TOPS Site Council Meeting Minutes
11/12/08

Present: Maureen Germani, Steve Haines, Leslie Hazlewood-Spurr, Dan Hurley, Jeanne Kuban, Johnny Calcagno, Magnus Giaever, Cliff Shettler, Kristina Stoneberg, Karen Stuhldreher, Susan Welch, Betsy Wells, Walter Zisette, Barbara Rockey, Clara Scott, Catherine Staunton, Tamara Kincaid, Marlies van Bergeijk, Leslie Nilan, Laurie Williams

Minutes: October meeting minutes: approval moved, seconded and unanimously approved.

ASB Report (Magnus Giaever): Magnus reported on a very successful Fall dance and plans for winter dances. He explained ASB to Site Council members.

Friends of TOPS: Friends of TOPS was convened. Young Playwrights did not request enough money for this year. There are 13 instead of 12 participants. Cliff would like to increase budget to $1250 for this year from $1,000. Cliff moved. Karen seconded. Budget amended unanimously. Friends of TOPS adjourned.

Treasurer’s Report (Cliff Shettler): Cliff explained the Finance Committee Process for new members of the Site Council. FC is composed of 6-8 members: The FC forms and an RFP goes out to the school community. Proposals are reviewed and additional information sought. The FC sends a proposal to the Friends of TOPS, and, at a Friends of TOPS meeting, the project managers describe significant proposals or changes. The final budget is presented for approval at the last Friends of TOPS/Site Council meeting of the school year. Marlies indicated that the FC had previously discussed starting the process earlier in the year, i.e., in December.

Principal’s Report (Ms. Scott): The 6th grade Ultimate Frisbee team the first TOPS championship. Writing celebrations are going throughout the building, and samples are posted outside classrooms. Chinese classes are up and running. Spanish will start later this month. There is a ski program meeting tonight (11/12/08). Two activity buses have been started for after school activities. One bus goes South and one goes North; students are needed to use the North bus. Sixth graders had a rainy camp. Parent tour dates are set and on the web. The annual TOPS food drive is coming up, and the Winter Wishes tree will be up soon. TOPS will have families affected by loss of jobs. The parent conference schedule is different this year with students attending until 3:20 during the week of November 17th-21st and staying home the week of the 24th-28th to allow three full days for conferences.

At a District administrators meeting, Monday pending school closures were discussed. Principals were given the general guidelines for closure. Closure plans will be announced Tuesday, November 25; December 15, 16 and 17th there will be public hearings on the closures at the affected buildings. Ms. Scott called upon the Site Council to stay calm until the closure list is announced. She does not believe TOPS is at risk.

Site Council Discussion of School Closures and Assignment Plan: Parents talked about the need to be proactively prepared in case the school is affected by the closure plan. The main focus will be on keeping informed. The cost of transporting TOPS students from around the city,
and the generally low enrollment in the Central Cluster were raised as issues that might make TOPS vulnerable. With regard to the assignment plan, parents raised the concern that TOPS is not consistently viewed as an alternative school. Thus, assignment plan changes may have the biggest impact on TOPS because of our wide draw. This plan will come later, after school closure issue is taken care of. The consensus seemed to be that we will continually monitor the situation and try to find a TOPS parent (or parents) willing to consistently attend School Board meetings.

No Bake Committee (Marlies van Bergeijk): The No Bake proceeds are over $25,000 at this point. This year’s goal is $90,000. The committee’s plan is to send one letter per month until a household has donated. There is also a special letter that people can send to relatives, and the committee will be calling families of recent alumni. The No Bake officially ends December 31st but usually go longer. Last year we went through January. People can pledge and pay in three installments. The first mailing was missing pledge cards.

Discussion item: It would be useful for Site Council to discuss at some time the history of why we have two main fundraisers. Do we need to put all our energy into fundraising or into getting more out of our state budget. This discussion was tabled to a later meeting.

Coalition for Social Justice Report (Karen Stuhldreher): December 5 there will be a Friday evening meeting to brainstorm and plan the Social Justice Topics which will be January 16. Friday, January 30, CSJ will show the film, “Kids on the Ave.” They are hoping to get Middle School parents to come while waiting to pick up kids on ski bus. February movie night will be the 27th.
Workgroup Reports

Special Education workgroup (Dan Hurley): Dan has put together a document looking at three ideas, inclusion, communication, and program definition. For each of these three things, the document addresses how TOPS currently addresses the item, what are some ideas people have come up with, and what is Site Council’s role? By the next Site Council meeting, Dan will have gotten feedback from sub-committee members. Laurie Williams will be attending Special Education PTSA December 18 where there will be a panel on inclusion. She will send information to Maureen for the Go-Home.

Communication workgroup (Tamara Kincaid and Barbara Rockey): A name for the group, TOPS Active Communications TEAM (TACT), was decided. It is composed of Tamara, Barbara, Mark Rathbun, and Maureen. They are planning a Newsletter article titled “What is the Site Council and Why Should I Care?” They will be working on better use of communication channels in place, e.g., Site Council grade band reps should reach out to the room reps. The group is looking at the Site Council part of the website with the aim of making it current, relevant and useful. By the next meeting they will have more information on what the website is going to look like. Tamara will send out something for feedback.

Resources workgroup (Betsy Wells): The group has yet to gather. By the next meeting membership will be established and a working document outlining goals will be developed.

Building Leadership Team (BLT) Report (Jeanne Kuban):

The BLT is working on “C-SIP,” the school’s Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. C-SIP is a state requirement and draws on former transformation plans. There are four goal areas: Math, Writing, Science writing, and Citizenship. At the last BLT meeting, they talked about how goal setting for staff is aligned with the plan. BLT gave staff forms to pinpoint goals that focus on kids and specific skills. They asked that all staff have a math and a writing goal (where appropriate). They have been setting goals and having conferences with teachers over the last several weeks. Tamara suggested communicating about C-SIP for newsletter. Maureen suggests asking the BLT reps to do the article. Tamara is a new BLT rep from the Site Council.

Items for follow-up

Newsletter. Request for someone in school community willing to attend the School Board on a regular basis and report to Site Council.

Tamara’s subcommittee will take on what TOPS wants from the assignment plan.