

Explorer Elementary Charter School

Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January, 19, 2010

7:00 p.m.

Attendance: Patti Bruffey, Jana Fortune, Joon Han, Gretchen Gillingham, Jill Green, Wendy Hutchison, Therese Hymer, Anna Jimenez, Erica Lund-Anastasakis, Zoltan Sarda, Reita Sebert, Tracy Wilkinson, Teresa Zucchet, and Margaret Egler

Agenda Item #1: October Minutes Approval

1. Wendy Hutchison moved to approved the October 27, 2009 Minutes via email vote and Teresa Zucchet seconded. Minutes approved on January 21, 2010.

Agenda Item # 2: Parking Committee (as reported during the Executive Parent Council Meeting)

Report by Therese Hymer

1. Representatives of Village schools (except High Tech Middle Media Arts and High Tech High Media Arts) have met to discuss parking issues and provide recommendations. Therese has met separately with High Tech Media Arts schools.
2. Liberty Station Homeowners' Association has written letter about problems with parking in their neighborhood. Key points were drop-off on Womble, blocking driveways, and double parking.
3. **Recommendations:**
 - a. First, schools will ask City to designate curb on Truxtun in front of school as "Passenger Loading or Unloading" only.
 - i. High Tech Facilities Manager, Christopher Gerber, recommended against have "Between Hours" allowance of any parking because of enforcement issues.
 - ii. Committee will talk with Rock Church for suggestions on pick-up routine.
 - b. Second, phase in Crossing Guards
 - i. Areas of concern: Truxtun crosswalk between High Tech Middle and Explorer, Explorer driveway, Truxtun and Farragut intersection, front of High Tech High International.
 - ii. Ask City for requirements on trained volunteers.
 1. Possibly use Middle Schools in the morning and 5th Graders in the afternoon.
 - c. Keep parking on far side of Truxtun because there are so few parking spaces.
 - d. Implement in stages.
4. **Resolved:** The Executive Parent Council agreed to pursue the Passenger Loading/Unloading designation for Truxtun. Instituting crossing guards will be addressed after the Parking Committee works out further details.

**Agenda Item #3: Board Update (as reported in the Executive Parent Council meeting)
Report by Therese Hymer**

1. November 3, 2009 Board Meeting

- a. Discussed Explorer's budget for the year. Therese will start to share more information every month with the Executive and Parent Councils.
- b. Board discussed a goal to have a minimum of 3-months operating expenses as a reserve (\$600,000). As of September, Explorer had just under that amount (short \$10,000), including Parent Council's reserves of \$160,000.
- c. Therese presented a condensed Parent Council budget for the year to the Board. Thank you to Tracy Wilkinson for making that document easy to understand.
 1. Therese explained the total donations PC is making this year and covered the major buckets.
 2. PC was budgeted to run a \$51,000 deficit this year. These funds come from Explorer's reserves.
 3. Very best case scenario was that PC could make \$25,000 more, and run a \$26,000 deficit.
- d. Board bylaws were amended to correct a ambiguity between two sections of the bylaws– clarified that Board meetings are always held with notice, in compliance with the requirements of the Brown Act.
 1. Board meetings are held the 1st Tuesday of the month, 8:30-10:30, in the Teachers' Lounge. Notice is posted monthly of the agenda, on the bulletin board up by the office

2. December 1, 2009 Board Meeting

- a. Explorer's independent auditor, Nigro, Nigro & White, made a report to the Board. They gave Explorer an unqualified opinion, the highest level of assurance, with good internal controls.
- b. Board set goals, following up on the "generative thinking" that the Board did at its retreat in October. The Board set the following priorities, in this order:
 1. **Financial.** Development Committee of Board appointed, and 5- year financial projections will be developed.
 2. **Long Range Planning.** Will include strategic planning, faculty generative thinking like the Board has done, and a review committee that is working on succession planning for the year – we hope many, many, many years from now – that Jill decides to retire.
 3. **Diversity and Dissemination of the Explorer model.** Faculty/staff committee to be formed to review diversity objectives and how to best serve the needs of the increasingly diverse student body.

4. **Other Goals:** Board Development, Community, Physical Plant

3. January 12, 2010 Board Meeting

- a. Becky Frost has taken Zoltan Sarda's place as the faculty representative who attends Board meetings.
- b. Board discussed the results of the research done on whether the Parent Council needed to incorporate separately from Explorer. The short answer is NO.
- c. The Review Committee presented a new Principal's job description that has been developed. The description fully reflects the incredible breadth of Jill's job – leadership of the school, parent involvement, community partnership, oversight of student learning and instructional leadership and professional development and human resource management for all faculty and staff.
- d. The November Financials for Explorer were presented. Therese talked about the big picture this month. Next month Therese will present detailed numbers from the December financials:
 1. Money is coming in very slowly from the state and other public sources. Running about \$33,000 behind budget as of 11/30. Timing issue.
 2. Costs were running over budget in several categories – staffing & administrative costs, totaling about \$40,000.
 3. Bottom line is Explorer was running \$72,000 behind budget as of 11/30/09. About half is timing in receipt of revenues.

Agenda Item #4: Budget

Report by Tracy Wilkinson

1. Explorer Wear has raised \$603.48 over expectations.
2. Gift Cards raised \$1000 over expectations.
3. Scholastic Book Fair was \$1000 under expectations, due in part to misunderstanding on wanting Book Fair to be a cash fundraiser rather than a book fundraiser.
4. Square One Art was \$1000 over expectations.

Agenda Item #5: Fundraisers (as reported in the Executive Parent Council meeting)

Report by Teresa Zucchet

1. Gift Cards:
 - a. **Issue:** Because the gift card sales were so successful, Teresa recommended making the top sellers available for purchase at the front desk.
 - b. **Resolution:** Wendy Hutchison moved and Patti Bruffey seconded to allocate \$1,000 to purchase gift cards for the front desk. **Motion passed.**
2. New Children's Museum

- a. **Issue:** If school hosts membership drive for New Children’s Museum, the museum will return 50% of the proceeds to Explorer. If 20% of school participates, whole school will earn a free day at the museum.
- b. **Resolution:** Wendy Hutchison moved and Tracy Wilkinson seconded to launch membership drive after Jog-a-thon. **Motion passed.**

Agenda Item #6: Art From The Heart

Report by Reita Sebert

- 1. Good News:
 - a. All but one class has completed bookmarks individual art projects. Thanks to Kathy Saucedo for donating 90% of supplies.
 - b. Nadi Ovanessoff and Beth Bali are in charge of decorations, which will be beautiful.
- 2. Bad News:
 - a. Only 8 out of 248 families have donated to the auction so far.
 - b. Many businesses that have donated to the auction in the past have gone out of business.
- 3. Invitations will go out to alumni and grandparents because it is Explorer’s 10th Anniversary. This will triple the invitation expense from \$500 to \$1500, but is in keeping with Explorer being an inclusive community.
- 4. Food vendors will be local restaurants that will serve 100-300 portions.
- 5. Beer and wine will be provided.

Agenda Item #7: Parent Council Website

Report by Erica Lund-Anastasakis

- 1. Feedback on website has been great!
 - a. Calendar is updated
 - b. Links to HT Schools
- 2. Emphasis is on calendar, forms and news highlights.

Agenda Item #8: Principal’s Update

Report by Jill Green

- 1. Board and teachers are thinking “generatively” to envision Explorer’s next 10 years.
- 2. Faculty is focusing on working with English learners, especially in the 4th grade.
- 3. Service Learning is going forward thanks to Tiveeda Stovall. Jana Fortune also commended.
- 4. Assessments are underway.
- 5. New custodian, Victor Gonzalez, has started.
- 6. Kay McElrath, Explorer’s CFO, does not foresee any mid-year budget cuts.
- 7. Jill is working with High Tech Middle/Middle Media School Directors to shadow each other and work on ways to further integrate schools.
- 8. Enrollment orientations anticipate 1,000 attendees, but there are very few open spots.
- 9. New school website is up and running.

Agenda Item #9: Social-Emotional Update

Report by Zoltan Sarda

- 1. Zoltan conducted parenting workshops at High Tech High on adolescence during January.

- a. He focused on what is happening with the adult as the child enters adolescence. Parents and children affect and change each other in a dynamic relationship.
 - b. Recommends "Crossing Paths" by Laurence Steinberg. He found that teens don't exhibit more "prickliness" than average adult couples but they do exhibit it more than children. The teen's behavior triggers something in the parent.
2. Adolescence is a journey that has to happen and a parent's goal is to maintain the connection with the child. Attachment theory offers guidance for keeping the relationship open, warm and supportive.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Margaret Egler
Recording Secretary

Anna Jimenez
President