

**Lab School Parents' Association General Meeting  
Minutes, October 6, 2014**

**A. Introduction - Parents' Association ("PA") president, Cheryl Rudbeck, welcomed attendees and brought the meeting to order announcing that tonight's meeting would mainly focus on presentations by Lab's administration. In addition, Cheryl announced that high school parent Kim Stolze was elected to the High School Council in the special election completed October 3. Kim is filling the 2 year position left vacant by the recent resignation of Sheila Noorain.**

**B. Members of Lab School Administration spoke.**

**1. Robin Appleby, new Director of the Lab Schools, introduced herself to the attendees by reviewing her background and commenting on her Lab experiences to date.**

**a. A native of Rhode Island, Ms. Appleby has been overseas for the last 12 years, most recently as the superintendent/CEO of the Dubai American Academy. She returned to the US for this opportunity at the Lab Schools.**

**b. Robin has already met with Cheryl and is trying to address outstanding issues brought forth by the PA. Robin has an office in Earl Shapiro Hall ("ESH") and at the historic campus. Parents can make an appointment to see her at ESH on Wednesdays.**

**c. Before the school year, Robin held a strategic retreat with Lab educators, principals and vice principals, and deans; everyone was responsible for creating a strategic plan with goals and objectives. Common themes among all areas included (in no particular order): 1. Plans for growth and analysis for staffing and facilities, 2. Communications strategy with all of Lab's stakeholders, 3. Long term financial planning and the articulation of the next capital campaign (to be based around financial aid and equal opportunity for all students), 4. Diversity and 5. A review of entry points to Lab for students and the related transitions**

**d. Robin is focused on Lab's diversity and challenged all PA meeting attendees to read the diversity statement on Lab's website.**

**e. Robin noted that there are 34 new staff members at Lab.**

**f. By this 5<sup>th</sup> week of school, Robin has met with a lot of staff, faculty, alums, the PA, parents, development committee, board members, key programs in area (in order to build connections) such as High Jump and After School Matters; she has attended athletic events, classes, parent back to school nights and more. She is trying to get to know the many Lab stakeholders and is taking these opportunities to build on:**

**1.) Communication - she wants to develop transparency, noting both clarity and methods of communication, both build trust**

**2) Self-evaluation - Lab is in midst of its ISACS self-study this year with about 35 committees reviewing different aspects of Lab. Next year, the ISACS board comes in and tests the school on its self-study in order to provide an accreditation. This is an opportunity for Lab get to know itself better.**

**3.) Coherence - Lab's teaching autonomy can lead to fragmentation; strategic planning for coherence**

4.) Relationship with the university - Looking for opportunities for Lab and building this relationship and others (i.e. Robin had breakfast today with High Jump and the directors of other local schools that sponsor the program)

5.) Global thinking -Lab became a member of the Council of International Schools last year through Dave Magill; there are only 22 member schools in the US. Most of these are internationally tied.

6.) Other topics to be addressed include the renegotiation of teacher contracts, leadership on diversity, new capital campaign, redefining the role of the Associate Director, assess staffing in admissions and development, offering further support to families that self-report no spoken English at home, the arts hall opening next year and Judd Hall and Belfield renovations.

g. Robin finished by noting there "is a lot to do and it can get done." A question and answer session followed.

## **2. Carla Young, Principal, Nursery School**

Carla noted she was happy to be in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year at ESH. She noted that the past weekend, 2 guests from Reggio Emilia were visiting ESH and one remarked that the building is similar to what new houses look like and maybe ESH students will feel more at home then in the old building. Carla also mentioned two words on ESH's wall, curiosity and creativity. She reported that these two words, included in the school's mission statement, are alive and well at ESH. She noted that the science table is back in the lobby, with exhibits continuing to come from the science museum; the lobby is now home to some small low maintenance animals; Jackson Park has been a great resource for the students with a lot to explore.

## **3. Susan Devetski, Principal, Primary School**

Susan noted various topics being addressed in the Lower School: Literacy with a group from Purdue University, the hiring of an English Language learning consultant, the review of student assessment materials and the compilation of 1st and 2nd grade programming guides developed by teachers and learning groups, making more productive progress reports, introducing IPADS in the 2nd grade classrooms, addressing social and emotional learning by establishing classroom rules and responsive classrooms, and professional development.

## **4. Sylvie Anglin, Principal, Lower School**

Sylvie noted the Blaine remodeling is amazing. With the combination of the timing of the space completion and the addition of a whole new class of 3rd graders, she was a bit worried about the start of the school year. However, it was a wonderful first day, with one of the best starts ever. She encouraged everyone to walk through Blaine, especially the library. The Lower School held a scavenger hunt at the start of school to help the students get oriented. Blaine's Parent Night was changed up to have parent groups move through all the spaces. Sylvie's goal will be to use the new space creatively.

## **5. Ken James, Director, Student Services**

Ken noted that more Lab colleagues are understanding the different ways of learning. Two new Learning and Counseling faculty joined Lab, a lower school counselor and an academic consultant. In addition, the Middle School and the Lower School will have a counselor on call. He also noted that some high school students are forming a group regarding learning and the brain.

**6. Sandra Bixby, Interim Principal, Middle School**

Ms. Bixby noted that there is a lot of enthusiasm in the Middle School this school year. There were over 20 candidates for the Middle School student council. There has also been the formation of a Pep Club, a Quiz Club, and a Debate Club set up by U-high students.

**7. Scott Fech, Principal, High School**

Scott noted that a Principal Chat is scheduled for the next morning and evening when he will address high school topics more in depth and encouraged those interested to attend. High school highlights include a lot of work on Challenge Success with the help of various teachers. In addition, there are another 10 teachers working on a high school homework committee and meeting every other week. This committee is grappling with being a rigorous high school and having students ready for college and yet, having a balanced home life. Scott also noted the freshman and sophomore retreat changes which included an overnight retreat for freshman for the first time and the inclusion of peer leaders. For sophomores, this year's changes included more interesting and varied community service projects.

C. Cheryl Rudbeck announced that December 1 is the next general meeting and will be part of the speaker series. She then adjourned the meeting.

Minutes submitted by Lisa Curci