

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

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

List of Attendees in no particular order: UCLS school parent community, Michael Norwood, Abundio Rodriguez, Christie Tate, Angie Holleb, Samantha Morales, Rupert Vaughn, Barbara Kern, Lauren Polite, Monica Hughson, Susan Farmer, Zainab Baig, Farah Noor Cheema, Ann Grissom, Archana Dharanipragada, Patty Jones, Mellisa Mchill, Amelia Klein, Catherine Rosenberg

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)
 - Health and Wellness Activities
 - Update from Individual Councils
 3. Parent led discussions on Health and Wellness Group
 - Corrine Bal (UCLS parent)
 - Lauren Raphael(Lab Parent Health and Wellness Group)
 - Chery Hubbard (UCLS Parent Sleep Group)
 - Discussion with Parent Panel
 - 4 Communications at Lab (E-news, Schoology, PA Website etc) (5 minutes)
 6. Open Discussion (15 minutes) and Wrap Up

– 8:39 p.m. Adjourn and Disperse

1) 7.01 pm: Introductions:

LP and herself as a Co-President and went over the agenda.

2) 7.04 p.m : Individual Council Updates:

- **ESH** : Christy Tate gave the ESH update. She talked about the CASEL framework in the context of ESH. Their transition from Nursery to kindergarten transition meeting went well.
- **LS**: AR gave an update that Ice Skating party was cancelled off. Their teacher conferences went well. Their BoxTops Collection was a success. Their Principal Chat was which was on mindfulness and CASEL framework on Feb 28th, 2019 was a success. Their breakout session was focused on social and emotional well-being.
- **MS**: SF gave the middle school update. Their “At the table conversation with Sylvia Aschliman, middle school counselor about CASEL went well. There was a positive response from middle school parents about recent events in the school, and the response from parents gave an indication that we are making progress in terms parent participation at school events. Their Parent-to-parent had focus on student health and wellness. Betsy Noel, Lab's Title IX Coordinator joined to provide an update and answered their questions. Their main goal was to educate bring parents together through their events, and they would like provide copious amounts of facetime to facilitate UCLS community norms.

- **HS:** Continuing the trend of having relevant preselected and advertised topics of discussion, the HSPC topic for the Feb 5 meeting was “Naming social relationships in high school’ and “Social conflict vs bullying”. Learning Counselor Aria Choi and Dean of students Ana Campos were speakers. Parents concerns about number/gender distribution of academic counselors, and mental and physical health support resources were brought to the attention of the administration. Following up on the issues that arose from previous P2P meeting, High School Council (HSC) members met with Administration regarding
 - ✚ Increasing internship & civic engagement opportunities. Currently only 100 internships for 600 HS students.
 - ✚ Better utilization of resources such as Makers space.
 - ✚ Finding more paid work opportunities during year and summer break.
 - ✚ Search for new HS Principal.

HSC in conjunction with Learning and Counseling and Wellness and Equal opportunity programs worked on

- ✚ Continued parent education through SEL/CASEL framework. 2/13 topic was “Gratitude & family emotional safety”
- ✚ Compulsory Wellness assembly was held with various wellness workshops. Some of the topics included were :Re-defining personal space; space to breath-applying mindfulness to everyday life; stretch away your goals; The Art of screen time (Full list available on Schoology)

In light of recent changes and anxiety in the students, faculty and parent communities HSC met with Director of Schools, Charlie Abelman regarding

- ✚ Greater transparency around major school events
- ✚ Better communication with parents-proactive vs reactive
- ✚ Increased involvement of PA
- ✚ Addressing community fears regarding large faculty turnover, lack of trust and implementation of policies.
- ✚ Maintaining wellbeing and progressive education of students as primary focus

Their next P2P is set for April 3rd, 2019. PA funded two speaker series, and they are preparing for HS graduation.

HSPC representatives have been at the Booth Cafe on Monday’s at 8 am to be available for discussion and maintain communication with the parent community regarding the faculty firing and subsequent issues. HSPC members will be available at Booth on Mondays until Spring Break.

- ✚ **Communications:** Everything is up to date and smoothly running.

7.18 p.m – LP remarked that there is ongoing mediation on gift policy with school administration and PA board, and there would some sort of voting procedure, and we would know the gift policy details soon.

2) 7.20 p.m Parent Panel on Health and Wellness Survey, Corrine Bal : CB mentioned that UCLS is an experimental school and she come to school and share her experiences while being mindful to teachers and parents. She felt parents give over care, parents to students and students to parents teachers and teachers cannot convert these expectations properly at times. Students face high pressure to perform, but we as parents should promote success to find a cohesive community and brainstorm to find a best ways to teach students. She emphasized that since teachers see students on a daily basis like parents do, there should be no separation of roles, teachers should be actively in involved in social and emotional well-being, and vice versa, parents also actively be engaged academic excellence and rigor. Otherwise, it would be hard to enforce, both Title 1X or CASEL framework at school. These core values are what give vitality to UCLS as a school, and focusing on core values together we would be able to build a strong curriculum and achieve academic excellence.

7.30 p.m Lauren Raphael (Lab Parent Health and Wellness Group) : LR presented her ideas with Powerpoint presentation, which will uploaded later on the PA website. She mentioned that they received much needed encouragement from school administration to form a parent panel to encourage more transparency.

7.33 p.m- Eric Oliver(Lab Parent Health and Wellness Group) : He mentioned that he is a UChicago faculty from past ten years. With his academic experience he notices that students at UCLS have high levels of anxiety, depressions
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, and some students try to self-medicate. He strongly emphasized that UCLS culture is geared towards academic success. He initiated a survey with help from teachers and students towards end 2017 academic year, and Grade 6 gets an average homework of 2-4 hrs. Majority of parents felt that this a heavy homework loads. Some students resort to tutoring, to help achieve their academic goals. He had several talks with the Director CS, school counsellors and parents, and he urged that we need have important conversations as first step, build UCLS as a community.

7.40 p.m Sheryl Hubbard (Lab Parent Health and Wellness Group) : SH conducted a research study, and they found that a healthy time to start school is after 8.30 am. Children need 9-10 hours of sleep, and starting school late on a experimental basis has effectively worked in Seattle Public Schools, San Francisco Laboratory Schools, Francis Parker School. The School should make these changes based reflections and self-evaluation from students and parents, and get more people involved in this decision process.

8 pm : Parent Panel : A parent panel was set up to answer questions from the attendees.

- ✚ A participant asked if homework load was based on any prior research conducted, or there was any particular teacher or department who gave excessive homework. There was long discussion how they contacted a particular teacher that the homework load, and how parents got together, and approached the teacher to resolve the issue.
- ✚ A parent asked how they contacted other parents if need arises, and that we need a much more specific guidelines to both parents/teachers about how to communicate with each other.
- ✚ 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 parent remarked that he too feels that there is too much homework at school, and in general how many hours of homework are acceptable.
- ✚ Another remark was as we go up the grades; the HW load should increase by ten minutes. Such hard guidelines would make it hard in high school, where each student has signed up for different major, and they have different teachers.
- ✚ Another parent remarked that stress is coming from the way the homework is handled, not from just homework assignment and completion. Wellness is just a way of life, and since it is a growing school with great community, we need to be positive, and find good avenues for student support. As the Lab community, we should try address issues like bullying, anxiety, stress, and make sure that there are no gaps in communication between parents, teachers and students, and be respectful to each other.
- ✚ Another parent remarked not if not being able to do homework would reflect student's capabilities, and if the grade is a real reflection of student's intelligence, and how teacher receives it, and makes a robust correlation, and what a grade eventually communicates to the outside world. It is important for a student to set his own benchmarks to achieve the academic excellence desired, rather view it as a punishment. There should surveys conducted backed up with appropriate research in the relevant areas.
- ✚ There was a long debate on how homework is viewed as pedagogical practice, what the function of a grade is, how to not stress about it, and make all around wholesome progress, just not academic achievements.
- ✚ LP concluded we all have work together as a parent forum, PA helping build those relationships in establishing a positive relationships

4) 8.35 p.m Call for nomination for PA Board: MI announced the call for nominations, and parents interested in serving PA Board should contact her, and the details are posted on PA website.

5) Upcoming events and important dates to Remember, Conclusions

- ✚ **Conclusions :** LP thanked all parents who attended the meeting, and urged all parent to read E-news for school related news, and updates. She also talked about Challenge Success, an initiative adopted recently.
- ✚ **Upcoming Events : Next Board Meeting is on April 1, 2019 - PA General Meeting**
7:00 - 8:30 pm, John Rogers Board Room
 - Upcoming E-news on Thursday, March 28th ,2019 (Please submit by Sunday, Mar, 24th, 2019)

8. 39 p.m Wrap Up and Disperse