

TOPS NEWS

BACK-TO-SCHOOL RALLY ON SEPTEMBER 3

A Seattle-wide Back-to-School celebration is scheduled to take place downtown on Thursday, September 3. Come join the fun as all of Seattle honors superintendent John Stanford and his efforts to make Seattle a world class school district. Lots of celebrities will be participating, including Danny Glover, Mayor Paul Schell, and our city's fabulous faculty and students. There are three ways you can participate: come to Memorial Stadium for a 10:30 a.m. rally, march from Memorial Stadium to Westlake mall at 11 a.m., or join the 12:15 p.m. rally at Westlake mall. Or do all three!

Seward building-July 1998

STATE OF THE SCHOOL MEETING SLATED FOR OCTOBER 14

TOPS wants to welcome all our new families and give them a chance to meet some of the "old" families. Come to the annual fall State of the School meeting (7:15 to 9:15 p.m. in the TOPS cafeteria) to learn how you can be involved in your child's education here. Hear principal Gary Tubbs talk about challenges and changes this year. Learn from Penny Bolton, site council chair, just how

parents can be involved in TOPS. We'll explain our site-based school governance and will show you where you can help. Remember that *Learning Together is TOPS*. That's what makes our program so successful. Child care will be provided if you let the office know by October 12. Call 729-3360.

McDonald School
144 NE 54th Street,
Seattle, WA 98105

729-3360

<http://seacss.ssd.k12.wa.us/TOPS/index.html>

TOPS NEEDS VOLUNTEERS FOR SCHOOL SET-UP

The construction at McDonald this summer is coming down to the wire as this newsletter goes to print, and custodial staff and facilities committee parents are wringing their hands about getting it all done on time. Parents are desperately needed to help teachers set up their rooms before school starts. Volunteers are welcome in the building between August 31 and September 7. A special all-out effort is planned **Monday, September 7 (yes, Labor Day), from noon to five p.m.** Bring cleaning supplies. When you come, please use the west (cafeteria) doors, so as to minimize the tracking of construction dirt around the building. *Phil Converse* is coordinating volunteers (again) this year. Call his special hotline number at **329-0441**, and leave your name, phone number and the grade & teacher of your child.

A WELCOME MESSAGE FROM GARY TUBBS, TOPS PRINCIPAL

I hope this end-of-summer newsletter finds you and your loved ones happy, healthy, and ready to begin the 1998-99 school year! As your new principal, I look forward to leading this wonderful school in our collective pursuit of student-centered goals.

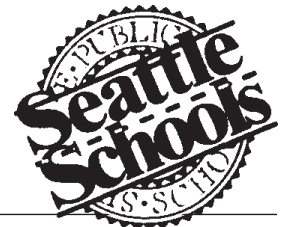
I believe in open communications and will strive to ensure that everyone has access to relevant information about TOPS. To that end, I have summarized below the key activities of the summer months.

Enjoy your remaining days of summer vacation. I'll see you soon!

continued on page 2

Principal:
Gary Tubbs

Site Council Chair:
Penny Bolton



ABOUT TOPS NEWS

This is the first monthly newsletter of the 1998-99 school year, edited by Amy Hagopian and Jim Wells. Robyn Ricks does the layout and design. Bruce Pulmano maintains the mailing list and gets this to you. We welcome help with writing and soliciting news from contributors. We're always looking for kids' art, photographs, committee news, faculty news, classroom news, opinions, compliments, profiles, questions, education politics, calendar items, announcements, and wholesome gossip.

Articles for upcoming issues may be submitted to Amy at 4203 5th Av. NW, 98107. Articles are preferred on computer disk, accompanied by a paper copy. Both IBM and Macintosh are accepted. Email submissions may be sent to Amy_Hagopian@fammed.washington.edu. Or fax to 616-4990.

Deadlines for the year's issues are at 3:30 on each of these dates: September 24, October 22, November 19, December 17, January 21, February 18, March 18, April 15, May 20 and June 10. If you don't make the deadline, you will really regret it.

WELCOME

continued from page 1

- ◆ Classroom assignments will be posted throughout the school on the first day. As parents, your assistance in helping get students to the correct rooms will be appreciated.
- ◆ The seismic work at our McDonald site has been nothing short of amazing.....and MESSY! The schedule is very tight for the startup of school and teachers are going to need your help in putting their rooms together in preparation for the students. I have been working with the Facilities Dept. and construction foreman to push the clean-up schedule as much as possible but some classrooms may not be ready until the very last minute. If you don't have plans for Labor Day weekend, please come in and help out! Thanks!
- ◆ Two exciting new teachers are joining the TOPS staff! Ms. Michel Mercer will be Mr. Burleigh's new 6th grade teammate and Mr. Joe Drummond will teach 7th-8th grade Social Studies. Although both Michel and Joe are relatively new to the teaching profession, they come to us with varied experiences, excellent recommendations, unlimited potential, and a high degree of passion for educating children. Fortunately for us, they turned down other offers in order to teach at TOPS! Please welcome and support them as they join the TOPS family!
(Our new teachers fill positions previously held by Michelle Ota and Kevin Smyth. Michelle accepted a position as a STAR Consulting Teacher for Seattle Schools, and Kevin will be teaching in a neighboring district closer to his home. We wish them well and will certainly miss them!)
- ◆ The "sand pit" is gone from the playground and plans have been made to erect a playscape for the children. It will probably take a couple of months to complete this project. Thanks to Rebecca Sadinsky, Mary Grassely, Craig Dawson, and others for their hard work.
- ◆ Charlie Burleigh and I worked with Penny Bolton and Amy Hagopian (Site Council Leadership) to align and integrate the Site Council Strategic Plan with the Academic Achievement Plan of the TOPS Staff. It made sense to all of us to have a single plan that we can collectively join forces to accomplish. Lucky Charlie! We delegated most of the work to him since he's completing his Administrative Internship this year!
- ◆ The TOPS Staff will be meeting for a full-day retreat on Monday, August 31. We will continue to work together on September 1 and 2, allowing time for classroom set-up on Thursday, September 3.

PASSINGS

The TOPS community mourns the death of two family members this summer. Amelia Savage, age two, daughter of Anna and John Savage, and sister of Justin and Jessica, died as the result of an accident in early summer. Rozell Alexander, father of Megan, died in August after a stroke last spring. Our sympathies go to the Savage and Alexander families; we will all miss Amelia and Rozell.

KEEP THIS UNDER YOUR HAT

by Penny Bolton

When we criticize others behind their backs, it's gossip. Or whining. Or nattering. Or complaining. None of those things are nice. Remember that your children are listening. Please be careful of what you repeat. Gossip spreads like wildfire at TOPS!

Many times these words are needlessly hurtful. I've heard parents criticizing teachers' skills and styles in front of their children. I believe our kids learn from their parents to criticize their teachers. When they reach middle school, this manifests itself in a lack of respect for teachers or adults generally.

Please try to assume the best motives for everyone at the school. We all want to be great parents, teachers and

students. Sometimes we succeed and sometimes we are less than perfect. Gossip and nattering are hurtful to our community and to the specific members that we gripe about. When someone brings you a "juicy bit" of gossip, try to leave it there, with them. And if it's really destructive or negative, let the complainer know that what they are spreading is not helping anyone.

If you have a problem with a parent or staff member, talk directly with that person so they can do something about it. Let's work together! Attitude is something we will be working on this year as part of our middle school grant. Remember that a great part of the strength of TOPS is our support for each other. Learning together is TOPS! Let's model good behavior for the kids.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IS WHAT MAKES TOPS TOPS!

You know what makes TOPS so great? It's parents, faculty, and administration working together on behalf of all the kids. More specifically, parent involvement and volunteerism is probably the most vital, central feature of our alternative school identity. When everyone contributes at least a little bit, TOPS really works for all of us. Our aim is that every family contribute at least 30 hours per year to supporting the school, with single-parent families contributing 15 hours.

We are all busy people with busy children and seemingly little time. How can we strike a balance between home, family, work, and school? Many of us may not be able to commit as much time as we'd like, constrained as we are by our job schedule or a need to use a babysitter. But just ask around: It's downright fun to work in the classroom or go on field trips and to get to know your child's school pals. These TOPS kids are really a capable and fun group. They'll never cease to amaze you!

Choose to help out in an area that you enjoy. Look at the field trips scheduled for your class and see if there's one in which you could participate. Last year, several trips were cancelled for lack of drivers. Your teachers will send home requests for help now and then. If you can't get away during the day, offer to help a teacher with paperwork, or work on the Auction or No-Bake Bake Sale in the evening. Really consider doing something—no matter how small.

And with this call to action, remember to take time to do something for yourself. It is okay to say "no" when you need to. Just try to say "yes" sometimes, too.

Many thanks. We're looking forward to an absolutely terrific school year.

—Penny Bolton, site council chair

Joni Marts, volunteer coordinator

PLAY STRUCTURE INSTALLATION NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Work parties to install the new play structures at McDonald are scheduled for September 26 and October 3. On September 26, we'll prepare the site for installation of the play structure. On October 3rd, we'll do the installation of the new play structures. Please call either *Rebecca Sadinski* at 684-0462 or *Craig Dawson* at 624-2871 to sign up. Plan to roll up your sleeves, get dusty and dirty, make new friends, and have lots of fun.

TOPS TEST SCORES FROM SPRING 1998

TOPS students again scored better than national and district averages in the spring testing season.

The basic skills test (ITBS) for grades 2 through 5 indicated the 132 TOPS students tested scored 71 in reading on the "normal curve equivalent" where 50 is the average. Three year trend data indicate TOPS is consistently at or above district standards in all areas of Reading, Language and Math for both the elementary and middle school programs. The elementary math trends have been particularly positive, however. Here is a quick summary of the data:

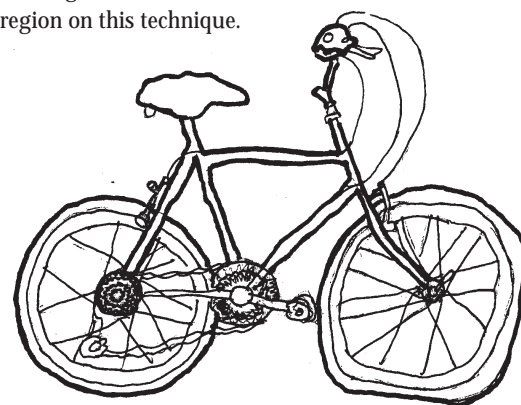
ITBS TEST SUBJECT

	<i>Grades 2-5 Normal Curve Equivalent Score (where 50 is avg.)</i>	<i>Grades 6-8 Normal Curve Equivalent Score (where 50 is avg.)</i>
Reading	71	69
Language	68	66
Math	69	65

The Direct Writing Assessment scores and writing samples were mailed to students' homes at the end of the school year last June. The wonderful thing about this "test" is that it not only tests actual writing (as opposed to a student's ability to select a right answer from a list of choices), but it also is part of a whole system of teaching students how to write. Our own Lori Eickelberg is a guru on the subject, and teaches faculty throughout the region on this technique. TOPS student performance:

<i>Direct Writing Level of performance</i>	<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Grade 5</i>	<i>Grade 8</i>
Advanced	20%	37%	27%
Within Standard	64%	48%	59%
Below Standard	16%	15%	14%

There were significant improvements from last year in grade 3, and TOPS students performed better than the district averages at all grade levels.



By anna

COMMITTEES OF THE SITE COUNCIL

TOPS Site Council has a number of committees that carry out aspects of the strategic plan or fulfill roles of the organization. In 1998/99, the following committees are organized.

Chess Club, coordinated by *Mark Morales* (325-4079), meets after school (probably Mondays) 3:30 to 4:30, with a chess coach provided by the Chess Mates Foundation in Seattle. Students are welcome to come learn and play chess.

Communications (formerly Parent Steering Committee), coordinated by *Susan Spieker* (543-8453), is responsible for keeping members of the TOPS community up to date on the needs and activities of a very active community and to make sure that all members are included. This committee consists primarily of the parent room representatives from each classroom and oversees production of the newsletter, annual roster, and TOPS handbook. Parent Steering Committee also hosts the all-parent meetings and school-wide events, including the Parent Involvement Night, the State-of-the-School meeting and other events. (Find and save the room representatives list in this newsletter.)

Curriculum Enhancement, coordinated by *Jeanne Spurlock* (324-1934), is responsible for recommending and overseeing the expenditure of most of the money raised by parents. Mostly, this means extra programs to enhance regular teacher-directed curriculum, including music, art projects, Inquiry Science, Service Learning, drama, classroom support through AmeriCorps, books, PE support, teacher supplies, and special classroom projects.

Diversity Committee, coordinated by *Cheryl Pappy* (725-0577), works on addressing the issue of disproportionality of achievement between white children and minority children. Members have organized an after-school tutoring program and are working to increase the number of children of color in our school. Cheryl Pappy is also the Cultural Outreach Coordinator.

Drama Committee meets September 15 at 4 pm. Play dates have been set (see the calendar). The committee desperately needs new blood, and a new chair. Lots of the routine information for this organization is available on computer disk, so the job is more one of contributing vitality and leadership rather than inventing the systems. Call *Anne Sebeste* at 323-7076.

Executive committee consists of the site council chair, assistant chair, secretary, treasurer, a staff member, and the principal. The committee meets at least monthly to prepare the site council's agenda and resolve any between-meeting issues. The executive committee may invite others to join the meeting, as needed. Meetings are, of course, open. Call *Penny Bolton* at 325-5074.

Facilities and Community Relations Committee works with the school district on new capital improvement building plans, analyzes how TOPS fits into the Eastlake and Wallingford communities, and helps teachers with

in-classroom construction and maintenance. Facilities Committee voice mail is at 281-6501, #4916. Call *Phil Converse* 323-8123 or 329-0441.

Finance Committee is chaired by the site council's elected treasurer, and is staffed by an appointed financial manager (according to the bylaws). This committee is responsible for generally assuring the control of Friends of TOPS foundation assets, and for developing and monitoring the budget, in compliance with the Foundations management policies. *Dana Carey-Twight*, new TOPS treasurer, makes a special request that people be patient with her as she learns the job. Call her at 325-5185. Several members of the committee assume various management roles, including *Randy Joseph*, who volunteers the services of her CPA firm to write checks.

Fund Development committee raises money for site council-approved projects and approves all fundraising activities and grant-writing projects. The core fundraising activities are the No-Bake Bake Sale (direct solicitation) in October, the annual TOPS auction in March, and grant writing. The 1997-98 No-Bake Sale Committee had one of the best years ever. The Auction Committee had an incredible event, topping even the previous year's numbers. The Playground Committee has been busy this summer planning the new play structure. We have raised nearly \$10,000.00 through TOPS Site Council, Latona Community Council, the Department of Neighborhood, and our sweat equity. See related article about volunteering to help install the new play structure. Call *Craig Dawson* at 322-4414.

Immediate Assistance oversees the distribution of a designated sum of money to assist TOPS families who are experiencing financial crises, and notifies the TOPS community when TOPS families are in need of special support. It also makes referrals for resources available from other places. During the 1997-98 school year, \$270 was provided in family assistance. The committee needs three new members for the new school year. Call *Lisa Brown* at 324-0474.

Middle School committee consists of faculty, parents, and administrators. The primary project this year is to implement the Middle School Strategic Plan with the new Middle School Grant. The committee focuses on the unique needs of a small middle school program. Call *Linda Secord* at 325-6497 or *Melanie Pepin* at 325-2129.

Nominating committee forms in the spring to recruit candidates to run for site council positions and oversees the administration of the election process.

PEAK organizes the parent-sponsored kindergarten enhancement program. Parents raise funds through this committee to finance the non-district portions of

continued on page 3

continued from page 4

kindergarten teacher salaries so that all students in both the full-day and half-day programs enjoy a small faculty-to-student ratio and many enrichment activities. After the spring meeting with new kindergarten parents, it was expected the program would continue as it has. Call *Tom Boyer* at 706-7544.

Safety Committee organizes efforts to ensure that classrooms can meet the safety and security needs of TOPS students and staff in the event of a natural disaster. Safety committee is also responsible for playground supervision staffing. Call *Michelle Butler-Myles* at 246-9404 or *Dan Bloedel*, the middle school science teacher.

Staff Appreciation committee needs parents to help organize four annual appreciation activities this year. This is an ideal activity for the working parent who is looking for off-hours ways to contribute time and creativity. To help, call *Janet Moore* at 283-7284.

World Language Committee is planning before- and after-school Spanish classes. Each class will probably run for 20 weeks, at a cost of approximately \$240 per student. Look for enrollment information during the second week of school. Call *Sandra Welsh* at 285-6254.

The **volunteer coordinator** is partly sponsored by a grant from the city to maintain a database of volunteer interests and talent and to recruit volunteers for specific tasks. Call *Joni Marts* at 632-9741.

The **cultural outreach coordinator**, *Cheryl Pappy*, works to include all members of the community in TOPS activities and to help recruit and retain families of color for our community. Call *Cheryl* at 725-0577.

TOPS 1998-1999 BUDGET

The following budget was approved by Friends of TOPS on June 10, 1998, for the school year which starts September 8, 1998. All funds are raised by parents and staff through the NoBake sale, the auction, and a few "user fees" (participation fees for chess club, band and keyboard class; yearbook sales; T-shirt sales; ski club fees; drama ticket sales; etc.). Congratulations to the TOPS community for this tremendous contribution to our students' education.

Category #Activity	Expenditure	Category #Activity	Expenditure
Curriculum Enhancement Committee		Parent Steering Committee	
1 General Proposals, including:	\$6,000	22 Printing & mailing	1,000
Artist-in-residence	750 >	23 Newsletter	3,300
Immigration books	700 >	24 Childcare	200
Hawaiian artist	600 >	25 Staff appreciation	800
Adopt a Park	400 >		
Writers workshop	300 >	Site Council	
Die cutters (math)	265 >	26 Executive Com. - operations	2,000
Cedar River trip	250 >	27 Volunteer Coordinator	2,000
Looking at diversity	250 >		
Underground RR	225 >	Safety/Emergency Prep Committee	
2 Teacher Supplies & Equipment	3,725	28 Operations & supplies	800
3 Art Supplies	2,000		
4 Artist-in-residence - General	8,000	Immediate Assistance Committee	
5 Artist-in-residence - Poetry	3,100	29 Emergency Assistance	500
6 Musicians & Music Supplies	5,000		
7 Science & Science Supplies	1,000	Facilities Committee	
8 Internet Access - Internet committee	3,300	30 Operations and supplies	1,150
9 PEAK dance teacher	2,000	31 MacDonald Playground work	1,500
10 Americorps	15,000		
Curriculum Enhancement subtotal =	49,125	Finance Committee	
		32 Operations and supplies	400
Disproportionality Committee		Other Expenditures	
11 After-school study & tutoring	3,000	33 Library - materials	1,000
		34 Curriculum development for faculty	1,000
Drama Committee		35 P.E. Program enhancement	2,000
12 K-5 production	3,400	36 Ski Program	7,200
13 Middle School production	4,300	37 Chess Club	1,000
		38 Uncoded expenditures	0
Fund Development		Budget - 98-99 totals =	
14 No Bake Bake Sale expenses	700		102,775
15 Auction expenses	9,500		
Middle School Committee			
16 Middle School Field Trips	2,000		
17 Middle School yearbook	800		
18 Student Recognition	500		
19 8th Grade Graduation	1,600		
20 Middle School Band	1,000		
21 Keyboarding Class	1,000		

LET'S TALK TOPICS:

NOW ON THURSDAYS, FRIDAYS

Topics this year will be presented Thursdays and Fridays from 2 to 3 p.m., starting in October. There will be a description of the Topics program in the take-home packet first week of school, with a return form indicating what or if you can participate. All parents are urged to come teach a Topic at least once this year. Just think up a two-hour activity that can be done with a small group of students grades 1-4 (maybe grade 5 will participate this year, too) and can be interrupted in the middle.

The Topic committee includes Tracy Seefeld, Louise Chacartegui, Pm Weisenbaum, Rebecca Fox, Cheryl Pappy, Toby Harris and Joni Marts. The committee will work on refining the program, establishing a Topics resource center in the library, and recruiting volunteers. People who do Topics will be asked to contribute their lesson plans to the resource center for use by future parents.

Here are some suggestions from one Topics volunteer, Dana Carey-Twight:

- Design a walking tour of your neighborhood, and create a brochure for it
- Architectural styles of the Wallingford community, complete with photos and written descriptions
- Making planet magnets (there are instructions in Christian Science Monitor)
- How to Buy One Share of Stock (learn to invest)
- Diversity training: anti-bias exercises for kids
- Anti-harassment training with role playing
- Mother/daughter book club
- Father/son book club
- 1998 Time Capsule
- Career exposure (bring in outside speakers)

If you have a skill or a hobby that you love, chances are that a kid or group of kids is just dying to learn it too. Just think: you can be a catalyst for a child's life-long love of some special subject—a subject he or she would never have learned had you not heroically stepped in and taught them during Topics at TOPS!

TOPS MISSION

We are a relatively small, central city, K-8 public alternative school. A diverse range of Seattle families enroll here on a completely voluntary basis because they seek a balance between structure and nurtured independence for their children. While offering a strong, academically challenging program, we also enhance the personal, social and emotional growth of students by building skills of conflict resolution, social and personal responsibility, values and self-esteem. Our staff and faculty work with students and their families as partners in building an engaging, active, positive, and supportive school community. Working in cross-age groups, TOPS students have regular and important opportunities for decision making, innovation and risk-taking.

**PARENTS:
SAVE THIS
PAGE!**

TOPS 98-99 CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Whole first week: volunteers at school to help teachers
District TRI Day
- 2 Waiver Day
- 3 Work day in classrooms
6th grade potluck 6 to 7:30 pm at school
- 4 Site council executive committee
- 7 Volunteers at TOPS to help teachers, noon to 5
Labor Day
- 8 First Student Day
- 16 First 98/99 site council meeting, 5-7 pm
- 17 Individual Pictures
- 22 Curriculum Night
- 23-25... 8th Grade Camp
Native American Week
STATE OF THE SCHOOL
- 26 Playground work party

OCTOBER

- 3 Playground work party
- 8-10.... NW Math Conference
- 9 Waiver Day and State Inservice Day
- 14 Site council meeting 5-7 pm
Parent involvement fair & state of the school meeting, 7-9 pm
- 19-20... Middle School NCEE Training
State 2nd Grade Reading Tests

NOVEMBER

- 6 End of First Quarter
- 11 Veteran's Day
(site council meeting to be rescheduled)
- 16-24... Parent Conferences
Food Drive (Louise)
- 26-27... Thanksgiving

DECEMBER

- 4 End of First Trimester
- 9 Site Council meeting, 5-7 pm
- 11 Report Cards
- 11-12... Middle School Play
- 17 Young Authors Conference, K-8 (Louise, Tracey)
..... Adopt A Family (Jill, Carla—delegate to parents)
- 21-1/1 Winter Break

JANUARY

- 13 Site council meeting, 5-7 pm
- 18 Martin Luther King Day (no school)
- 22 Martin Luther King Celebration (Julie, Nani, Carla)
K-8 TOPS / BOC Event
- 29 Last Day of Semester

FEBRUARY

- 10 Site council meeting, 5-7 pm
- 15 President's Day
- 16-19... Mid Winter Break
Jump Rope for Heart (Eric, Dan)
Black History Event (Nani, Julie, Mercedes, Lynette)
Debate (7th grade)
Direct Writing Assessment (grades 3, 5, and 8)

MARCH

- 5 Waiver Day
- 10 Site council meeting, 5-7 pm
- 12 Responses to budget request for proposals due
- 12, 13.. Elementary School Play
- 19 End of Second Trimester
State ITBS Test (grades 3 and 8)
District ITBS Test (grades 5 and 6)
- 29 TOPS public budget consideration meeting

APRIL

- 7 Site council meeting, 5-7 pm
- 9 End of 3rd Quarter
- 12-16... Spring Break
Speech Tournament (needs more discussion)
Primary Speech Festival
State WASL Tests (grades 4 and 7)
State 2nd Grade Reading Tests (follow-up to fall)

MAY

- 12 Site council meeting, 5-7 pm
- 13 Cultural Fair / Achievement Fair / Art Walk
- 14 Waiver Day
- 15 2nd TOPS budget consideration meeting
- 31 Memorial Day
Camps (grades 6, 7, and 8)

JUNE

- ?? Camp Long
K-8 TOPS / BOC Event
Awards Assembly
8th Grade Passage
Wild Waves
- 9 Site council meeting, 5-7 pm
1999/2000 Budget approved by Friends of TOPS
State of the school meeting
- 13 Annual site council retreat
- 18 Last Student Day
- 21 Last Teacher Day
- 30 Site council fiscal year ends

1998-99 TOPS SITE COUNCIL

Role	Name	Home phone
Principal	Gary Tubbs	
Chair parent rep 6-8	Penny Bolton 6th	325-5074 325-6000
Asst. Chair parent rep k-2	Heather Worthley 1st	789-6092
Treasurer parent rep 3-5	Dana Carey Twilight 3rd	325-5185
Secretary & diversity rep	Cheryl Pappy 3rd	725-0577
parent rep k-2	Andrew Schmechel k, 3rd	633-0453
parent rep 6-8	Vivian Queija 6th	789-9977/680-7004 dg.pgr
parent rep 6-8	Melora Battisti 6th	324-8187
parent rep k-2	Betsy Scott 1st,3rd	784-5768
parent rep 3-5	Pat Helgren 1st, 4th	722-0956
parent rep 3-5	Terry Sperling 3rd	632-0796
faculty rep 3-5	Julie Trout	
faculty rep 3-5	Tal Troy	
faculty rep 6-8	Charlie Burleigh	
faculty rep 6-8	Mark Ellis	
BOC rep	Karen Wong	
classified staff rep	Sorayya Aly	
Support Staff	Lynette Tate Jackson	
faculty rep k-2	Joby Moore	
faculty rep k-2	Susan Mamlock	
Kids Co. rep	Lisa Stokell	
Eastlake Community Rep	Marjorie Nelson	329-3097

OTHER STAFF & SPACE ASSIGNMENTS:

Name	Role	Room
Lori Eickelberg	7/8 LA	21
Eric Herdon & Don Zemke	PE	Gym
Joe Drummond*	7/8 SS	17
Steve Haines	Library	
Luzita Roll Mark Ellis	Art 7/8 Math	18 19
Mike Anderson	Comp Ed	
Dan Bloedel	7/8 Sci	20
Lisa Stokell, et al	Kids Co	
Jill Bjerke	BOC	7
Karen Wong	BOC	1
Patty Maffitt	Special Ed	
Jennifer Marberry	BOC	6
Peggy Harden	Psychologist	
Lynette Tate	Student Assistant	
Kurt Hertzog	Speech	
Jo Shapiro	Assist Principal	
Dave Hodsdon	Custodial Engineer	
Gary Tubbs	Principal	office
Chris Nielsen Susan Larson* Linda Downing*		office

COORDINATORS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Asst. Principal	Jo Shapiro	
Auction committee	Rhiann Lombard	325-5395
Communications committee chair	Susan Spieker	543-8453/ 324-7261
Curriculum Enhancement chair	Jeanne Spurlock	324-1934
Drama chair	Ann Sebeste	323-7076
Facilities & Community Relations co chair	Phil Converse	323-8123
Facilities & Community Relations co-chair	Debra Walker	329-0625
Fund Development chair	Craig Dawson	322-4414/ 624-2872
Internet committee	Jack Lee	524-6346
Middle School committee co-chair	Melanie Pepin	325-2129
Middle School committee co-chair	Linda Secord	325-6497
Newsletter Editor	Amy Hagopian	706-0989/ 685-3676
No Bake	Mary Connors	325-6708
PEAK coordinator	Tom Boyer	706-7544
Safety committee chair	Michelle Butler Myles	246-9404
Volunteer coordinator	Joni Marts	632-9741

1997-1998 TOPS ROOM REPRESENTATIVES (As of 8/20/98)

Teacher & Grade	Room	Room Representative	Phone
K- Joan O'Connor	B	Joni Marts Terry Sperling Sherri Chen	632-9741 632- 0796 527- 8926
K- Joby Moore	A	Molly Lapatra	789-7169
1st- Susan Mamlock	Portable #1	Barbara Bengtsson/Marlies Van Bergijk Naoko Magasis	871-5512/328 - 3064 784 - 9980
1st- Carla Fetterley	Portable #3	*JOB AVAILABLE	
2nd- Tracy Seefeld	3	Ronimae Porras-Foye	723-5449
2nd- Louise Chacartegui	2	Joan Dawson Janice Lovell	322 - 4414 721 - 0790
3rd- David Wilhelm	9	*JOB AVAILABLE	
3rd- Katie Waters	11	Peg Maas	364-2409
4th- Julie Trout	5	Sherrie Boyer	706-7544
4th- Mary Chao	4	Pam Haruta Sue Wardle	323 - 3165 547 - 6097
5th - Tal Troy	16	Laurie Black Virginia Powers	285 - 7079 285 - 1691
5th- Nani Castor-Peck	8	Sherry Hamilton	328-5379
6th- Charlie Burleigh	15	Karen D'Luhosh Rhian Lombard	328-8123 325-5395
6th- Michel Mercer*	14	Janet Moore	283-7284
7th- grade room reps		Carolyn Law Kim Dammann	782-1294 367-1024
8th-grade room reps		Kate Day/Keelan Curran/Maggie Lubov	621-2196/783-8393/323-4965

*To be a room rep, call Susan Spieker 543-8453/324-7261.

TOPS SITE COUNCIL RETREAT PRODUCES PLAN REVISIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

The all-day June 13, 1998, site council retreat attracted good attendance, and resulted in some interesting proposals.

The focus of the day's discussions was on how the various parts of the TOPS structure fit together for strategic and coherent planning and decision making. Each of the various committees, forums, councils, and entities has a life of its own and controls some portion of the school's destiny. To get to the next level in our development, however, the site council felt it would be wise to unite these entities and align them in a way that avoids work overlap and allows the school to speak in one voice.

The relationship between the Leadership Team, the faculty as a whole, and the Site Council was discussed. The Leadership Team was created two years ago to engage in decisions about the District-allocated budget to our site, and its composition was based on language in the teachers contract. At TOPS, this team had close to ten faculty and staff participants and a couple of parents, and met several times each of the last two springs to make the budget decisions. Unfortunately, the decisions each of those years has had to focus on where to make cuts.

At the same time, the District has policies and procedures that allow for the creation of site councils, but the language does not specify what the composition of those bodies should be.

The site council unanimously proposed an overlap in the faculty who are elected to the site council and who compose the Leadership Team for TOPS. Members felt the alignment would bring together the decision making in a way that works towards the school's mission and strategic plan, which are set at the site council level. Faculty members of site council were to take this request to faculty for discussion and action.

The following plan was adopted by the site council for its focus of activities this year:

1. IMPROVE THE K-8 PROGRAM FOR ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL GROWTH

- a. Support and implement the middle school plan
- b. Reduce class size by supporting state and district efforts to fully fund schools
- c. Promote the personal and social growth curriculum
- d. Define and expand City School program and school without walls concept (K-8)
- e. Develop Service Learning program
- f. Support full K-8 math and science curriculum alignment

- g. Explore integration of World Languages into the curriculum (do the faculty support this?)
 - h. Work on a full program of K-8 art and music
 - I. Raise reading levels by improving reading instruction
 - j. Integrate multicultural education into the curriculum
 - k. Figure out what to do with Topics
 - l. Provide after-school tutoring for elementary and middle school students
 - m. Explore more cross-grade interactions
 - n. Support classrooms through parent/teacher collaboration
 - o. Promote faculty team-building
 - p. Build new and expand existing communication channels (i.e., voice mail, email, internet, newsletter, roster)
 - q. Evaluate our programs and systems for continuous quality improvement
- ## **2. BUILD THE TOPS COMMUNITY AND STRENGTHEN OUR IDENTITY**
- a. Integrate leadership team into site council
 - b. Promote TOPS to underrepresented families of color and work to retain them
 - c. Recruit and retain teachers of color
 - d. Create a climate where it is safe to explore racial issues
 - e. Support and retain our BOC
 - f. Involve BOC students with other students in joint learning projects
 - g. Invigorate student government
 - h. Work with neighborhood community councils
 - i. Schedule social activities to build community
 - j. Actively welcome new families during the year
- ## **3. IMPROVE OUR FACILITY AND GROUNDS**
- a. Design playground for remodeled site; seek funding (i.e., Neighborhood Matching Fund)
 - b. Support facilities and DRC committee to optimize new design
 - c. Support emergency plans as coordinated by safety committee
 - d. Support faculty in the transition to Seward
 - e. Ensure remodeled facility will have outside phone and data lines in each classroom
 - f. Ensure the new building is fully funded to complete the gym-theater, rooms for music and gym locker room, etc.
 - g. Implement transportation plan

WELCOME MICHEL MERCER, NEW TOPS 6TH GRADE TEACHER

Michel (pronounced "Michael") Mercer has been hired as the new TOPS 6th grade language arts/social studies teacher. She replaces Michelle Ota, who left TOPS this summer to accept a mentor teacher position with the Seattle School District's STAR program. Michel was interviewed and selected in early August by a TOPS team comprising principal Gary Tubbs, teachers Charlie Burleigh and Lori Eickelberg, and parents Penny Bolton and Amy Hagopian.

The interview team was really enthusiastic about Mercer. "She's a dynamic, enthusiastic, well-trained teacher with a lot of energy to give our 6th graders," observed Amy Hagopian after the interview. "We are really lucky to get her."

Michel brings a solid grounding in alternative education to TOPS, although she is relatively new to the teaching profession. She grew up in New York City and was in the first graduating class of the Maslow-Toffler School of Futuristic Education, an alternative high school on Long Island. She went on to earn a BA in English from Dowling College, also on Long Island. She completed the teacher education program through Western Washington University for state certification through Western Washington University in June. Michel was a student intern at Emerson Elementary in Southeast Seattle, and has served the district as an instructional assistant.

Her previous work experience includes group insurance underwriting, AP/AR general accounting with Ackerley Communications, and substitute teaching. "I value a climate of shared decision making, unity of purpose, outstanding instructional practices, and strong leadership qualities in a principal," Michel wrote in her letter of application. She has gone through Lori Eickelberg's Direct Writing Assessment training more than once, because of her enthusiasm for the program and passion for reading and writing.

"I plan to use authentic assessment data (portfolios, direct writing, performance tasks) to evaluate student learning outcomes, and involve parents and the community with our classroom community. My belief is school is life, not just preparation for life," said Michel. The slogan on her business card reads: "Preparing the future and the world 180 days at a time." Welcome, Michel Mercer!

MEET JOE DRUMMOND, OUR NEW 7TH-8TH GRADE TEACHER

Joe Drummond will be the new TOPS 7th-8th grade social studies teacher, replacing Kevin Smyth, who left TOPS to accept a teaching position closer to home in the Puyallup district.

Joe taught 5th grade at B.F. Day Elementary last year, but budget cuts at the school caused his release as the newest teacher there. He also taught health at Pacific Middle School in Des Moines in 1997, and served as a K-12 substitute during 1996 and 1997.

A graduate of Evergreen State College, Joe earned a BA in Liberal Arts.

with an emphasis in the social sciences in 1991, and a master of teaching degree in 1996. His master's project was on "implementing progressive educational reform in Guadalupe, Peru," where he went to instruct teachers in the concepts of multiple intelligences, cooperative learning and critical thinking.

Joe's work experience includes swim coaching, graphic arts technical work, and fingerprint data entry. He was captain of his high school water polo team.

Joe has always wanted to be a social studies teacher, and is excited to joining us. "I'm excited about becoming part of the TOPS community," he said last week. "I feel honored to be invited to a school that has a teaching philosophy that coincides with mine."



Joe Drummond at his recent wedding.

NEW AMERICORPS VOLUNTEERS

Site Council budgeted significant funding for several AmeriCorps members next year, but only two positions were approved by the funding sponsor, Washington Service Corps. Candidates were being interviewed during late August, and the individuals selected will start work September 1.

One of the commitments TOPS makes to AmeriCorps members is to provide thoughtful guidance and supervision. Parents interested in helping faculty fulfill this responsibility are urged to talk with Gary Tubbs, TOPS principal. Lianne Sheppard, TOPS parent, has done most of the work of spearheading this project, and is looking for some help from other parents to keep the volunteers happy and productive.

Other supplemental staff may be available to TOPS this year through the America Reads Work Study program. These students are available at no cost to TOPS to do tutoring and reading in grades K-6. The program is sponsored by the federal government and the University of Washington's College of Education. Several schools in the area successfully used these folks last year, about students per school. These include Olympic View (Ramona Curtis), Laurelhurst (Cindy McKelvey), and Latona. U.W. students would need to schedule their course schedules.

General work-study U.W. students may also be available at a cost to TOPS of about \$2.50 per hour. Work-study students are often available during their entire education, so that when we find someone appropriate we could keep them at TOPS for several years.

Site Council will consider these options at its September meeting.

TOPS SURVEYS INDICATE HIGH SATISFACTION

Surveys of TOPS students and parents last spring show that most people like the school, and indicate lots of improvement from the previous year in the middle school in particular.

Middle school parents showed at least twenty percentage points of improvement between 1997 and 1998 in the following areas: feeling a partner in your child's education, being informed about your child's academic progress, being satisfied with the progress your child is making, extra help for child's needs, child challenged by the work, and building cleanliness. There were ten percentage points of improvement in these areas: being informed about your school's activities, getting information with the district's school choice process, satisfaction with the principal, satisfaction with the superintendent, satisfaction with your child's teacher, student safety, and high academic standards. There were 53 middle school parents who responded to the questionnaire, which was mailed to homes by the district with a postage-paid return envelope. About one-third of the respondents said they volunteered more than five hours a month at the school.

Elementary parents were also highly satisfied, with three-quarters or more saying they were definitely satisfied in the following areas: being informed about your school's activities, the principal, the teachers, feeling welcome in the school, staff members take a personal interest in your child's school experience, equal respect for all individuals, races and cultures, child feels safe, and child is treated fairly with regard to the rules.

Fewer than half of respondents were satisfied with the amount of extra help for children's needs (although there was a 15% improvement from last year in this area), how challenged students are by their work, students learning about computers, and the cleanliness of the building. There were 94 parents who responded to the survey, 44% of whom said they volunteered more than five hours a month at the school.

Students in grades 4 and 5 completed a survey as well. Three-quarters or more said fellow TOPS students were friendly, they feel safe at school, they have friends of different races, their teachers listen to them, they like most of their classes, they get information about drugs from teachers, they feel safe, they do homework daily, the teachers know their names, the teachers are good, they learn a lot, and they see parents helping at school. About half said they knew the school rules, and one in four said other students make fun of them or there is too much fighting between students. About two-thirds think the rules are fair, use the library, say adults at school help them when they have a problem, or say they themselves do things to make the school a good place to learn. About 18% said "many students" at the school use drugs or alcohol.

Students in grades 2 and 3 were very highly satisfied. Ninety percent or more said they liked school, kids were friendly, they feel safe, they learn a lot, the teachers listen to them, they see parents helping, and they themselves help make the school better. About two-thirds said other teachers knew their name.

KIDS COMPANY

Kids Company hopes to move back into the school building on Friday, Sept. 4, after having spent the summer in the first grade portable. Kids Company will provide before- and after-school care beginning the first day of school for registered students. Most Kids company teachers from last year are returning (*Tanya, Shannon, Matt, and Josh*), but *Drea Bibl* has announced she is leaving to do nanny work while completing her education. *Lisa Mitchell-Stokell* goes on medical leave until October 1, and *Lynn Wunder* will take over her duties. So far, 49 students are enrolled for after-school care. Call 524-2698.

GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR SEATTLE SCHOOLS:

ANYONE WANT TO WRITE A GRANT?

The Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) recently announced the availability of funding under two 1998 grant programs. The 1998 application submission deadlines are September 21 and November 16.

The Graffiti and Litter Matching Fund offers up to \$5,000 per project. The "Less is More" waste-reduction grant fund offers up to \$15,000 per project.

For a grant application or to talk about your ideas, please call 684-5004. Leave your name, address and daytime telephone number. You will be called back. If you decide to submit a grant application, please work with the TOPS fund development committee.

RESULTS OF LAST STATE OF THE SCHOOL MEETING

Parents were asked to vote on a set of priorities proposed by the TOPS faculty at the spring State of the School meeting. Here were the top vote getters, by grade constituency:

<i>CONTINUE:</i>	<i>VOTES</i>		
	<i>K-2</i>	<i>3-5</i>	<i>6-8</i>
TOPICS	9	1	0
diversity/gender discussions	7	3	4
Seattle Children s Theatre plays	6	2	1
Americorps	5	2	3
music	3	2	1
community service projects	2	7	2

<i>START:</i>	<i>VOTES</i>		
	<i>K-2</i>	<i>3-5</i>	<i>6-8</i>
World language	13	14	
Reduce class size	14	11	
“it takes a village”; cultural awareness; recruiting kids of color; disparity			
art all year, all kids	11	6	3
continuum of K-8 reading (more cohesive and structured like writing)	8	3	1
cross-age interactions, K-8	7	1	3
Cleaner connections between curriculum, instruction & assessments and then communicate that to parents	13		
Diverse music program	11		

THE STAFF PRIORITIES WERE AS FOLLOWS:

<i>CONTINUE:</i>	<i>VOTES</i>	<i>START:</i>	<i>VOTES</i>
Achievement Fair	14	Continuum of study skills, routines, processes, expectations	24
Music	13	Art all year, all kids	16
Speech tournament	11	Redefine Time Out	16
Topics	11	Mentor “time out”	15
		Continuum of K-8 reading	14
		More integrated K-8 schedule	11
		Family groupings, K-8	11
		BOC student welcomes and goodbye celebrations	10
		New reading assessments, K-8	10

There is a full report on both the parent and faculty votes, available from the newsletter editor.



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AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Back in the 1980s, an economic downturn and “women’s liberation” conspired to send all the women to work. Consequently, most of us have kids who are at loose ends between 3:30 and 6:00 every weeknight during the school year. Here are some ways to keep them busy.

A TOPS keyboarding class for middle school students will meet two afternoons a week, probably Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:30, starting in October. The instructor has not yet been selected. Contact *Jo Shapiro*, assistant principal.

Middle school band will meet two afternoons a week, probably Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:00, starting in October. The instructor has not yet been selected.

Chess Club meets 3:30 to 4:30 one day a week, probably Mondays, starting in October. All grades are welcome. Look for a flyer in your Wednesday take-home packet. Call *Mark Morales* at 325-4079.

Kids Company provides before-school (starting at 7 a.m.) and after-school care (‘til 6 p.m.) for all elementary grades, in a classroom on the east side of the ground floor of the McDonald building. Call *Drea Bible* 524-2698.

Middle school students are invited to “after-school study table,” a quiet study hall for students in grades 6-8, usually held in *Lori Eickelberg’s* classroom. This should start in October.

New AmeriCorps volunteers will coordinate “study club” in the library after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Middle school students will be hired as tutors with funds provided by Friends of TOPS. Interviews for new tutors should take place in September. Talk with *Jo Shapiro*, assistant principal.

Spanish classes will be offered before and after school at TOPS for 1998-1999. Classes will run about 20 weeks. Look for enrollment information around the second week of school. Call *Sandra Welsh* at 285-6254 with questions and comments.

After-school sports are sponsored by Seattle middle schools, including TOPS. Kids can also play in city leagues, but most of them had sign-up periods in the spring. Check with *Don Zemke* or *Eric Herndon*, TOPS P.E. teachers.

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