

Valencia Elementary Home and School Club
September 10, 2008
Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Wendy Clarke at 9:30 am. Meeting participation and voting was briefly discussed.

Present: Jennifer Nowark, Jan Candau, Alison McKenna, Jeremy Ertl, Jody Cole, Aimee Martin, Wendy Clarke, Susie Ronzano, Trent McNair, Lisa Mella, Gina Libby, Terry Berman, Claire Breen, Trina Scott, Christa Taylor, Katrina Walkinshaw, Michelle Young, Karin Kerber-Smith, Carrie Jett, Al Jett, Dawn Schipper

II. Approval of Minutes

The May 6 and May 21 minutes were reviewed. Karin moved to amend the May 21 minutes to include adoption of the 2008-2009 working budget presented by Renee Roberts. Michelle motioned to approve minutes as moved, Alison seconded the motion, and all approved.

III. Principal's Report: Jeremy Ertl for Dianna Higginbotham

a. Back to School report

- Valencia's CST 2007-2008 scores are just in at 854, our highest score ever! This represents a significant improvement over last year's scores, attributed in part to use of the "Step Up to Writing" program put into place last year.

- The start of the school year was successful with new students orientating well and all working together as a community. The back to school BBQ was a fun and well-attended success!

- Spirit Days have been successful with 75% participation. This Friday is "Twin Day".

- A new math program from Houghton Mifflin publishers has been adopted this year and the staff is working to align the program. New materials are still arriving.

- Teachers are forming a school wide Safety Program, standardizing emergency response folders and procedures. The committee will set year-long goals that might include staging mock incidences, such as earthquakes, involving the larger community. The District recommends the "WeTip" program which encourages anonymous reports on vandalism, theft and bullying. A safety audit of the school last year resulted in 28 recommendations including things like locks, lighting and a marquee. Funding for Staff CPR training is being researched.

- Student Council Presidential candidates will give their speeches during the next Monday morning assembly.

- A Grandparent Program is underway where grandparents would be paid up to 15 hours a week for helping at school. It is believed funding is through the County.

b. Playground update

- Playstructure installation is coming soon.

- Construction at the school is related to bringing the entire school facilities up to handicap code.

c. SPECTRA and Science Assemblies

• SPECTRA: Michelle reported on efforts to secure a contract with Pisces Moon, a drama based artist. Michael Katz is also contracted for an upper grade story telling workshop. Planning for school-wide assemblies is also underway. Aimee explained the overall SPECTRA program and how the Walk for the Arts Fundraiser provides sole support for our arts program, with a goal of exposing students to a diverse array of art forms.

• Science Assembly: Karin reported we have \$2000 in the budget this year for science assemblies and are working towards bringing in 2 groups. *Save the Whales* is a local nonprofit that conducts hands-on classroom workshops in marine ecology & biology. Workshops being considered for the lower grades include “Marine Mammals Adaptation and Communications” and “Sea Otters”. Upper grade workshops under consideration also include “Marine Mammals Adaptation and Communications” as well as “Whales on Wheels”. We are also hoping to once again bring in *Wildlife Associates* to present school-wide assemblies titled “This Living Earth”.

d. District budget update

The District has not yet finalized a budget, resulting in a freeze on spending at Valencia.

IV. President’s Report: Wendy Clarke

a. Report on Back to School events

The H&SC sponsored a successful Back to School Breakfast. The Club welcomes volunteers for these kinds of hospitality events; please let us know if you are ever available to help

b. Report on August 27 Social

The H&SC held its first Social where the club and its general activities were informally discussed. The social was well attended and provided a nice forum to talk about the various opportunities parents have to get involved at school.

c. Planned 2008-2009 fundraisers

Discussion deferred to Michelle under item VI.

d. Goals

• The H&SC Board met with Dianna to discuss general Goals for this year’s fundraising efforts. Items discussed included ongoing technology updates (such as Smart Boards) and school beautification projects, including an eventual outdoor amphitheater. There have not been any targeted discussions on specific goals or anticipated costs.

• A suggestion was made to set a goal for involving more classes in Life Labs in the school garden. Jeremy explained that while this is encouraged and supported, the decision is left to individual teachers. Bringing in help from an outside Garden Specialist was suggested however it was noted that this would require a vote to use General Funds.

Trent explained that his nursery is sponsoring an on-line promotion of their Organic Seed Starting Kits, where a \$5 donation will be made to Valencia for each kit sold. He also said he may be able to find volunteers from our community who would donate their time to help kids in the garden. Trent will follow-up with Karen Richmond and keep Jeremy in the loop.

Misc

Shoebboxes are needed to place in each classroom for decoration and collection of Box Tops throughout the year. An ice cream party will be awarded for the class bringing in the most tops. Contact Wendy with box donations.

V. Treasurer's Report: Karin Kerber-Smith

a. 2008-2009 working budget

The Club's working budget was adopted in May. Since the State and District budget are still not finalized, it was proposed that we maintain the working status of the budget at this time and readdress it at the October meeting.

The proposed \$13,000 transfer from the General Fund to the Literacy Fund has not been made since the district budget allowed us to keep our librarian. A move was made to allocate those funds to the Literacy Fund to instead support a half-time Reading Specialist for the lower grades. Additional staff that was available last year contributed to the improvements in reading as reflected in the API scores. Those resources are not available this year due to reassignment and budget constraints. A Reading Specialist would help to promote the continued improvements in reading.

Other transfers listed in the report have been made.

b. Financial report review

The Overall Fund Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2008 was passed out with brief explanation of restricted vs. general funds. Also provided was the Profit and Loss by Class report for May - August 2008.

c. Proposal to transfer funds

Karin motioned to allocate \$13,000 (previously proposed to cover Mrs. G's position) from the General Fund to the Literacy Fund for a half-time Reading Specialist for 2008-2009. The motion was seconded, and unanimously approved.

VI. FUNdraising Report: Michelle Young

a. Toyota Give Away: September 24 kick off

Toyota is giving away a Camry hybrid or \$25k in cash! Jan Candau & Lisa Mella volunteered to co-Chair this fundraiser, with Alison's assistance. 600 ticket books are allocated to Valencia. Valencia retains 100% of the proceeds from ticket sales, and netted \$4200 last year.

b. Harvest Festival: October 24

Jody Cole and Trina Scott are co-chairing this fun event. Volunteers and Room Parent Volunteers are needed. Wendy reported that the dunk tank will need to be paid for from the festival's budget and not by a sponsoring classroom.

c. Sally Foster gift wrap: Sept 18 kick off

Sarah Walls is chairing the event this year. She is seeking volunteers to help make posters. Last year's fundraiser netted more than \$9k.

d. Auction preparations

Jennifer is doing a great job at working behind the scenes to plan the auction so as not to interfere with other fundraisers going on. It was reported that this year's event will be held at Seascape Resort on March 21. Contact Jennifer if you would like to help with this fun event.

Post meeting correction: the auction will be held at Chaminade Resort, not Seascape as previously indicated.

e. eScrip, including gift cards

Christa Taylor is doing a great job with eScrip. She will need help over the new few weeks to collect receipts for the current drive that ends on Oct 5. We can place collection envelopes in classrooms and offer eScrip gift cards as incentives to bring in receipts.

Under the eScrip gift card program, Valencia would receive a kickback from each card purchased. We need to select which cards we would carry from the many vendors available. Cards can be ordered on-line and we also have the option to stock some in the office. A stock would require cash expenditure by the Club, and would also involve managing the logistics of on-site sales. We will be prepared to address the gift card program in more detail at October's meeting.

f. Spirit wear recycling program

Unused spirit wear in good condition can be donated back to the H&SC and then donated to Valencia families. Teachers can make the call on who may be in need in their individual classrooms. We can also apply a similar program to unclaimed lost and found clothing that would have otherwise been donated to Goodwill.

Alison offered that signs can be put up at the Rummage Sale on the 20th advertising the need for volunteers, spirit wear, fundraisers, etc...

VII. Volunteer Update: Michelle

Michelle reviewed the volunteer sign-up sheet and described it's availability on the website. We are always interested in additional volunteer help! We are also currently looking for someone to fill the Volunteer Coordinator position on the Board. A Job Descriptions for this Office is posted on the school's website.

VIII. Misc and wrap-up

a. Yearbooks

Interstate Publishing will be producing yearbooks. They will be published in color for the first time and will be compiled electronically throughout the year. A suggestion was made to include an option on the order forms to allow for donation of books to a child who would not otherwise receive one. A new prismatic cover design was presented which will increase the price from \$15 to \$16.50/book. Michelle made a motion to adopt the new cover and price, the motion was seconded and approved with 2 opposed and 2 abstentions.

b. Event banners/signs

Not covered

c. Policy regarding charges to school staff at H&SC events

Not covered.

d. Playground dedication

Kim DeSerpa has requested to have H&SC sponsor refreshments for an upcoming dedication ceremony for the new playstructure, once installed.

Karin conveyed Kim's request of \$5k from the General Fund to use as a cushion to complete the playstructure installation. Kim has offered to reimburse the general fund for this loan if it is needed, and if she is successful in obtaining additional grant monies. Kim has worked very hard for 2 years on this project and has raised more than \$90k in grant money. The installation delay has been due to delays incurred by contractors and the uncertainties in exact costs at this stage are due to potential "hidden" costs. Kim is also in the process of soliciting new bids from other contractors for portions of the install. Karin motioned to allocate \$5,000 from the General Fund to the Outdoor Fund to cushion the completion of the playground. Katrina seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Note: Next month's meeting currently scheduled for October 8 conflicts with Yom Kippur and has been rescheduled to October 15 from 7-9 pm, location TBA.