TOPS Site Council Meeting Minutes
1/14/09

Present: Lori Eickelberg, Steve Haines, Liz Hayden, Leslie Hazlewood-Spurr, Dan Hurley, Tamara Kincaid, Jeanne Kuban, John Lynch (School Psychologist), Eva Masumoto, Janet Morrison, Barbara Rockey, Clara Scott, Cliff Shettler, Catherine Staunton, Kristina Stoneberg, Karen Stuhldreher, Susan Welch, Betsy Wells

Minutes: December meeting minutes reviewed but quorum absent at beginning and end of meeting. Not approved.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) and English Language Learning (ELL) Programs (Eva Masumoto and Liz Hayden)

Eva Masumoto presented information about TOPS ELL program. In this school year (2008-09) TOPS has 94 students with a home language other than English. Forty five are qualified for bilingual services. Eleven kindergarten students are qualified for ELL services. Eva provides these services with the help of two Instructional Assistants, Andrew Wong and Xiao Yu Jackson. IA’s are centrally hired and assigned to schools based on numbers of children with a given language. Our IAs were both teachers in China (math and science). The bilingual program is a support program for kids learning English. For students whose primary language is not English, it takes them 2 years for basic and 5-7 years for academic language to be fully mastered. The main ELL function is to provide a language bridge to the classroom but also to help make the social connection to the family. The ELL staff do translations and provide academic support, depending on the classroom and the needs of the children. They run a homework club for 1st-3rd graders in the a.m.. Debbie Bermet (math specialist) helps with the homework club. How do students enter and exit? – If families say their home language is other than English they are referred to the Bilingual Family Center where the child takes a test to qualify for services. Kids new to the U.S. go to the Bilingual Orientation Center for school and stay there for half a year. At semester change they are mainstreamed into regular schools. Students exit program through taking the WA Language Proficiency Test (reading, writing, and speaking). Last year 16 TOPS students exited through WLPT. Have 20 kids in homework club. All the schools have ELL programs. The basis for ELL was a lawsuit in 80’s against the district saying kids weren’t getting equal access to education.

TOPS has two DHH classrooms. Liz Hayden teaches the nine k-5 English DHH classroom which uses sign language that follows English and that is taught at TOPS primarily for students who are hard of hearing. The other classroom, taught by Cindy Beck, uses ASL (American Sign Language). ASL does not follow English grammatical structure and easier for students who don’t have access to sound. Students in the DHH classroom are exposed to the curriculum that everyone else is getting using sign language. Language development, which lags behind that of hearing peers, is emphasized. Unlike an ESL student, DHH students don’t necessarily come to school with a fully functioning language. In Liz’s classroom, they work on speech, hearing, and phonics. There are several assistants in classroom and one interpreter who goes out to work with a student who is mainstreamed most of the day. Mainstreaming works differently for different
children. It takes a lot of support. It is hard to get everything done in the DHH classroom if the staff is supporting a lot of mainstreaming. A lot of the DHH families are also ELL. Some don’t have transportation. DHH students go to Eckstein in 6th grade, and the two programs (ASL and English sign language) are under one teacher in middle school.

Discussion: Translations of materials going out to ELL families need lead time for IA’s to be able to do them. Room reps from grades of regular kids should be informing DHH kids of activities. Only two of nine parents in Liz’s classroom have email.

Site Council Discussion of School Closures and Assignment Plan:

- Lobbying Olympia re funds for education – We will be seeking advice from TOPS parent and former legislator, Kip Tokuda.
- Transportation plan – We will be monitoring how this will affect TOPS and giving input as possible.
- Audit of alternative education – We will also be monitoring this and how definition of “Alternative” will affect us.
- Parents are monitoring the closures and possible effect on TOPS.

Principal’s Report (Ms. Scott):
Happy New Year. Tomorrow is MLK birthday but the assembly had to be rescheduled, because of remodeling going on in the gym (Special Auction Project dollars at work). Congratulations to students in Our Town, the Middle School play performed December 12 and 13. Discussion is going on about the Speech Tournament which is not being held this year and may be reorganized for next year. Thanks to all parents for participation in holiday gift program. The December snows made delivery of gifts as well as Food Lifeline donations challenging but it was accomplished. A TOPS student has been diagnosed with Leukemia and the staff has organized a stair climb for him, participating in the Columbia Tower event, March 22nd to raise funds for Leukemia. The first tour was held yesterday attended by approximately 60 people. One for Middle School is coming up. Middle School students will watch the Inauguration in classrooms and discuss the events. Elementary students will view a delayed taping of the event.

Building Leadership Team (BLT) Report (Jeanne Kuban):
Writers workshop sessions have been taking place. Later in the month K-5 teachers will go to Madrona School for a session on math. Math parent “nights” are happening (one in morning, one after school and one in evening) January 30. Debbie Bermet will be running these sessions. The Safety Committee has been meeting and is determined to articulate an emergency response plan. Joanne Jordan from City of Seattle did a training for the committee. She recommended having a parent meeting in which she would join us and talk about emergency response. We will try to time it to coincide with an Eastlake Community Council meeting, possibly in March or April. Barbara suggests keeping the school community informed about the developing plan through the newsletter, etc. Plan will be aligned with the City of Seattle plan. Leslie noticed parents who are volunteering in class don’t know the emergency procedures.

Auction Report (Janet Morrison) – The theme for this year’s auction is “Spring for TOPS.” The goal is the same as last year ($110,000). Last year brought in $93,000. Site Council needs to
decide the special auction item (“Fund an Item”) by the end of our February meeting. Last year’s was “complete a classroom.” Need to get an article in newsletter about the success of that item –Kristina will do that. We will have testimonials in the March newsletter and fund an item for this year in April newsletter. The Auction date is May 2. Someone has donated a large supply of greeting cards to TOPS, so many that selling them at Auction will make a small dent in them. Cliff will look at what the possibilities are in the charter, given the limit on fundraisers, to sell these cards, e.g., Art Fest, Book Fair, Auction, etc.

List of Possible “Fund and Item” projects
- Replacing the Mac Lab (need price and plan)
- Teacher Excellence Fund
- Rain prevents kids going outside. Many schools have a rain cover so kids can play outside on rainy days. (need plan and pricing)
- Students with special needs – to promote inclusion for students in special needs classroom. – community-building

Coalition for Social Justice (Karen Stuhldreher)
This Friday will be CSJ Topics for K-5 and will include 10 topics, e.g., songs of freedom, Brazil and the cycle of poverty, homelessness, hunger issues, international human rights, community kitchen volunteering, propaganda – branding & logos, stuff they have and what kids around the world have, economic distribution and disparity in U.S., lunar new year and celebration food. January 30 is TOPS movie night showing Kids on the Ave. and other movies the 8th graders are watching. Gathering at 6:00. Movie is at 6:30. Ski bus waiters will hang out together afterward. Barbara asks about Black History Month Karen says CSJ is doing “Sentenced Home” for February movie night. Barbara suggests the film “Being David Wilson” for a future movie night. Taste of TOPS will be in March. China is the culture of focus.

Treasurer’s Report (Cliff Shettler): Friends of TOPS is in good shape, financially. Cliff is working on the tax return and 1099’s. Need to find a treasurer to take over from Cliff next year.

Items for follow-up
Lori will price out the Mac lab – new computers
Kristina will follow up on the outdoor shelter idea
Betsy will send out lists of possible auction projects from last year.
Betsy will email Karen about Tracy Harachi’s work with youth sentenced home to Cambodia
Kristina and Barbara have ideas of potential treasurers
Kristina will do Survey Monkey about conference schedule.
Cliff will work with Susan on restrictions about raising funds using the greeting cards.