**Minutes of the Board Meeting of the JSSPVA**

**December 15, 2015**

**In attendance:** Julie Kalainov, Kath Lyman, Adrienne Weisenberger, Emily Tzur, Michele Bacik, Kristin Jungbluth, Stephanie Henry, Donna Brunso, Carrie Beeman, Beth Beeler, Lisa O’Rourke, Kendra Wallace, Tiffany Hunsader, Suzanne Nelson, Chike Erokwu

Meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Julie Kalainov, President.

Julie stated that the first order of business was to approve the minutes from the board meeting in November.  Kath Lyman motioned to approve the minutes. Kristin Jungbluth seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

**Principal’s Report**

Kendra Wallace reported that the school will have opportunities for parents and community members to try the ropes course and climbing wall in 2016.  The first children went up on the high ropes last week.  It presents a great opportunity for team building and working with new peers.  The gym is packed when it is open at lunch.  Kids are challenging themselves and each other and building confidence.  Parents are welcome to visit.  The kids are taking ownership and responsibility for the equipment and safety.

The Maker Space is growing and evolving. The week of coding was successful. There has been a lot of activity in the third grade hallway, and the robots are being used.  Many students are choosing to use the Maker Space during their free time.

RefugeeOne, which was the beneficiary of the 8CES service project, sent a second thank you for the generosity of the PVA.  The 8th graders had a great time visiting RefugeeOne and learned how to make a door sock to help insulate a room.

The school will be updating its website, and Chike will be leading the effort.  There are great options, and the PVA component will be updated as well.  The school will be hosting a series of vision meetings in January.  These meetings will help identify parent expectations of the journey through Sears school.  The goal is to align school programs with parent goals.  In the fall, the day session was better attended, so this will be taken into account when planning future meetings.

Julie asked what the before and after school hours are for the Maker Space.  Kendra said that it opens at 7:45AM some mornings and 7:30AM on other days.  The school library is open until 6:00PM Monday through Thursday.  Junior High students visit during their enrichment time and on Tuesdays and Thursdays during lunchtime.  Second grade will have Maker Space time on Fridays.  Tiffany Hunsader asked about when additional hours will be available for the ropes course.  Kendra said that it would be communicated in New Year.  Stephanie Henry asked what the younger kids are doing on the ropes course. Kendra explained that there is a way to use foam pool noodles on the horizontal rock wall. These obstacles make it more challenging for the smaller kids.  Kath Lyman asked which grades have been on the ropes course.  Kendra said 5th-8th grades have had the opportunity.  It is a choice to participate, and kids have been supportive and positive when their peers are on the course.  Julie asked about head lice and shared helmets.  Kendra said that there is a wipe that is being used to clean the helmets before and after each use, and she explained that the hard foam interior is not lice harboring material.

**Treasurer’s Report / Past Treasurer’s Report**

Michele Bacik reported that everything is going smoothly.  Any questions with the income statement should be sent to her.

**President’s Report**

Julie asked everyone to please submit expense receipts promptly.  It makes the budgeting process much smoother in the spring.

Kelly Rainey is moving to California in December and will not be able to help any more with the benefit.  Please support the benefit in any way that you can, whether financially, donating your time, or both. Angie has plenty of help with party planning but may need help with service projects.

Julie thanked everyone for supporting the JSSPVA and for everything that the group has accomplished this year, including: launching an online directory, updating the display case, planting flowers, organizing LTC volunteers, managing the lost and found, delivering school supplies, funding the new ropes course and climbing wall, purchasing a popcorn machine, purchasing a sound system for the Outdoor Classroom, distributing eight newsletters, updating the website, organizing Family Fun Day, hosting a Welcome Coffee, managing Sears Cafe, hosting the Outdoor Classroom Open House and Farmers Market, taking student pictures, organizing Walk and Bike to School Week, providing staff meals and treats, organizing the Book Fair, celebrating Veterans Day, running the Skate Exchange, organizing the Turkey Trot, sponsoring World Link activities, providing FAN communications, purchasing music teacher gifts, paying invoices on time, taking meeting minutes, attending Board of Education meetings, reporting on the happenings at New Trier, providing background information and valuable advice, updating the website, and planning field trips.

**Vice President Reports**

Kath Lyman reported for the subcommittees.

**Environmental**:

Mr. Scheidt, Katie Nahrwold, and Antje Boeing have been working on having Sears participate in the Trex Recycling Challenge again. Sears is registered and just got approval from the administration to set up three plastic bag recycling bins in the following locations:

1. Outside Mrs. Saxton's room-Junior High,

2. Outside the multipurpose room-K-1st, and

3. Outside the 5th grade-Mrs. Lehsinski's room.

Kendra asked about adding a box in the foyer.  Emily Tzur has extra boxes and will coordinate with the team. The challenge runs through April, and bags will be collected until then. Please spread the word and look for details in the next newsletter. A few years ago Sears won 2 birdhouses in this challenge that reside in the outdoor classroom.

**Lost and Found**:

Lost and Found will be donated to charity over the winter break. All lost and found clothing and items will be cleared out over the winter break and donated to the Northwestern Settlement House. There are a lot of sweaters, shirts and lunch bags. Lost and found is now located in the alcove at the bottom of the stairs that connects The Link and the basement. Drop in at any time to browse for your children’s items. Please note, if any clothes or other items have been labeled, they are set aside from the unidentified items and you will receive notice to come pick up. Contact the lost & found Ladies with questions: Julianna Harris juliannats@hotmail.com or Cathy Sheehan cathyshee@gmail.com.

**Outdoor Classroom**:

The Outdoor Classroom had a 2016 planning meeting with The Organic Gardener, Kendra, Lynne Hubert and Crystal. Proposals were shared to continue working with The Organic Gardener in spring and summer. Lynne Hubert, Katie Nahrwold, and Cathy Bell plan to meet on a monthly basis to keep on top things. They discussed ways to use the space during the winter, including making bird feeders, looking for animal tracks in the snow, talking about prairie plants that provide food for animals and shelter, etc.

**Chess Club**:

The first session of Chess Club finishes the last week of January, and there will be a tournament on January 21st.  The second session will commence during the first week of February. Registration details were sent to the JSSPVA newsletter for inclusion this week. The team is still planning to develop a chess team that may be starting at the beginning of the second session on a designated morning each week, so that all grades could participate.

**Secretary**

Nothing to report.

**Nominating**

Not present.

**Community Liaison**

Adrienne Weisenberger reported on the Board of Education meeting last night.  Crystal Leroy talked about the tax levy again.  The board approved the 2015 tax levy estimate.  The proposed calendar for the 2016-2017 school year was presented.  The district is trying to coordinate with the New Trier start and historical schedules.  They added a BOE meeting on January 19, 2016.  Crystal reviewed where we are in architectural services.  Three firms were interviewed, and DLA architects were recommended. All information is available online.  Kendra Wallace reported on the PARCC data.  Letters have been mailed home.  Sears did well and was ahead of the township in all but two areas.  All data is on IL state report cards.  There will be a meeting in January for parents to ask questions.

The science curriculum is being updated.  The school is reviewing data and making adjustments.  Suzanne Nelson said that Julia Jones has been sharing a lot of the work they are doing in student services.  They are planning to communicate more information with parents about the tiered student services and RTI.  Chike will be doing a full update of the website.  The board also plans to conduct a school climate survey starting with the faculty.  This survey will be much more robust than those conducted in the past.  They are hoping to use the results to guide continuous improvements. There is also a plan to revamp the parent surveys at the end of the year.  Kendra said that we are also revisiting the math curriculum.  Sears has had a very leveled math system in the past and is considering a change.  She will be presenting in March on what may change with math.  If the district uses a leveling system, there will be more information on how kids are placed.  The curriculum is currently common core aligned.  The goal is to retain the love of math but also allow kids to achieve their full potential.  This is the one area where kids blossom at different times.  At New Trier the highest-level class is multi-variable calculus.  Most kids who end up in this course enter New Trier in algebra one and not geometry. They are not finding that early math achievement is tied to being in the highest level at New Trier.  PARCC scores are not going to be part of our placement criteria this year.  Stephanie Henry asked how the school would ever use results when they come so late.  Kendra said that they should come in June in the future and that the school can use the historical trends to figure out a way to incorporate this into the placement process.  This is still just one piece in placing the kids. They are refining the system to support the kids as best possible.  Math in Focus is still being used to teach most of the curriculum.

Suzanne Nelson mentioned that the school is choosing a new architecture firm to make some improvement.  The main challenges are with the lunchroom and the gym.  They will be doing some work on facilities.  Parent communication will follow.  Adrienne asked if the school will work with the village or park district regarding the village house.  Suzanne said that the board will work with the park district but the focus of renovations will be on the main building being used for all student needs.

**NT Liaison**

Donna Brunso reported.  On January 6, 7, and 12, New Trier will have academic life presentations for incoming freshman.  This is an opportunity to learn about class choices.  An academic fair will follow.  The placement make up test will be offered on January 9.  On January 28, there is a meeting about choosing electives.  The Winter Carnival is scheduled for Friday, February 26.  Kath Lyman asked when results from placement tests would be available.  Donna said that dates are on the website.  New Trier is currently asking for teacher forms, and registration closes on February 5.  Levels will be sent home on January 22.  There will be a Sears parent meeting for 8th grades in lieu of February conferences during placement week. Julie Kalainov asked if the carnival is for the community or NT students.  Donna clarified that it is for young children in the community.  Each advisory sets up one activity, and it is well attended and fun.

**Enrichment**

Tiffany Hunsader reported. 2nd grade had a field trip to the American Indian museum.  Karate has been offered in PE.

**World Link**

Beth Beeler reported that not much is new.  They have two commitments for the May fair.  They plan to have a children’s mariachi band on the second day and are working on an Apache healer for the third day.

**Communications**

Stephanie Henry has several last minute updates for the newsletter tomorrow.  The website will be updated as well.

**Sears Café**

Carrie Beeman had nothing to report.

**FAN**

Brooke Timmerman reported in absentia that she did not attend the last FAN meeting, and there is a break in presentations until after the holidays.

Meeting adjourned at 9:14am.

*Respectfully submitted by:*

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*Julie Kalainov, President*

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*Emily Tzur, Secretary*