

Wildwood School Governance Council
Minutes of the meeting of June 6, 2013

Attending: Kerry Crosby, Laura Quilter, Kristie Stauch-White, Sarah Marshall, and Nick Yaffe.

1. At the request of some PGO members, Sarah brought forward as a concern the District's new policy regarding science projects, namely, that students must conduct these projects in class only, with school-supplied materials only, without help or supplies from home. The concerned members (parents of 5th graders) understand the desire for equity in the classroom regarding resources but believed teachers did not have enough materials to support meaningful projects. Nick stated that this policy was not made at the District level but at the school level. There seems to be misunderstanding and/or mis-communication at the teacher/parent (and possibly student) levels. Sarah said that the PGO had offered to pay teachers immediately for out-of-pocket costs. While everyone agrees that required projects should not require extensive expenditure of parent resources, or depend on parents' understanding of science, SGC members nevertheless feel that effort should be made to increase opportunity for all, not simply reduce it for some, and hope that teachers (and the school science curriculum, overall) can take greater advantage of the deep scientific expertise in the local community. Parents with science training, for example, might be eager to work in the classroom with students on science projects. It was also suggested that the after-school program take on some science projects.
2. We discussed membership of the Council for the coming academic year. Kristie is stepping down but, if her fall schedule permits, will be happy to serve again. Megan is also stepping down, but Kerry and Sarah are happy to continue, as is Laura, who will become a parent member instead of a community member. The SGC will thus be seeking one parent, a community member, and teacher representation. We will meet in September at a day/time more convenient for teachers (TBD). Nick will announce the opportunity to serve on the SGC in his newsletter and Sarah will get the invitation posted on the PGO blog and Facebook page.
3. Kerry expressed a desire to turn discussions into action, opening a discussion of the function of the SGC. We will try to clarify action items.
4. One of the chief functions of the SGC is to assist with the school implementation plan, which will be formulated next year. To help in development of the plan, the District is releasing a survey to parents at all schools. The committee examined this survey and noted that the absence of questions regarding participants' background, such as SES, use of IEP, and grade level(s) of ARPS children, will make interpretation of responses very difficult. For example, if a sizable group is unhappy with the degree of teacher communication, ARPS (and the SGC, tasked with reviewing the results) will not know the location or extent of the problem. Nick will convey this concern to the District.

Action items:

Nick: (1) Consider improving communication (teacher-student-parent) about science project policy and resources. (2) Invite parents and teachers to serve on SGC next year. (3) Convey concern about survey to District.

Sarah: (1) Get invitation to serve on SGC into PGO blog and Facebook page.

Next meeting: September, date to be determined after new school schedule is implemented and teachers are consulted.