- \***Goal #2:** Create more opportunities for school and family social interactions
- \***Goal #3:** Support student recruitment efforts
- \***Goal #4:** Support the needs of our teachers and staff
- \***Goal #5:** Enrich classroom experience and support facility improvements
- \***Goal #6:** Provide an open forum for sharing information that impacts students and families

**\* IFA GOALS**



- \* **PRESIDENT:** Kalena Clarke  
Aaron (2<sup>nd</sup>) & Bailey (K)
- \* **VICE PRESIDENT:** Allison Acosta  
Violet (1<sup>st</sup>)
- \* **TREASURER:** Stephen Sipos  
David (3<sup>rd</sup>)
- \* **SECRETARY:** Lucy Newton  
Naia (1<sup>st</sup>) & Helen (PK 4)
- \* **MEMBER AT LARGE:** Kirsten Hubschmann  
Anna (2<sup>nd</sup>) & Lukas (K)
- \* **MEMBER AT LARGE:** Meaghan Mountford  
Maeve (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- \* **MEMBER AT LARGE:** Yashika Okon  
Elijah (3<sup>rd</sup>) & Ezra (PK)
- \* **MEMBER AT LARGE:** Rachel Papantonakis  
Zoe (K)
- \* **MEMBER AT LARGE:** Nichole Swearingen  
Jordan (1<sup>st</sup>)

**\* IFA BOARD MEMBERS**



### IFA Coordinators

- \* SOCIAL MEDIA - Nichole Swearingen
- \* WEBMASTER - Lori Hardenbergh
- \* VOLUNTEERS - Rachel Papantonakis
- \* ROOM PARENT LIASON - Yashika Okon

### IFA Committee Chairs

- \* RECRUITMENT - Yolanda Corbett, Leslie Jones, Johanna Olexy & Mary Pitts
- \* SOCIAL - Kirsten Hubschmann & Meaghan Mountford & Shelley Stokes
- \* STAFF APPRECIATION - Lisa Cain & Michelle Sinkgraven & OPEN
- \* CAMPUS BEAUTIFCATION - Thomas McManus & Beth Omasta & Stan Cartyle
- \* ENRICHIMENT- Karla Adams & Lisa Dueringer &Vanessa McNeil & Nitu Walker
- \* SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL - Gayle Wald & OPEN & OPEN
- \* FUNDRAISING - Merry Alderman & Lucy Newton & Ana Rodriguez

Want to Volunteer? Here is our volunteer survey <http://bit.ly/IFAVolunteers>.

\***Goal:** To create and participate in effective student recruitment strategies that generate optimal enrollment numbers.

\***Personal contact** is at the heart of ITS recruitment. Distribution of marketing materials, invitations to IFA events, and current family to prospective family interactions are also a large part of our success.

#### \*Open Houses:

- Saturday, January 10
- Saturday, February 21
- Saturday, March 7

\* **RECRUITMENT**

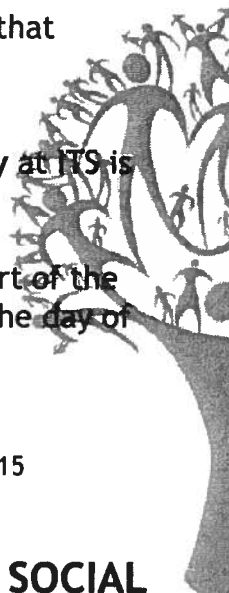
**\*Goal:** To create and support social activities that encourage more friendly student and family interactions.

**\*Forming a welcoming and caring community at ITS** is the end goal for all those that serve on this committee. There are many opportunities to volunteer at our events, including being a part of the planning committee or just volunteering on the day of the event.

**\*Social Events :**

- Fall Festival & Chili Cook off - Saturday, November 15
- Family Game Night & Potluck - TBD (Winter Event)
- Family Fun Day - TBD (Spring Event)

**\* SOCIAL**



**\*Goal:** To coordinate activities throughout the year that show appreciation and celebrate our wonderful teachers and staff here at ITS.

**\*Volunteers are needed** to solicit food donations, shop for supplies, assemble staff gift presentations, or participate on the day of the event by setting up, serving and cleaning up after staff lunches.

**\*Staff Appreciation Initiatives:**

- Creation of Amazon Wish Lists during Winter Holiday
- Professional Development Day Lunches
- Staff Appreciation Week

**\* STAFF APPRECIATION**





**\*Goal:** To coordinate activities that help improve, maintain and beautify our school environment both inside and outside the school.

**\*This committee and its volunteers work on ITS grounds during the school year - planting, watering, landscaping & small projects.**

**\*Campus Beautification Initiatives:**

- Keeping Outdoor Plants Healthy
- Maintenance of Playground
- Procurement of Beautification Supplies

**\* CAMPUS BEAUTIFICATION**



**\*Goal:** To create a safer and more convenient environment for all families who walk, bike, or drive to school.

**\*This committee is responsible for organizing and participating in Kiss and Go and making sure that traffic and parking signs for the school are being properly adhered to when dropping off students.**

**\*Events & Initiatives:**

- Morning Kiss & Go Drop Off
- Bike to School Day Events
- Parking Sign Procurements

**\* SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL / KISS & GO**



**\*Goal:** To create more opportunities for the school to earn money by taking advantage of the shopping ITS families already do.

**\*All rewards and loyalty programs support our school** in an easy, efficient manner that requires no additional cost to ITS families.

**\*Programs & Events Include:**

- Box Tops & Labels for Education
- Stores: Target, Safeway, Giant, Harris Teeter
- Online shopping: Amazon
- Restaurant Nights

**\* REWARDS PROGRAMS & SMALL FUNDRAISERS**



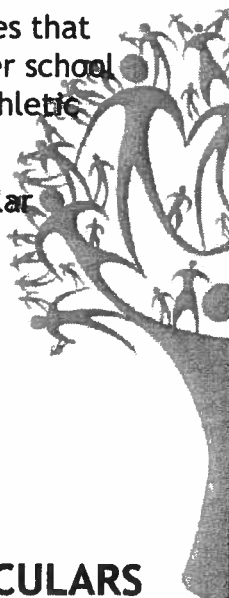
**\*Goal:** To offer input and help organize families that are interested in programs and activities after school that would further create educational and athletic opportunities for ITS students.

**\*We are interested in organizing extra curricular activities that are designed to build skills, relationships and positive self esteem.**

**\*Activities Can Include:**

- Intramural and Organized Sports
- Music & Dance Instruction
- Special Interest Clubs
- Creative Expression Outlets

**\* EXTRA CURRICULARS**



**\*Goal:** To identify and put into action all fundraising activities that will help to fund the needs identified by the school.

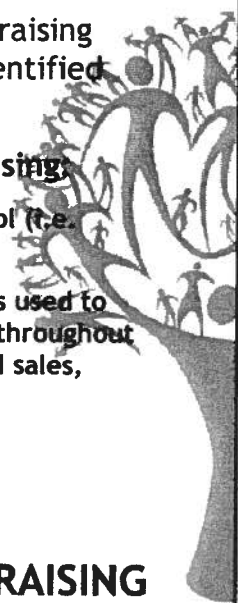
**\*The IFA participates in two types of fundraising:**

- ITS fundraising - money goes directly to the school (i.e. online fundraisers and reward/loyalty Programs)
- IFA fundraising - money goes to IFA account and is used to support IFA events and programs that take place throughout the year (i.e. Food sales, merchandise sales, yard sales, etc.)

**\*Fundraising Activities:**

- Give to the Max Day
- Small Fundraisers
- Inspired Evening
- Inspired Giving Drive

**\* FUNDRAISING**



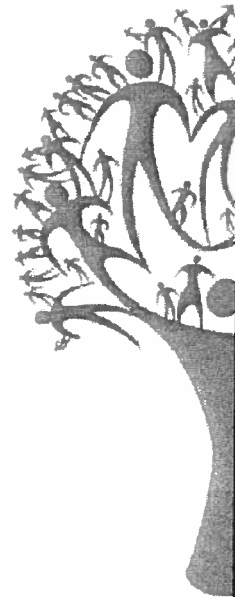
**\* IFA FALL EVENTS**

**OCTOBER**

- Oct. 1 IFA "All Families" Meeting
- Oct. 10 Half Day - Family Conferences
- Oct. 13 No School - Columbus Day
- Oct. 25 Half Day - PD Day

**NOVEMBER**

- Nov. 4-5 School Photos
- Nov. 10 No School - Prof. Dev. Day
- Nov. 11 No School - Veteran's Day
- Nov. 15 Fall Festival
- Nov. 20 Learning Showcase
- Nov. 21 Half Day - PD Day
- Nov. 26-28 Thanksgiving Break



## \* IFA WINTER EVENTS

### DECEMBER

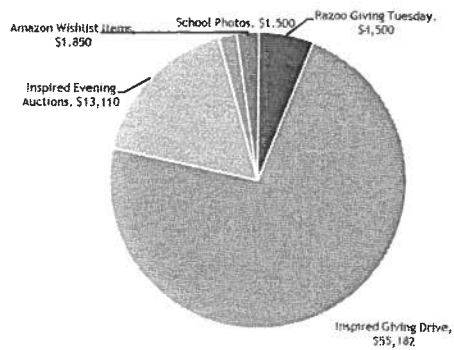
Dec. 2 Giving Tuesday  
 Dec. 16-19 Intersession  
 Dec. 19 Half Day - PD Day  
 Dec. 22-31 Winter Break  
 \* IFA "All Families" Meeting  
 TBD

### JANUARY

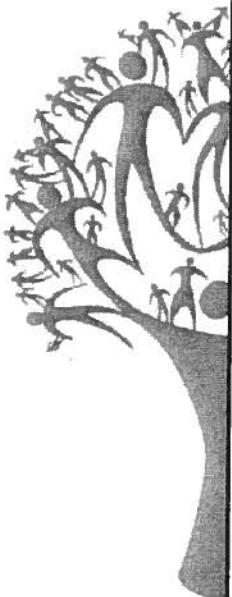
Jan. 1-2 Winter Break  
 Jan. 16 Half Day -  
 Family  
 Conferences  
 Jan. 19 No School -  
 MLK Day  
 Jan. 30 Half Day - PD Day

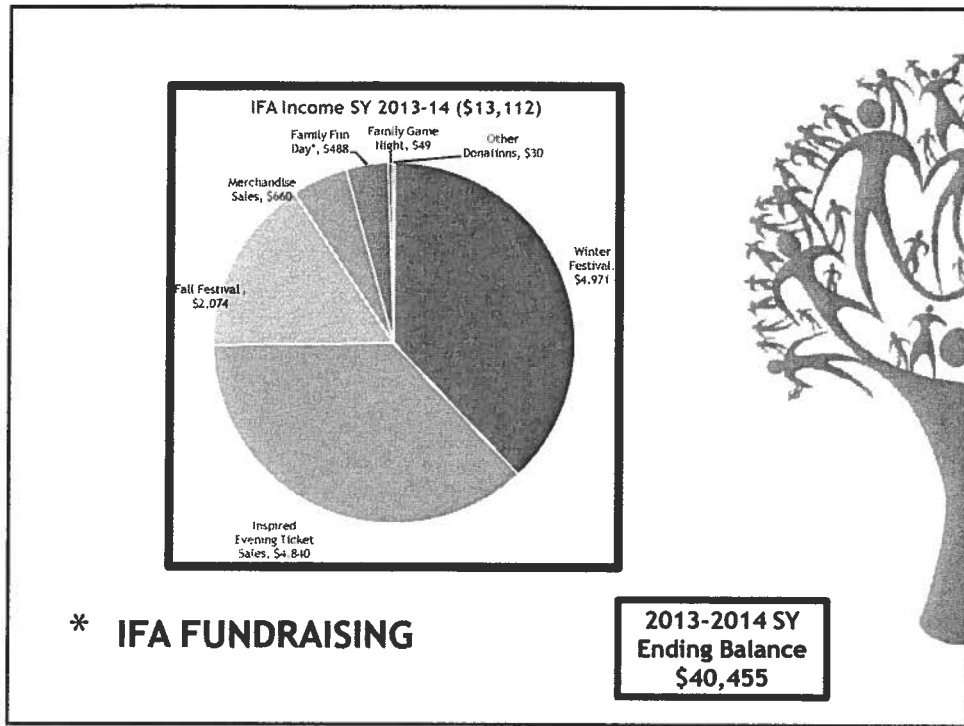


### IFA Fundraisers for Inspired Teaching School 2013-14 SY (\$76,142)



## \* INSPIRED TEACHING FUNDRAISING





\* Questions /Comments