

**Minutes of the Board Meeting of the JSSPVA  
September 19, 2017**

**In attendance:**

Board Members: Mindy Douthit, Rebecca Quigley, Nancy/ O'Donnell, Emily Wyner, Antje Boeing, Robin Stone, Betsy Kilroy, Kris Whisner, Paras Malhotra, Lara Scarborough, Adrienne Weisenberger, Suzanne Nelson, M'Liz Simonds, Amy Crosby, Kath Lyman, Kendra Wallace

Other attendees: Kirsten Carlson, Lisa Metzger-Mugg, Heather Khalaf, Chris Tribe, Guiliana Weiss, Alexandra Mercury, Carly Cape, Linda Ransford, Bridget Pennise, Eleanor Husman, Stacy Dale, Megan Sullivan, Tanya Boatman, Meredith Sullivan, Anne Crowley, Cathy Sheehan,

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 by Mindy Douthit, President. She then introduced herself and this year's Board members.

The second order of business was to approve the minutes from the May Board and Budget Allocation meeting. Antje Boeing motioned to approve the minutes, Lara Scarborough seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

**Principal's Report**

Mrs. Wallace thanked the JSSPVA for successful Family Fun Day. She also thanked the JSSPVA for the "new school year" faculty gifts--\$100 bill for each teacher which they may use to support classroom expenses. The teachers were grateful, and thank you notes were passed around. Mrs. Wallace also thanked the new 2017-2018 Room Parents for their efforts thus far—she has witnessed some good communication between the Room Parents, teachers, and parents. She commented on a successful Curriculum Night and noted that she has received some very positive feedback from parents re: the new format for JR High families. She and her staff will continue to tweak Curriculum Night formatting for all grades in the years to come.

Mrs. Wallace announced that Sears and the Kenilworth Park District (KPD) have partnered to provide "Before and After Care" programming for Kenilworth families. In line with several other neighboring school districts, these new programs are designed to support working parents who seek child care before and after school. KPD will coordinate all scheduling and program development, while Sears School will provide the venue for these programs (children will not have to leave school). In addition to general care and play, KPD will infuse various enrichment opportunities like sports, cooking, science, etc. It has also partnered with all organic catering company to provide healthy breakfast and dinner options during the programs. Beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>, care will be offered mornings from 7:00 am - 8:10 am...and then again after school 3:15 pm - 6:30 pm. Families may choose care from 2 to 5 days a week. Registration details can be found on the KPD web site. Families are encouraged to register online in advance for one full

session—however care is available on a drop-in basis at higher rate. KPD requires a minimum of 11 registered children to execute the programs. At present there are not plans for similar programming on “No School” or Parent-Teacher Conference days. This will be explored if the Before and After Care is successful.

## **President’s Report**

**2017-2018 Budget**--Mindy Douthit provided some background on JSSPVA budget strategy now vs. years past. She referred to a bar graph which indicated 2010-2016 historical revenues and expenses and explained: 1) revenues have been declining...and...2) in the last three years we have spent more than we brought in. Mindy explained these trends were by design as previous JSSPVA leaders elected to use the surplus of cash on special request items from teachers. Because the JSSPVA is a non-profit organization, it made sense to spend a certain amount of the excess funds. “Good practice” recommendation for similar organization is to maintain approximately 1.5 years of operating budget in cash (current operating expenses approx \$100,000)

Now, in 2017-2018, the excess is gone, so we need to be mindful. The Benefit fundraising will be strategic: 1) earn \$100,000 in baseline revenues (“cake”)...2) determine special allocations that need to be addressed and raise money for those specifically (“icing”). This approach will also promote transparency with the community and shift the perception that JSSPA has untapped resources. Douthit opened the floor up to discussion from attendees and asked all JPSSVA members to be stewards of the new message.

All budget information is located on the JSSPVA web site for those who want to see more details for each year back to 2009.

**Giving Tree**--Kath Lyman reminded meeting attendees that the purpose of the newly established “Giving Tree” fund is to provide recognition and compensation to ALL staff working throughout the school to provide an exceptional experience for the students (vs. traditional model where families recognize only classroom teachers). JSSPVA believes it should help eliminate the stress of holiday/year end gifting for all families. It was clarified that Giving Tree funds will be tiered based on the specific job of each staff member—teachers, janitorial, special services, etc. All Giving Tree donations are tax deductible—families will receive a receipt via email in the near future.

Thus far 60 families have donated (30 via Square, 30 via checks). Kath Lyman and Mindy Douthit are looking into possibility of getting Square fees waived since they may be deterring families from donating. Suzanne Nelson commended Kath Lyman and others for substantiating the suggested amount per family (vs. random number) and appreciated the good communication to families thus far. JSSPVA plans to send more reminders to families not yet donated, leverage upcoming parent parties by encouraging parents to bring checks, and remind families again in December as they are thinking about Holiday teacher gifts. Finally, the

hope is to include on Infosnap this Spring so families can simply click an “opt-in” box while registering children for the 2018-2019 school year.

### **Lunch Room Waste**

Mindy Douthit reported that Katie Nahrwold recently spearheaded a one-day “waste audit” guided by a local SWANCC expert. During both lunch periods in the MPR and Village House, parent volunteers helped kids sort compost, recyclables, landfill, etc as they disposed of their lunches. The audit showed 26 pounds of waste was saved from landfill during one day. Mrs. Nahrwold would like to establish a more permanent waste sorting process during lunch periods. She is seeking parent volunteers to help students sort lunchroom waste during two lunchroom periods 11:30-12:30. Amy Crosby (Sears Café Chairperson) will create a Sign-Up Genius to generate a schedule of volunteers for the next several weeks until students get used to the process. JSSPVA will consider creating a new position to oversee this role in 2018-2019. In addition, Mrs. Wallace mentioned this is an opportunity for service hours for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students—she will coordinate that effort.

### **Treasurer’s and Past Treasurer’s Report**

The budget is approved for 2017-2018 year with the following adjustments:

Field Day expenses will be shifted back over to the Booster Club, therefore this line item has been stricken from the JSSPVA budget. Although expenses will covered by Booster Club in the future, there is still a need for a JSSPVA member to oversee the event.

The “Special Allocations” line item remains in the 2017-2018 budget. Sears School will absorb some of the costs of these special allocations.

The “President’s Discretionary” line item will remain, but Mindy does not plan to spend it this school year.

Mindy urged all JSSPVA members to submit receipts for reimbursement ASAP to help keep the overall budget balanced. The absolute deadline is August 31<sup>st</sup> for 2018. She reminded the group that JSSPVA committee members should be aware of their budget and carefully track it—they are responsible for sticking to the budget or alerting the Treasurer, VP, and President ASAP if any overage is anticipated.

### **Vice President’s Report**

**Book Fair**—The Fall Fair will occur 11/7-11/8. The Book Fair Co-Chairs are working with Jen Riefe (volunteer coordinator) to create a volunteer schedule. Mrs. Wallace reminded the Co-Chairs that families may contact her directly if they are cannot afford to purchase books at the Fair, but want to support the event. There are grants available. They are confidential.

**Display Case**—Stacy Smith has created a wonderful Display Case for the new school year. This case will be refreshed periodically.

**Walk/Bike to School Week** will take place 10/10-10/14. More details to come.

**Family Fun Day**—Mindy thanked commended Anne Crowley for a very successful event.

**Newcomers**—Mindy thanked Anne Crowley & Deb Ponko for successful Newcomers party. The party was attended by more than 150 sears parents. There was positive feedback on the Kenilworth Assembly Hall as a nice, “neutral” venue. people’s homes.

**Outdoor Classroom**—Linda Ransford reported the Fall Open House will occur on 9/27 after school from 3:30-5:00. Movie Night is planned for 10/12 from 7:00-9:00 pm. “Trolls” will be shown.

**Room Parents**—Mindy thanked Bridget Pennise and Jenelle Chalmers for coordinating all Room Parent efforts thus far. TheCo-chairs will continue follow-up on dues participation to ensure families are 100% supportive. Room parents should reach out directly to teachers to coordinate room parent-teacher meetings.

**Parent Parties**—Bridget Pennise provided the following parent party dates:

Sat. 9/30/17 – Kindergarten

Fri. 10/13/17 – 5th grade

Fri. 10/20/17 – 2nd grade

Fri. 10/27/17 – 1st grade

Sat. 10/28/17 – 4th grade

Sat. 11/11/17 – 7th grade

Fri. 1/19/18 – 3rd grade

Sat. 1/20/18 – 6th grade

**Staff Appreciation**—Kirsten Carlson and Lisa Metzger-Mugg reported that a special Fall Teacher Institute Meal will occur 10/11 at 3:30 pm. They will also provide dinner to teachers during parent teacher conferences on 10/19.

**Chess Club**—Amy Schmalz and Chris Trip reported that the first session of Chess Club is up and running.

**Picture Day**—Mirofora Geroulis reported that JK-7th student pictures will be taken on Wednesday, 10/4, and 8th grade on Thursday, 10/5. There will be a new, streamlined process for families who wish to have re-takes. She was reminded to ask 8th grade parents to bring any extra blue blazers and have them hanging up at Stuart Rogers for boys who do not own a blazer

or who have outgrown their current blazer. Mrs Wallace requested three photographers be present on Picture Day so the process goes quickly, and ideally is completed before lunch.

**Library**—nothing to report.

Rebecca Quigley noted she will create and circulate event re-cap forms for all event Chair people to capture thoughts/reflections in real time vs. waiting until end of year.

### **Board Committee Reports**

**Benefit**—Betsy Kilroy reported that the benefit will occur on Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 at Michigan Shores Club in Wilmette. This year's theme: "Havana Nights"—with Cuban food, Salsa dancing, live music, etc. Attire is: "festive cocktail". The Benefit Committee will be seeking volunteers to help execute the event. If you are interested, please contact: Crystal Pennington (auction/fundraising), Betsy Kilroy or Sarah Halack (food, décor, entertainment, communications), or Emily Tzur (Treasurer).

**Communications**-Kris Whisner reported that the next JSSPVA Contact newsletter comes out Wednesday, 9/27. All newsletter submissions should be sent to: josephsearsschoolpva@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions is the Friday before publication. Kris encourages everyone to keep communications brief and eye-catching.

**Community Liaison**--Nancy O'Donnell provided a brief re-cap of items discussed during the 8/21 Kenilworth Board of Education meeting:

- The State of the District Community Forum is tentatively scheduled to take place on Oct. 18, 2017. The Board and Administration will work together to determine how to best present District information to the community.
- Dr. LeRoy noted that this year's budget includes a \$3.3 million placeholder allotted for potential capital improvement projects. A public hearing on the budget will take place at the September 20 board meeting.
- The gymnasium floor has been re-sanded and re-painted thanks in part to a donation from the Class of 2017. Air conditioning units have been successfully installed in the Multipurpose Room as well as the kindergarten and third grade wings of the building.
- Mrs. Kendra Wallace reviewed the enrollment report for the 2017-2018 school year then led the Board in a discussion about a Sears before/after care program. Mrs. Wallace noted that the need for before/after school programming arose from discussions with families and from the annual parent survey.
- The Board unanimously approved each of the following personnel changes:
  - Ms. Shannon Szymikowski as 1.0 FTE Kindergarten Teacher
  - Ms. Samantha Valsamis as 1.0 FTE School Psychologist
  - Ms. Courtney Weber as 1.0 FTE Fifth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Karen Burriesci as 1.0 FTE Instructional Assistant  
resignation for Mrs. Debbie Geib, Front Office Greeter.

- Mrs. Donna Keller gave a presentation on the strategic plan, noting four factors that make Sears unique: individualized learning, excellent faculty/staff, environment focused on higher order thinking and community values
- Mr. Scott Wallace gave an update on the status of the Village House renovation. Project cost estimates and design specifics will be discussed at the next board meeting.

**Enrichment**--Paras Malhotra reported that Enrichment planning is in progress. Several K-2 trips are already planned. The Committee will share dates with Mrs. Wallace and Susan White on a regular basis.

Oct 11: Kindergarten - Field trip to the Grove

Sept 27th: 1st Grade - Field trip to The Grove

Nov 3rd: 2nd Grade - Outdoor Classroom program at school

**FAN**—Lara Scarborough—provided a brief overview on FAN, passed around flyers about upcoming speakers, and circulated a sign up sheet for those interested in receiving email updates directly from FAN. Two upcoming speakers which were highlighted: Mitch Prinstein, Ph.D.: "Popular: The Power of Likability in a Status-Obsessed World" on 10/4. Mrs. Wallace encouraged Kenilworth community members to attend an upcoming presentation by Jo Boaler, Ph.D.: "Mathematical Mindsets: Unleashing Student Potential" on 11/16.

**New Trier Liaison**--Adrienne Weisenberger reported that New Trier has half day of school on Friday 9/22; 10/6 is Homecoming vs Niles North; 10/10 is the Freshman Compass Program; 10/15 there will be a Campus Renovation Ribbon Cutting & Dedication from 2:00-5:00 pm; and 12/2 is the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade placement testing for Sears students.

**Nominating**--nothing to report

**Sears Café**--Amy Crosby is working closely with Katie Nahrwold and Marla on Green initiative. She also reported that Marla's is working with local farmers to provide organic, locally-sourced fruit in lunches. This will begin in the next two weeks. Marla's will be striking pancakes and French toast from menu moving forward due to negative parent feedback. Mrs Wallace encourages parents to provide feedback to Marla's on lunches—positives, negatives, likes, dislikes, etc. Marla is willing to work with us as needed. There was an inquiry about Marla providing nutritional information for the various lunches on the ordering web site. Amy will circle back with Marla about this.

**Secretary**--nothing to report

Meeting adjourned 10:03

Respectfully submitted by:

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Mindy Douthit, President

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Emily Wyner, Secretary