

Walker PTA meeting: Wednesday, June 13, 2018 @ 7:00pm
Location: Walker School

Attendees:

Carla Green	Darlana Simmons
Courtney Ivaska	Courtney Shapiro
Kelli Kaul	Dara Ury
Natasha Dobson	Nicki Devine
Stephanie Kimmel	Jenny Walsh
Lynette Lupia	Lin-Wei Bonney
Gabi Aguilar	Raechel Alexander
Erin Sacluti	Luke Larmee
Inbal Fraiman	Katie Shonk
Terry Velan	Larry Kaul

Principal's Announcements (Ms. Lumpkin was on vacation, but these were her announcements from the Exec Board's meeting with her the previous week)

- ALICE Training
 - The staff underwent a two day training session of the ALICE emergency program that was run by the Evanston PD.
 - It is a more proactive approach with dealing with intruders – no longer just hide and wait, more of how to barricade and how to confront the intruder if comes in the room.
 - It was very powerful and a real shift in mindset
 - There will no longer be color codes – the district is going to use more clear language
 - The district will be sending out information to parents about the switch in emergency procedure
 - Ms. Lumpkin is going to check with the Skokie PD to make sure they are on the same page as the training from the Evanston PD since Walker is taken care of by the Skokie PD.
- Climate & Culture Work and Equity Umbrella
 - The school staff committees are now restructured under 4 different groups to make it easier for others to figure out who to contact for projects and questions.
 - The four groups are: Student to Staff, Staff to Staff, Student to Student, and Staff to Family
- Ms. Lumpkin wants to be more accessible to parents (an evening option via the PTA meetings and a morning option via the Friday Coffees)
 - Coffee with the Principal will be held on the last Friday of each month. She will host it in the morning after drop-off at school
 - She has also committed to being at all future PTA meetings

Executive Committee Announcements

- Chess Update: Terry is meeting with Jeremy Porter and Allen Alexander (Allen will be taking over for Jeremy b/c Jeremy is moving on the help Chute with their Chess Club). They are putting in more controls to clean up how parents pay and how scholarships are handled. Chess should run \$1000 in surplus this coming year.

District 65 PTA Equity Update

- Seed the fund donation increase from \$500 to \$1000(VOTE REQUIRED)
 - A committee was put together 2 years back to figure out how to make PTA income more equitable across the district. They have come up with a plan of making a pot from the PTAs that will get distributed to the bottom tier schools. The funds will be housed by the district. There are 2 phases to start this program: Phase 1 was for the PTAs to vote if they would be willing to participate in the program and Phase 2 is another chance for the PTAs to vote if they are fully in after all the details are sorted and presented (in the Fall).

- Seed the Fund is to start the pot. It will include funds from three different avenues: donation asks from all PTAs, a GoFundMe campaign, and a restaurant week fundraiser
- This will give the bottom tier schools a good jump start next year.
- Walker is on the bubble, we are a receiving school as of now, but could later end up being a giving school.
- What are the top earning schools doing to raise money that the other schools could do?
 - A lot of people have their own contacts/connections that don't necessarily want to be shared
 - Some communities can just write checks while others don't have the means to fulfill requests like that.
- Other schools have committed to donating \$1000. We have already donated \$500 and we would like to vote on another \$500.
- The extra \$500 will come out of our reserves (Terry estimates we have about \$15-20k in reserves)
- **Erin motioned to approve the extra \$500 donation, Stephanie second, all in favor, motion passed**

Budget

- No Update, still transitioning. Getting everything on Thursday and bank accounts on Saturday.
- Vote on Proposed Budget for 2018-2019 School Year at Aug. meeting
 - Terry will be working on this in July and will assess every line item
 - An idea we had is to start making targeted reserves (a technology fund, etc.)

NEW BUSINESS

- Parent Communication
 - Erin & Inbal's take on the communication situation
 - The past year has been frustrating trying to communicate with Ms. Lumpkin as a parent
 - With their new PTA roles, they've had more access to her and have let her know that parents want more contact and communication from her (via email and seeing her on school grounds)
 - They expressed to her that her presence is greatly wanted and they didn't sugar coat it
 - She was accepting of the criticism, owned her short falls this past year, and was very positive moving forward and changing it for the coming year.
 - She invites anyone to come in and meet with her
 - They were really surprised with how well she accepted and recognized that this was a rough year (a complete transitional year for her, the school, and families – esp with Amina leaving half way through) and came away from the meeting feeling good about moving forward in the future.
 - Incident of concern:
 - A lunch supervisor was reported bullying children (threatening or actually putting a child into a garbage can) and has now been fired.
 - Parents are upset that there was no communication of the incident from Ms. Lumpkin and that she hasn't answered any of their emails about it.
 - Some students' parents were contacted by the Skokie PD b/c their children were witnesses to the incident and the parents of the child affected are filling charges.
 - It was also heard that another lunch supervisor threatened the kids with punishment if they told about what had happened.
 - This happened back in March/April
 - There is great frustration from parents when they can't get a response via email esp. if they can't make it down to the school to meet in person.

- An email from Ms. Lumpkin just acknowledging that she received the parents email and is looking into things or has handled things would be greatly appreciated.
 - From the information known to parents it seems that it was only handled because a Y.O.U supervisor reported it after having a bunch of kids upset and crying about what had happened.
 - There hasn't been a response from Ms. Lumpkin or the district.
 - The Exec Board didn't know of this incident until today, so hasn't had the chance to talk to Ms. Lumpkin about it.
- There seems to be two issues at hand: 1. A lack of communication from leaders (principal and district) 2. A safety concern
- Some parents feel that their kids aren't safe because of some of the actions by Ms. Lumpkin/school staff
 - Other incidents:
 - Voting day – Polling people were fighting near the kids on the playground and causing problems in the parking lot. Parents feel that Ms. Lumpkin should have been out there.
 - She learned that the school was a voting place with short notice. She said she was out there during the day and had responded to the parent emails about the situation. She has decided that in the future they will close the older kid playground to keep the children away from that situation.
 - Someone was allowed into the building that shouldn't have been and possibly had access to the school database. Human Resources is handling an investigation about this incident and it's ongoing. We don't have more info about it at this time. There are a lot of rumors going around about it.
 - We may never know the whole story – parents would like some sort of communication sent out about the incident after the investigation is finished.
 - A kindergartener was unable to be located for over 2 hours – they were sent to the wrong place after school (after care, vs. the bus home, vs. the YMCA). This happened twice to the child.
- Some teachers are unhappy with the communication and are talking to parents about their concerns (if prompted).
 - The teachers should try to utilize their union reps to solve these internal problems instead of voicing things to parents – it could become a bigger and messier situation
- We should try to give her a chance to fix the problems from this year. People don't like a new person coming in and changing things right away esp. without knowing the culture.
- We shouldn't expect an instant response to emails and expect staff to stay after hours. This was her first year; we understand there's going to be some adjustments on both sides.
- How can we move forward and help this situation?
 - We should push for an Assistant Principal, to have more eyes in the building
 - If Ms. Lumpkin can send email responses to parents at least saying that she received it and will get back to them soon that would help – she said she can do this.
 - The parent coffee and her presence at the PTA meetings will help with accessibility
 - If you ask for a meeting with her and don't get a response, please reach out to Erin or Inbal and they will try to open up the communication line (since they have more access to her being PTA presidents)
 - Have her address the parents with a communication plan at the next PTA meeting along with lunch/recess, safety and bus procedures and protocols.
- We need to pinpoint the problems before they get bigger
 - Parents are already writing letters to the district
 - Some people are not being heard
 - People are getting frustrated

- Some teachers are getting to the point where they are thinking of looking into being transferred
- Some parents are looking into having a town hall meeting to come together and make a list of expectations and what we want
- Inbal & Erin have heard from three camps of teachers: Upset, Neutral, and Pro
- Ms. Lumpkin is coming from CPS which is a different kind of beast compared to District 65
 - We're more like a mom and pop shop where CPS can be like a mega corporation
 - She's coming from a completely different culture and has to make the adjustment
- People want to see actual change in a short period of time
- What is the plan B is she can't make the changes?
 - We don't know – hoping that it doesn't get to that point, but if it does we will figure it out
 - We can ask her
- This can snowball quickly. We need to get ahead of it so we don't have a mess at the end of next year.
- We should try our best to foster the positive change we want – we don't want a revolving door of admin change. It's not good for our children and the school as a whole.
- We need to judge on the bigger important things and let go of the small side things
- It seems like in-person meetings and by phone is the easiest way to reach her
- We need to make our Facebook culture better. Try not to make a communication storm when it's going to cause more harm.
- Erin and Inbal will bring all of these comments back to her and ask her to prepare to talk at our August meeting.
- Ms. Lumpkin does do a lot of awesome things at our school – it just doesn't get out.
 - Brought a large group of kids to Walkerfest that wouldn't have otherwise been able to come
 - Took a group of girls out for a fun time during winter break
 - Took girls to the track meet that wouldn't have been able to go otherwise
 - She wants to bring back the Parent Advisory Board
 - If would be nice to get the word out of these great things she's doing – we will need to check with her about if she is comfortable putting it out there b/c she's very protective of the families' privacy

Volunteer Needs

- Back to School BBQ & Enrichment Fair, Thursday Sept. 6th
 - Definitely need a bunch of volunteers
- Will be pushing out dates of events for the year soon – as soon as it gets locked down. We will send out a digital version and we are looking into having a paper calendar printed. So if anyone has printer contacts please let us know. We want to do a very simple, plain, old school printout. If it's too expensive, we'll at least do a one page printout.

Important Dates

- Kindermixers
 - Tuesday, June 19th, 4:00-5:30pm
 - Wednesday, July 18th, 5:00-6:30pm
 - Sunday, August 5th, 1:00-3:00pm

Notes

- Can look into Skype, Webex, or just audio – conference call for parents who can't make it physically to the meetings

Adjournment

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 8th at 7pm in Walker Cafeteria