

Lyon/Pleasant Ridge PTA Minutes  
April 10, 2007

President Chris Northwick opened the meeting at 9:15 a.m. in the Pleasant Ridge Library.

In Attendance: Kevin Dorken, Matthew Rich, Chris Northwick, Liz Price, Robin Hinrichs, Dee Dee Gross, Sue Raben, Brett Clark, Kristen Borth, Ana Cassorla, Stacy Saef, Pam Hartigan, Kay Laurie, Miriam Biales, Sandy Brennan, Yuko Aimi, Meg Carpenter, Lisa Dickholtz, Dianna Gordon, Denise Tener, Gina Brunswick, Cheryl Kasner, Bridget Cienkus, Eileen Grant, Gloria Pedrelli, Kristi Carroll, Susie Feldstein, Debbie Berg, Eleni Athas, Renee Morosky

**I. Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the March 16, 2007 meeting were approved.

**II. Officer's Reports**

President—Chris Northwick passed around cards for PTA members to sign for Teacher Appreciation week. They were signed— Chris reported that Susie Feldstein and Stacy Saef had entered a contest for 1000 schools sponsored by Scholastic to recognize the best book fair publicity campaign. Susie and Stacy sent in descriptions about how the book fair was promoted to the students, teachers and parents. Lyon school won 1 of four 1<sup>st</sup> prizes for the fall book fair. The prize includes an author visit with Walter Wick who does the I SPY books and Can you See What I see? He will be coming to Lyon School in late May or early June. We also received \$2500 to spend from the Scholastic catalog.

Chris announced that PTA would be cleaning out the Lyon School basement room of PTA materials on Thursday April 19<sup>th</sup> from 9-12. More dates will be forthcoming if needed. Please come if you can help. PTA still needs 1-2 volunteers for hour shifts to assist on Election Day April 17<sup>th</sup>, especially at Lyon. We will be setting up a table in the halls to help monitor people who come to vote and guide them around the school.

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President—Liz Price reported that the Safe Walking Route committee, Natalie Weber, Kim Kretekos, Pam Hartigan, Denise Tener, and Liz Price met with the police to discuss the state's new safe walking route initiative. In the next few weeks the committee will be completing a survey of the designated walking neighborhoods for each school. They will plot out stop signs, crosswalks, crossing guards and sidewalks. They also need to note whether there are any barriers to walking—i.e. obstructions, lack of sidewalks, etc. They will also note places where they would like to have improvements, such as sidewalks or crossing guards. Liz stated that the committee needs help mapping 3 specific neighborhoods: 1) the area south of Lake just east of Lyon school 2) the area south of Lyon near the old police station, and 3) the area north of Pleasant Ridge

and east of Sunset Ridge Road. Yuko Aimi agreed to coordinate the 2 Lyon neighborhoods, and Meg Carpenter took the map for the Pleasant Ridge neighborhood. The survey maps will be finished by the end of April and returned to the Village so the Village can apply for grant funds for improvements.

Treasurer—Dee Dee Gross presented the monthly financial report (see attached).

Note that the expenses for March are on the same sheet as the projected budget for next year. The executive board and the principals will meet on April 23 to discuss next year's budget. All committee chairs should review their projected budget and submit feedback to an executive board member by April 23rd regarding your committee's estimated expenses and revenue. The budget will be presented for preliminary approval at the June meeting.

### **III. Teacher's Representative Reports**

Pleasant Ridge—Deanna Sainati, from the TREE program reported for the Pleasant Ridge teachers. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade students are presently doing a History Alive project, which was funded by a grant. As part of this they act out periods of history. They are doing colonial period now. It has been very popular with the students. TREE is presently doing the Revolutionary War. They are rewriting parts of the words of the Declaration of Independence and changing the words sometimes to help them understand it, and sometimes just for fun. Either way it gets them to look at the words closely and think seriously about they mean. In Science they are also doing light and sound. The whole school is doing Poetry because it is National Poetry month. Some of the students doing a blog that will be available for parents to read. TREE is starting their last project, which will be on Systems and Structures. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes are doing biographies. They are doing powerpoints and a presentation with note cards about someone they like. The Read Naturally grant program has also begun. It helps kids practice reading a passage of nonfiction for speed and comprehension. Some of the children have made huge gains this year using this program.

Lyon School—Sue Raben reported tonight is parent orientation night for incoming 3<sup>rd</sup> grader to visit Pleasant Ridge. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Lyon is starting their Glenview unit. They are also practicing for the April 27<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> grade spring program. The kindergarten students are reading Donald Crews this month. Susan Stevens Crummel came for an author visit. The author visits provide so much for the students. The fine arts team is working on a pod cast on repetition and contrast in art, music and drama. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade art class is starting a new tradition. They are doing a permanent piece for the Lyon School garden. This year's piece will be ceramic. 1<sup>st</sup> graders are creating banners for International night and learning about the cultures in the process. Sue Raben then showed a short video of Mr. Wendt's 1<sup>st</sup> grade students using the IPODs that PTA bought with grant funds.

### **IV. Committee Chair Reports**

Global Language—Denise Tener reported on the parent survey about Global Language. She stated that most people said that studying language was very

important for their child. The survey also found out that parents generally liked the current program but that we need to be sure that our kids are actually learning things. This year PTA has been administering the Global Language program and the PTA volunteers have had a lot of work. PTA has been hiring teachers, evaluating curriculum, evaluating teachers and maintaining the finances. This year we had a teacher as one of our PTA volunteers, but every year we won't have that. Quality will waver. When the program was started years ago, it was set up to foster a love of language and culture, but now parents are asking for the kids to also show progress in learning. To do that, we need to have a program with measurable outcomes and standard curriculum. The committee recommends partnering with an experienced company to establish this program. The company will administer the program, and provide curriculum, teacher training, and evaluation. The committee looked at number of programs. After consideration of 4 main programs, it chose Discovery Foreign Language (<http://www.discovery-language.com>)—run by Eva Michalski. The committee particularly liked the following aspects of the program: Eva has been running it for 15 years. She has put together a curriculum specifically for after school use and has evaluated it through the years. She has agreed to keep a lot of our teachers and is willing to keep our Chinese program although she does not usually teach Chinese. The costs will go up. It will be about \$12 a class for each student, which will be about \$500 for twice weekly sessions for the whole year. There will be more options, however. At Lyon the program will offer sessions 2 times a week, for about \$250 a semester (one fall and one spring). A student may sign up for one semester or both. At Pleasant Ridge students may go one day a week for about \$250 or possibly twice a week for about \$500. Denise made a motion that we discontinue the volunteer administration of the Global Language Program and partner with Discovery Foreign Language for 2007-2008. The motion passed unanimously.

Lyon/PR Spring Book Fair—The committee reported that they are working hard on the book fair. It will be May 23-24 at Pleasant Ridge. May 23<sup>rd</sup> will also be Literature Alive and an author visit by Dan Gutman. The book fair theme will be connected with My Weird School, a series of books by Dan Gutman.

International Night—Anna Cassorla reported that at this point they have nine countries represented, including Italy, Ireland, Germany, Poland, India, China, Greece, Norway, and Korea. They are also hoping to find someone to sponsor Mexico. They have lined up a series of dance groups, *I'm going mad for Mexico*, *Sheila Tully*, and maybe a Polish group. They also have some ethnic restaurants donating food. It should be very successful. Look for more details in the school newsletters.

Fifth Grade Picnic—Pam Hartigan reported the picnic planning is coming along really well. She gave an overview of the plans. The day will begin with a rally at Pleasant Ridge. Then the students will walk over to Cole Park where the Celebration Authority will do team building activities. They are planning a variety of obstacle courses, and team races. Then the kids will have lunch. The food has

all been donated. They have Goode and Fresh, water bottles, hotdogs, and fruit. Then the students will come back to school to the gym and have a dance with a DJ and music. Family Video has donated prizes that will be given for team cooperation. Pam stated that the committee has spent almost all of its money. The committee's budget was cut this year in part because the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class is smaller. This year, however, the committee is spending money on entertainment not on goodie bags and prizes for individual students as in past years. The committee is also responsible for taking and paying the class picture that goes in the front hall and is given to each of the students. Pam made a motion for \$300. to be added to the committee's budget to be used if needed for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade picnic. The motion passed.

**Nominating Committee**—The nominating committee has met and filled many of the positions on the board. We will be voting on positions in May. If you know of anyone who would like a position, ask him or her to contact Stacy Saef. The Sprigman/Attea PTA is also looking for people for their board. If you would be interested in any of the following positions and have a child who will be at Attea or Springman next year, contact Lisa Dickholtz. They need a Treasurer, a Book fair coordinator for Attea, a Sally Foster Chairperson for Springman, Debra Gelfand and Graduation coordinators for Attea, and someone to hope with FOCUS distribution.

**TV Turn off Week** is April 23-27<sup>th</sup>. We have decided that there is not enough time to plan something with the Room Moms for this year, but will be thinking about that for next year.

**Ways and Means—Recycling campaigns**—Cheryl Kasner reported that there is a box in both schools for recycling cell phones. The schools will get at least \$1.00 for each phone, much more for some makes and models. Look around at your home and place of business for phones that could be recycled. The cell phone recycling will continue until May 11<sup>th</sup>. Remember there is also inkjet cartridge recycling regularly at both schools. Just ask at the front desk if you don't know where the boxes are.

**Cultural**—Gloria Pedrelli announced that the next Lyon assembly will be tomorrow. It is the Child's Play Touring Theatre. They will be doing an assembly-style workshop called an "Informance." This workshop gives children storytelling and writing suggestions, and shows them how to organize their writing ideas. They will return May 23<sup>rd</sup> to do a second performance, "New Voices." At this time they will perform stories and poems written by the children. Using costumes, props and a set, the children will see their stories come to life. Gloria has applied for a state grant for this program, but she will not hear whether it is approved until May. Meanwhile, Gloria and Mr. Wendt are trying to arrange to bring Justin Roberts back to do a songwriting workshop with the students. This will cost \$400. Gloria made a motion that PTA guarantee the \$400. fee for Justin Roberts.

If the grant for the Child's Play assembly is approved, it won't be needed, however. The motion was discussed and passed.

Grant Committee—Kay Laurie reported that the grant committee is beginning to review grant proposals for spring grants. If anyone else wants to volunteer for grant review committee, sign the sheet or see Kay. Kay then proposed that PTA approve \$15,000 in funds for Spring PTA Grants. This will allow PTA to maintain a \$25,000 balance in reserve funds for annual expenses going into the next budget year and still fund teacher and school grants now. The motion was made to approve \$15,000 for a spring release of grant money for grants that will be identified before the May meeting. The motion passed.

Teacher Appreciation Committee—Chris Northwick reported for Joanne Eenigenburg. Teacher Appreciation Week will be May 7-13 at both schools. The committee will have fruit and goodie baskets in the teacher's lounge on Monday. Personalized notepads for the teachers will be delivered either Thursday or Friday. Please sign the 2 cards, one for each school, which have been passed around this morning. There will be breakfast in the teacher's lounges on Friday morning and Joanne is working on something specifically for the office staff.

School Board Meeting Report-- Kristin Borth reported that the school board met on Mach 19<sup>th</sup>. They approved the teacher's new contract that includes a 6% increase in pay over 5 years. District 34 presently falls in the lowest 25% of teacher pay in the area schools. This should make teacher pay more competitive. To go along with the teacher's request for more teacher student contact time, they also voted to start school 5 minutes earlier next. Pleasant Ridge will begin school at 7:55 a.m. and Lyon will start at 8:55 a.m. beginning in August. In addition the Board voted to make the last day of school a full school day to make up the February snow day. All students, even kindergarteners, will have a full day of school on June 13<sup>th</sup>. The next school board meeting will be tomorrow night, April 11th. At that time the board may vote on the school calendar for next year.

Chris made the following announcements: PTA will start selling our magnetic bumper stickers in the next few weeks. Look for information in the newsletters. Thank you to the Red Rooster that sponsored Amy Holaday's Snack Shack at the Pleasant Ridge talent show. And thank you to the Lice Check ladies at Lyon and Pleasant Ridge. There were 17 women who came in and helped.

- V. **Guest Speaker**— Kathleen Hart, the District 34 Executive Director of Student Services discussed special education/NSSSED and other student services offered by the district.

## **VI. Principal's Report**

Pleasant Ridge School—Dr. Matthew Rich reported that Pleasant Ridge is really busy this time of year. The spring NWEA tests will be coming up in just a couple weeks. It will let us see how much students have grown throughout the year. There is an assembly scheduled for tomorrow, Novel Ideas. It is a two-part assembly where the children write stories after the first assembly, send them in, and then the performers return in May to perform eight of the stories. All grades will be beginning spring field trips as well. There are upcoming trips to Robert Crown, The Grove, The Chicago History Museum, and the Chicago Architecture tour, for example. Class lists are also starting to come together with teachers and parents giving input. On April 18<sup>th</sup> a form will come home for parent input. The school's goal is to create 5-6 excellent classrooms. There are a whole set of academic and social factors that we want to balance out to create a great cohort of student in each class. The class groups are created and the very last thing that Dr. Rich stressed that the staff does create classes or place students with a particular teacher in mind instead, they look to create groups that will balance and function well as a whole. He also stated that Pleasant Ridge was beginning the process of interviewing teachers for next year. He knows of 2 retirements, but that other positions will be open when and if teachers officially resign. He also stated the school board hires all new staff and only they can announce when a new teacher is hired. Dr. Rich also encouraged parents to support the great events that will be happening in the next few months at Pleasant Ridge, including International Night, scheduled for May 4<sup>th</sup> and Literature Alive and the Book Fair May 23-24<sup>th</sup>.

Lyon School—Kevin Dorken reported the Lyon School is also very busy with activities now and getting ready for next fall. Lyon will have 5 new staff members next fall because of the class size changes. They have begun interviewing for these positions. He expressed thanks for the extra funds approved funds Justin Roberts' workshop and stated that Justin Roberts will be working on songwriting with the students. In part, he will be helping the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders to write a new Lyon School song, which is really exciting. This week on Thursday the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers will have a half-day release to attend a district initiative focused on learning to balance all the students needs in reading and language arts. In the next few days Lyon will also be piloting a K-2 version of the NWEA tests. This is a trial to determine whether the test will effectively and easily measure student achievement. It will be tried in 3 classrooms: 1 Kindergarten, 1 first grade and 1-second grade. If the trial is successful the test holds great promise follow that long-term growth of our students from k-8. The data gathered on individual students would then be used to differentiate and personalize education for individual students. We think that this new assessment will be very kid friendly. It does use computers, however, kids don't need to be able to read to be able to complete the test.

**VII. Unfinished/New Business**

There was no new and unfinished business.

**VIII. Announcements—(Calendar Overview)**

May 4, 2007 International Night

May 11, 2007 PTA meeting at Lyon School Guest speaker—Brian Engle District 34  
Technology coordinator and Tracy Murdoch, Lyon School Technology  
Coordinator.

May 23-24 Lyon/PR Spring Book Fair at Pleasant Ridge School

**IX. Adjournment**—Chris Northwick adjourned the meeting at 11:30a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin Hinrichs