

Parent Board Meeting Minutes, Board Meeting, Feb 4th, Monday, 2019

6.45 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., John Rogers Boardroom, Judd Building

List of Attendees in no particular order: Lauren Polite, Barb Kern, Saima Sufi, Patty Carolina Jones, Abundio Rodriguez, Catherine Rosenberg, Susan Farmer, Angie Holleb, Mariana Ingersoll, Farah Noor Cheema, Archana Dharanipragada, Kevin Tan, Heather Tamburo, Meggan Friedman, Monica Hughson, Rupert Vaughn, Michael Norwood, Jill Cross, Amelia Klein, Christy Tate, Melissa McMahill and a UCLS school parent community

All council members will be addressed with their initials in this document. We will follow the notation as Archana Dharanipragada (AD). No surnames would be used. Meeting minutes from the previous meeting were accepted prior today's meeting. There several parents at the meeting, their names would be anonymous

AGENDA

- 7 p.m. –
1. Welcome
 2. Updates (10 minutes)
 - PA Presidents Update
 - Treasurer's Report
 - Update from the Councils
 3. U-High Teacher Dismissal (45 minutes)
 - Discussion
 - Presentation and discussion [this is where we would vote on a PA Resolution]
 - 4 Dialogos Three-day strategic planning process (15 minutes)
 - Summary report from Board members who took part
 - Ideas on type of forum that would allow the community to hear from the DesignShop Sponsor team
 5. Carla Young (N/K Principal) retirement celebration (5 minutes)
 - Ideas for Rites of May
 - End of the school year event
 6. Open Discussion (15 minutes)

– 8:39 p.m. Adjourn and Disperse

1) 7.01 pm: Introductions:

LP and BK introduced themselves as Co-Presidents, and all other board members who were present introduced themselves. There were several parents in the room who introduced themselves and mentioned which grades their kids were in.

2) 7.06 p.m : Individual Council Updates:

- **Co-President's Update** : LP and BK shared the mission statement of the PA and encouraged parent participation.
- **Finance Committee , Treasurer's Update**: RV mentioned that Spirit Wear sales were going well. Teacher Grants submissions are due soon and the teachers need to submit the bills soon. RV gave a detailed update about how much money was collected as dues from parents, and the how the money was distributed amongst various activities at school.

- **ESH** : Their Winter P2P based on Social Emotional Wellbeing went well. Their next meeting would be to help parents understand transition between grade levels. SpiritWear sales in the lobby went on smoothly.
- **LS**: Ice Skating party on Thursday, Feb 21st, their P2P for the month, conferences
- **MS**: They had a quiet back to school, after the winter mayhem due to polar vortex in Chicago. P2P is 8th grade to 9th grade transition. Technology Director, Bryant about apps. April 4th, Chicago Women's Health
- **HS**: Hot Chocolate and donuts were distributed at High school stress buster. Senior Pizza Party was a hit, and Summer Lab Engagement has been announced. They expressed a desire to have a better relationship with the University of Chicago, and school administration and hope to get more summer internships in Arts, Humanities and other related fields. The search for a new high school principal is ongoing, and they are working with the PA Board, CA to find a replacement before summer. High School Robotics Team has gone to state championships. We need to make an effort to combine Makerspace and Robotics collaborate with each other.
- **Communications**: Everything is up to date and smoothly running

7.14 p.m Update about Health and Wellness Survey : LP gave an update about Health and Wellness survey and CASEL study results.

- ✚ A flyer was distributed prior to the PA meeting about the survey results. LP mentioned an upcoming "At the table" conversation with Director of Student Services, Nicole D. Neal, on Feb 28th, 2019. More details would be announced in the in the E-news later.
- ✚ LP also mentioned that PA Board is working on figuring out logistics about how parents should reach out to the PA Board, or how parents should reach out to teachers. There is some concern that the P2P meetings and Principal Chats as well as other events are scheduled really early in the morning, and some parents find this inconvenient. PA Board and the School should work together, and make sure that parents have an opportunity to meet their peer group, teachers and administration at different times on several occasions.
- ✚ LP also touched upon the Principal Search. The PA is working with Carla Ellis. A final list of selected candidates will be presented to the school community.

3) 7.21 p.m U-High Teacher Dismissal:

- ✚ There was mention of the Lab Facebook page having a lot of discussion about dismissal of a high school biology teacher.
- ✚ The parent community felt that there is a some uncertainty in this situation.
- ✚ There was no formal announcement before the teacher dismissal, and school administration should have informed the parents adequately before they initiated the dismissal process.
- ✚ One of the parents who attended noted that her child received a message about a petition to sign, and the petition was initiated by a student. There were posters in the school building and the cafeteria about the dismissal.
- ✚ A parent mentioned concerns about the social emotional well-being of children at the school with the recent developments.
- ✚ It was mentioned that there is arbitration going on this case and there are legal constraints
- ✚ A comment was made that the integrity of the whole issue needs to be re-evaluated carefully.
- ✚ It was noted that there was a break down in the communication process between the administration, faculty and parents. Question about how you would go about fixing this. Also in future, in case something of this sort happens, what would be the kind of communication method would be preferred?
- ✚ It was noted that the PA has strongly encouraged as much transparency and communication as possible from the school officials, starting with sharing the process involved in disciplinary action or dismissal.
- ✚ A comment was made that if a similar incident happens and the HS parents are directly affected, what should the formal procedure would be?
- ✚ A participant remarked that they would be interested in finding out if actions taken by the administration commensurate with the school and university policies and procedures.
- ✚ Another parent remarked that it is important to understand a teacher dismissal from a student point of view, how it would impact the students, and the school community as a whole.
- ✚ There was remark that the dismissed teacher was connecting well with the teenage high school kids and he was talented and loved by all high school students in general.

- ✚ Another remark was that while the school counsellors went into classrooms, the students were not informed that their teacher was not going to be at the classroom. The sudden absence of the teacher was difficult.
- ✚ It was noted that that union contracts are on the school website, if anyone would be interested in looking at them.
- ✚ BK and LP made the closing remarks that they are working to find out the formal procedures when there is an issue with a teacher and what parents can expect. In this process, they need to also understand policies and procedures and how they work and impact the parents as well as the role of UChicago in this process. Charlie Abelman was available at Principal's Chats for further discussion.
- ✚ As the Lab community, we all are at a tough spot, but we should come together as a community and solve our problems by working together, which is the very essence of progressive education.
- ✚ The comment was made that the Lab community is very much alive and present amidst these challenges, and we all have work together to set norms about constructive and generative education environment.
- ✚ An emphasis was made that the Lab community should adhere to the five pillars enlisted in school's mission statement.
- ✚ The Health and Wellness Survey identified some key areas of concerns and we all need to march forward together as a single community with school's robust strategic planning and identify the definition of success.
- ✚ There was general feeling that parent involvement is important.
- ✚ LP concluded we all have work together as a parent forum, so that issues do not "snowball", and hopefully they'll be a good resolution /dialogue about the dismissed teacher soon.

4) Rites of May and Carla Young Retirement Part ideas/thoughts: This is the 50th year of Rites of May, and we could coincide the rites of May event with Carla Young's retirement.

➤ **Carla Young Retirement Part ideas/thoughts**

- ✚ Ads posted in YearBook in appreciation of her work at school
- ✚ Collect Rites of May T-shirts from past thirty years, and make a quilt with those t-shirts.
- ✚ Contact Alumni from past years, and ask them to share their pictures/experiences to capture their favorite moments
- ✚ Conduct interviews with students/alumni and publish in school magazine
- ✚ Make portraits with kids
- ✚ Story Rotation
- ✚ Contact Sarah Abella, Dean of Students, N-2 sabella@ucls.uchicago.edu

5) Upcoming events and Important dates to Remember, conclusions

March 4, 2019 - PA General Meeting

7:00 - 8:30 pm, Judd C116

Description: General meeting to discuss priorities for 2018-2019. All parents, particularly those interested in running for the Board, are encouraged to attend

- Upcoming E-news on Thursday, Feb 24 ,2019 (Please submit by Sunday, Jan. 20)

8. 39 p. m Wrap Up and Disperse