

**Site Council Meeting**  
Thornton Creek Parent Group  
Tuesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, 7-9:00 pm

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 7-9:00 pm, in the school library.

**Minutes for 8/25/09**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Julie Bisson, Lisa Shaffer, Deb Voss, Holly DeMaranville, Todd Bohannon, Amy Feldman-Bawarshi, Rae Keyes, Cristina McGlynn, Michelle Brown, Kellie LaRue, Rob Einaudi, Donna Howard, Nova Herzog, Kathleen Elsenboss, Judy Ruha, Michael Kristoferson, Elena Moya, Cosette LeCiel, John Miner, Kevin Jones, Maria Gutierrez, Kim Lambert, Mim Turnbull.

**1. Review of Site Council Consensus Process**

For the benefit of the parents who are new to Thornton Creek and in attendance at the first site council meeting of the year, *J. Bisson* offered an explanation of the consensus process stated in the Thornton Creek Parent Group By-laws.

**2. All-School Calendar Entries**

*J. Bisson:* Council would like to ensure that the handy one-page paper-copy calendar is out as soon as possible and in time for the school packets. Updates and additional all-school activities will be posted across from the Nurse's office. Upcoming dates: School starts on Wednesday, September 9th. The All School Picnic is scheduled for 9/13 at noon. Walk-A-Thon will be 10/8.

**3. Levies up for renewal in February**

*J. Miner:* 25% of district operating expenses, will be asking parents to volunteer with phone banking etc. will need to encourage all Thornton Creek parents to vote since low turnout could cause the levy to fail.

**4. Salmon Bay Preference and Boundaries**

*K. Larue:* Last years 5th graders were given preferred status to attend Salmon Bay. However, this year's 5th grader's no longer have this preference. Each year the school board votes on whether to allow graduating Thornton Creek Students to attend Salmon Bay. For students who are interested in continuing a middle school education based on philosophy and curriculum similar to Thornton Creek's it is important for all Thornton Creek families to regard this as a top priority and work respectfully and diligently with the school board to help ensure an appropriate feeder school pattern is continued. Kellie Larue will work on finding a volunteer to help organize an online petition.

*J. Miner:* **Boundaries** are now called Reference Areas. Seattle District wants all of the "Alternative School's" to be more in alignment with one another. District now calls them Option School's. District appears to be planning to only have these designations for a few years. Reference areas will be clustered with Middle Schools and High Schools based on residential location.

The **Alternative Schools Audit** is coming up in October and the school district has contracted with the Council of Great City Schools. The audit is not clearly defined and it is difficult to prepare when it is still uncertain on what criteria our philosophy and educational format will be evaluated. Based on the results of the Audit, the district will make a statement/decision about whether an alternative (Option) school is going to be part of the district's future plans.

The following questions will be discussed in the coming weeks and possibly at the next council meeting: Should there be a special committee set up to address the needs of the audit? What should the teachers and staff do to prepare? What message do we want the auditors to take

home with them? Will they also focus on the policy documents that define the relationships between the schools, their boards, and the school board? If other option schools in the district score poorly in the audit will it affect the future of Thornton Creek?

## **6. Painting Party**

The new floors are amazing. A parent who owns a painting company is coordinating with Pratt and Lambert paint rep will be giving T-creek a donation or a steep discount. Parent volunteers will work on the main hallways on Monday, August 31st, and Tuesday, September 1st, 9am until late evening.

## **7. Open Site council Committee Positions.**

Fundraising Events that need chairpersons:

WalkAthon co-chair (to assist Cosette LeCiel) is needed.

Need Auction Chairs (2 Co-Chairs)

Winter Bazaar Chairs

The announcements about the open positions will be made in the coming newsletters.

## **8. Joining the PTA/PTSA**

We are officially a Site Council and not a PTA or PTSA school. However, the Parent Group is now considering joining the PTA. Ramona Hattendorf, the area President of the PTA, will be invited to our next council meeting to explain the benefits and advantages of joining this effective and informative organization. Dues are required. The cost would be around \$200 per year. The council will then decide on whether to have Parent Leaders and Council Members join and benefit from the amazing resources, including submitting 501c3 filings.

## **9. Principal's Report:**

**A.** This years Enrollment is full:

Kindergarten 52 students, 1st grade 55, 2nd 52, 3rd 50, 4th 52, 5th 53.

Self Contained Classes: 7/7/7

With 2 extra students assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> grade via "No-child left behind" the school is now over capacity and enrollment is officially closed.

K and 1st waitlists didn't move at all this year. A few waitlist kids made it into 4th and 5th grade.

The first grade teachers are requesting the site council to provide a part time instructional assistant to be shared between the classrooms.

**B.** Boundary maps and student assignments will be undergoing huge changes. John would like to encourage parents to be aware and engaged and to be proactive in this process. The result of having families that are supportive of their school depends on allowing the most families who have listed their school as the first choice.

**C.** Option schools will still have sibling's first, but will now have geographic zone 2nd (w/bussing) and third via lottery. Traditional schools will no longer have sibling preference as the district is trying to save expenses by cutting back on bussing.

**D.** Who is teaching which grades? The list will be fully defined on the Friday before school starts.

**E.** Becks 4

Building process: Remodels, Extensions or new builds. We are on the spreadsheet for a new building for a K-8 program. Winter 2012 the final list will be made.

**F.** Every Day Math vs. Math Adoptions. EDM curriculum has been highly problematic. Thornton

Creek has requested a waiver to pursue a new curriculum. The Parent Group and Site Council are in full support of covering the necessary expenses. Most of the people that have been hired to teach EDM agree that the curriculum is not effective in teaching math. The school board also doesn't like EDM but they are under contract to buy 1/2 million into "expendables" to support the program and the contract enables the district to get the next 2 years "free."

John will continue to work on the math waiver.

**G. New Part Time Librarian:** John will announce this in the Parent Letter.

New Kindergarten Teacher: Comes to us from Salmon Bay

.4 Literacy position came out of baseline funding. Looking for Linguistic Remedies support and interviews will begin next week.

#### **10. Staff Reports:**

Todd/John: There is an enormous amount of work still to be done to restore classrooms after this summer's floor remodel.

Todd Bohannon got a grant from Earthwatch, working on a climate change research project. Will be able to broadcast live from the field via videoconferencing for a week so that students will have the opportunity to learn and discover along with Todd.

#### **11. Committee Reports:**

Hiring Committee: Still on the lookout for a part-time volunteer coordinator

Communications: Ready to send out all school e-mails. Kelly LaRue and Michelle Brown would like to have more people attend the school board member community meetings.

Finance: Donna, ready to transition into her new role. Last year's expenses:

The incoming donations and fundraisers exceeded budget forecast by 14% and spent only 92% of the original forecast. This puts Thornton Creek Parent Group budget in good standing and prepared for possible economical impact in the coming year.

Hospitality: Holly/Deb: Reported on Welcome Back picnic.

Diversity: Thornton Creek now has a parent, in Room 14, who is a school principal and a certified trainer with the REACH program who is able and willing to do diversity training for our staff and/or parents at a substantially reduced rate.

Grants: Working on filling co-chair position.

District Relations: Michelle / Chris Stewart: L.A. Times article Augst 17<sup>th</sup> '09 was passed around. Also announced updates to Google Group: Alternative Schools Coalition.

District Relations needs Thornton Creek parents to attend meetings to help take in all of the information about school board updates, etc.

#### **Additional Discussions:**

H1N1 Outbreak preparedness: School Closures possible for 1 - 3 months to help curb outbreaks. How can we help each other's families and help get necessary education? Parent volunteer's to come and ensure that kids are washing their hands prior to lunch. Educate the kids on flu prevention. Severe allergy warnings are also being addressed for this year.

#### **First Day Packets:**

Still determining whether parents can be asked to fill out the paper work electronically and then print and submit to the school via kid mail. For now, packets will distributed via hardcopy and upcoming newsletter will provide link for filling out electronically and printing.