

# Kennard Classical Junior Academy PTO Meeting

March 4, 2015, 6:00 pm, Gym  
MEETING MINUTES

PTO Board Members present: Jennifer Anania, Myra Belgeri, Lisa Granich-Kovarik, Allison Miller, Nicole Scott, Tiffany Tibbs. Also present: Dr. LeFlore

PTO President, Tiffany Tibbs, called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

## **Call to Order**

### **Call for New Business Agenda Items**

- Jerre Parsons asked that the condition of the sidewalks after snowfall be added to the agenda.

### **Acceptance of Minutes from April PTO Meeting**

- Motion to accept by Jerre Parsons, seconded by Erin Bihr. Motion passed.

## **REPORTS**

### ***Student Health and Wellness Assessment, Melissa White***

- Melissa White is the school health coordinator for SLPS. Kennard has a student health advisory council. Kennard participated in a survey about our health that determined our school health index.
- A program called AIM for fitness allowed schools to apply for a mini-grant. There were some safety concerns raised about the gym (edge of the stage is unpadded and students could hit their head against it as they're playing in the gym). The mini-grant we have been granted will allow us to pad the front of the stage. It was also identified that we needed activities that allowed students to be active during recess. We will be receiving a jumbo recess kit than can be locked—balls, jump ropes, chalk, cones, etc.
- Denise Brooks: If recess cannot be withheld as a form of punishment, what is the alternative? White: that would need to be explored in the next meeting of the student health advisory council; different alternatives can be explored.
- Tiffany Tibbs: Do you need any parental involvement? White: The next time we would be meeting is right before MAP testing, and we would welcome participation then.

### ***PTO President's Report, Tiffany Tibbs***

- Welcome everyone to our meeting tonight – thank you for coming!
- Overview about how tonight's meeting is structured
  - Once again, good news is that we have a full agenda – help us be efficient, we are trying to keep with the time schedule listed on the agenda, Meetings typically run till 7:30, due to building permit and childcare arrangements; I have asked Nicole Scott VP to help with time limits.
  - First reports, then old business which includes a vote on a change to the bylaws as well as PTO officer nominations, which according to our bylaws have to occur during our March meeting. Nominations are closed at the end of this meeting.
  - New business – we have several guests this evening.

1. Melissa White, who is the Health and Wellness Coordinator for St. Louis Public Schools, working with all of the elementary schools in the district to establish School Health Advisory Councils to address student health and wellness. She contacted me in the fall, and asked to present at this meeting – she will be giving a 10 minute presentation on the health and wellness assessment that was completed for Kennard.
- Our second new business item is the Discussion about the School name. Reminder: wanted to provide organized public forum that is respectful and thoughtful. We will structure that discussion in the following way:
    1. First, we are grateful to have Patrick Wallace, Executive Director of Communications for St. Louis Public School District with us tonight. He will begin our discussion with some information about the SLPS District policies, that apply to this discussion, I think will be helpful.
    2. After that, we will open the floor to Kennard parents and teachers to ask questions or share thoughts. Similar to other forums and district meetings, we are asking to limit your comments or questions to about 2 minutes, so that we can maximize the number of perspectives presented. We will begin that portion of the discussion with Joanna Abrams who initially raised this concern about the school name on our PTO facebook page, and she asked for this topic to be discussed on today's agenda.
    3. As many of you know, there was an article in the Post Dispatch several weeks ago about this concern, and we would anticipate that we may have reporters or other individuals from the media or community here tonight; wanted you to be aware of that as well.
    4. Finally, again reminding people to be respectful and thoughtful during discussion
- **Thank you's -**
    - To all who are running for Board positions next year, and for all of those who have served – really appreciate their work over the past year, such as pleasure to work with this Board!
    - To Nicole Scott and Allison Miller for planning Volunteer appreciation event efforts
    - To Susie Anderson Bauer – who provided a proposal for changes and improvements to our PTO website; Amanda Miller who offered to help Susie with graphic design elements
    - To Keica Jones, one of the leaders of the Kennardwear committee, for selling the extra items from our Fall Kennardwear sale before our meeting
    - To Punita Patel from Mallinckrodt & Gateway greening, for presenting on school gardens and Gateway Greening resources, at our last general meeting – very inspiring.
    - To Myra Belgeri – who entered us into a Labels for Education Grand Stand for School's Sweepstakes! Upon verification of our affidavit, we will be a winner of \$1,000.00 for our school!
  - **Upcoming events/dates**
    - Next SLPS District Parent Action Council meeting is Thursday, March 26, 6 pm – typically Tiffany Tibbs and Johnni Walker-Gillespie attend these.
    - Kennard Book Fair – March 9 – 12; we need volunteers – check in with Melissa Von Rohr or Dale Greenbury. The link to sign up to volunteer shifts is in our March newsletter and on our PTO facebook page. Remember, the book fair benefits our teachers (each teacher has a wish list), benefits our students (through individual purchases and encouragement of reading) and proceeds help to purchase new books for our library.
    - Volunteer appreciation –I continue to be very grateful for the work of our volunteers – without you, we wouldn't have book fairs, Kennardwear sales, grandparents' day, math and science enrichment events, Hispanic Heritage night, and so many more community building

and learning opportunities. Volunteer appreciation will occur in April; our theme is "Thank You for Making Kennard Grow".

- PTO General meeting – April 1, 6 pm – Officer elections and volunteer appreciation event (Nicole will describe more)
- Teacher appreciation week – May 4 - 8: Contact Sarah Custis and Laurie Erhard if want to help with teacher appreciation. Typically, the teacher appreciation committee provides snacks during monthly meetings, meals during parent/teacher conferences (which are coming up next week), and also some food and treats during teacher appreciation week. Thanks for their work to organize this. But I also encourage everyone here not to wait until May to appreciate our teachers. My challenge to you is to appreciate our teachers now. Send a note, email, tell them in person –thank them for what they are doing for our students and our school, how they have made a positive impact on your child. It really means a lot to our teachers to get this positive feedback– they work so hard, recognition goes a long way, so this is something positive we can do.
- PTO picnic – Friday, May 15, 2015, 4:30 to 6:30; all old and new Board members join together to work the picnic. We also need other volunteers. We have recruited a co-chair to help organize- Jerre Parsons; looking for another co-chair or two. Please contact Tiffany Tibbs if you are interested in helping to co-chair this event. Myra has offered to help support with planning, Tiffany has documents will pass along with detailed plans.
- Field day, May 19 , fun day of activities for the students; contact Amanda Miller or Nicole Colbert Botchway if want to help as a parent volunteer.

### ***Principal's Report, Dr. Wanda LeFlore***

- **Attendance:** Thank you for using SLPS' School Calendar for planning purposes located at:  
<http://www.slps.org/cms/lib03/MO01001157/Centricity/Domain/6/Copy%20of%20Final%20Calendar.pdf> The 2015.2016 Academic Year Calendar has not been approval. It's possible that it could be presented for approval at the March 10 Board Meeting. I'll share it as soon as it's available.
- **Budget:** *Target's Take Charge of Education Program* funds from the fall of 2014 to the school (\$1,212.22) were used to purchase the math resources for the primary grades. **Spring 2015:** *Target's Take Charge of Education Program* funds to the school (\$591.55) will be used to purchase snacks for the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> classes during the MAP Grade Level Assessments and purchase ice cream for Dr. Seuss' Birthday. **Schoola:** Received \$2.00 check from Schoola; online retail kid clothing site that you can purchase from or donate to. If schools register 40% of proceeds go back to the schools. [www.schoola.com/KidsClothes](http://www.schoola.com/KidsClothes)
- **Conferences:** Kennard's Spring Parent Teacher Conferences will be held on the following dates:
  - Wednesday, March 11 conferences are held from 4:30pm until 7:45pm.
  - Thursday, March 12 conferences are held from 4:30pm until 7:45pm.
  - No school on Friday, March 13.
  - Spring Break March 16 –March 20.
  - Classes resume Monday, March 23.

Teachers are also prepared to meet during their planning periods the week of March 10 if day time conferences are needed. As always, if you need more information, feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher.

- **Coffee with the Principal:** Friday, March 6 @ 8:30am. Hope you can join me!
- **Curriculum:**
- **Math Updates:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> grade and kindergarten teachers are implementing **Hands on Algebra** (solving equations with manipulatives)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers are implementing **Equate**, a math game that prepares students for algebra and equations.

Kennard's 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and Gifted Specialists met with Mia Carpenter, SLPS Math Supervisor and Michelle Jones, Gifted Coordinator to discuss content alignment and math placement testing for incoming McKinley 6<sup>th</sup> graders. It was recommended that math placement testing take place in May for all SLPS gifted 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Our dedicated Kennard 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers will work with Mia Carpenter to follow thru on this recommendation.

- **Science Update:** Students at Kennard are already using SEPUP (Science Education for Public Understanding Program) curriculum for one quarter each in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 5<sup>th</sup> grade as a pilot with great success. Staff input indicates that they want to continue with these units and add to them for the purpose of enriching the gifted curriculum. Additionally, the SEPUP curriculum supports problem-based learning relative to current issues in science and supports the *Next Generation Science Standards*. Therefore, a proposal has been presented to David Hardy, Chief Academic Officer, to add the following units for the 2015/2016 school year to Kennard and Mallinckrodt. Also, units have been proposed for McKinley's science curriculum so that the gifted rigor continues and students are appropriately challenged and prepared for college and career readiness. Free professional development will be provided from SEPUP/LAB-AIDS for all units. Units include teacher resources, a class set of books, and enough materials to sustain the unit for five to seven years.

Unit Description	Suggested Grade	Number of Teachers
Studying Soil Scientifically	4 <sup>th</sup> grade Quarter 1	4
Energy	4 <sup>th</sup> grade Quarter 4	4
Earth in Space	5 <sup>th</sup> grade Quarter 1	4
Weather and Atmosphere	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Quarter 2	4

- **Summer School:** SLPS is offering a free Summer Enrichment Program for a limited number of students completing kindergarten through fourth grade. The Summer Enrichment Program will run for four weeks from June 1<sup>st</sup> through June 25<sup>th</sup>. Enrichment will only be offered at two sites for SLPS students; **Jefferson and Kennard**. The Summer Enrichment Program is designed for those students who have experienced academic success in all areas during the regular school year and **do not** need an academic boost in math or reading. Note that a Summer Academy for students who need additional academic support will also be offered. Applications will be available Friday, February 27. More information will be provided as received.
- **Nurse Update:** As of Thursday, February 19, Nurse Brookins will service Kennard **Monday-Friday from 9:00am until 3:00pm** until further notice. Also, below is a reminder regarding **Student Health Related Absences:**

**Per 2014-2015 Parent Information Guide and Student Code of Conduct Handbook**

*"When it becomes necessary for a student to remain at home for health reasons, the parent shall notify the school administrative offices and the school nurse. When the student returns to school, **the student shall bring a signed statement***

**from the parent(s)/guardian(s) giving the reason for the student's absence.** Other documentation may be required as outlined above (e.g. physician's letter, discharge statement, court document, etc.)"

- Two teachers contacted Dr. LeFlore about Gateway Greening—one related arts teacher and one fifth grade teacher.
- Theresa Grabau: Will the summer enrichment be taught by Kennard staff? LeFlore: It will be staffed by any SLPS teachers who apply; it's open to both Kennard teachers and all other SLPS teachers.

### ***Treasurer's Report, Myra Belgeri***

- The PTO has \$7,419.57 in the primary account, \$473.86 in the debit account, \$17,382 in the Friends of Kennard account. The PTO's total balance is \$25,275.
- Fifth grade account has \$17,937 in it (held separately from PTO funds)
- We are doing well spending our enrichment money.
- We are still waiting on a Box Tops check.
- The dance did not lose \$300 as the report seems to indicate; they actually broke even pending some receipts and deposits.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### ***Fund Drive Update, Gary Siddens/Tiffany Tibbs***

- A new appeal was sent out for our Fund Drive. Our goal was \$28,000; we are now at \$22,500. The board may need to cut back some of our expenditures at the end of the year if we have not met our goal. We've had about 40% participation and all amounts are welcome, small or large.
- Kennard mugs are available for those who donated over \$100.
- Anna Stokes: Some parents have asked for what it would cost per pupil if we broke it down that way. Jen Anania: \$75
- Lauren Rea Preston: You could also give other examples and models to parents (example: enrichment money per teacher divided by number of pupils in a class); it's important for the fund drive to be accessible for parents of all income levels.

### ***Plans for Volunteer Appreciation, Nicole Scott***

- We want to show appreciation to all the parents who have volunteered throughout the year.
- We'll have a light dinner after our meeting in April and we'll raffle off an Ipod mini. It's a chance to socialize and we'll provide childcare. The food, drink and Ipod mini have all been donated.

### ***Changes to Bylaws, Tiffany Tibbs***

- There was a document at the front table that explains the changes to the by-laws and the process required for that to happen.
- We believe adding a communications officer will make the PTO Board more sustainable by lessening the already significant duties of the president. Adding an extra person to the board would be helpful for board discussions.
- Tiffany then read aloud the changes to the by-laws.
  - PER DOCUMENT:
    - "Section XII – Communications Officer shall:
      - a. work closely with the President to accomplish effective communication with the parents, teachers, and staff
      - b. maintain or oversee other volunteers to maintain: the PTO website, the PTO newsletter, the PTO facebook page, and PTO related bulletin boards in the school"

- The general PTO needs to vote tonight, and we need to have a 2/3 majority and a quorum. A quorum is present at this meeting.
- Motion to vote was made by Lara Fuchs, seconded by Anna Stokes. Voice vote was unanimous in favor of the change to our by-laws.

### ***Nominations of PTO officers, Tiffany Tibbs***

- Tiffany explained the process of nomination. Nominations are made tonight at the meeting, and no nominations can be made once this meeting concludes.
- You can nominate yourself or have someone else nominate you. Tiffany has written acceptance of some people's nominations, who were unable to attend the meeting.
- Nicole Scott explained she will not be able to be nominated as president because her family is relocating to Texas. She encouraged everyone to consider taking a position because it has been a very fulfilling experience.
- Nominations were open:
  - Communications Officer: Nicole Blumner nominates Allison Miller, Anna Stokes nominates Denise Brooks
  - Fund Raising Officer: Lisa Granich-Kovarik nominates Gary Siddens. Tiffany had a written acceptance from Gary.
  - Room Parent Relation Officer: Lara Fuchs nominated herself
  - District Affairs Officer: Lauren Rea Preston nominated herself
  - Enrichment Resource Officer: Jennifer Anania nominated Cheryl Levine. Tiffany had a written acceptance from Cheryl.
  - Parliamentarian: Jennifer Anania nominated Lisa Granich-Kovarik
  - Security Officer: Myra Belgeri nominated Jennifer Beffa. Tiffany had a written acceptance from Ms. Beffa.
  - Information Officer: Lisa Granich-Kovarik nominated Jennifer Anania
  - Treasurer: Allison Miler nominated Myra Belgeri
  - Secretary: Jennifer Anania nominated Tiffany Tibbs
  - Vice President: Lisa Granich-Kovarik nominated Jerre Parsons
  - President: Chad Beffa nominated Dale Greenbury (at the end of the March meeting). The nominations close at the end of this meeting. The list of nominees will be posted on the website, Facebook page, and bulletin board. We can appoint any unfilled positions.

Candidates for election should be at the next meeting. Our new terms starts May 1.

Chad Beffa: Are the nominations open until the end of the meeting? Tibbs: Yes.

Lauren Rae Preston: I can't be at the next meeting because I need to teach, do I need to withdraw? Tiffany: Teaching can be construed as an emergency because it's necessary to do as a job requirement. Perhaps you can put your situation in writing so that it can be used to explain your absence.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ***Kennard Community Discussion about School Name, Various***

- Patrick Wallace: The SLPS calendar for the next two years will be on the agenda at the next SAB meeting on Tuesday. The tentative first day of school is August 10.
- There is an opportunity for teachers to sign up for a program from the AFT called "First Book" to get free books for the classroom. Kennard Name Change: there is a board policy regarding the naming of schools on the SLPS website; Mr. Wallace brought hard copies of this policy, found at [http://sab.slps.org/Board\\_Education/policies/7600.htm](http://sab.slps.org/Board_Education/policies/7600.htm). He will not weigh in one way or the other on the idea of a name change. The SAB is the governing body of the school district so the superintendent would have to recommend to the SAB to change the name. The

SAB would then vote. To overturn a decision of a previous board you would need a pretty compelling argument. He has no idea how the SAB would respond to a recommendation to change the name.

- Lauren Rea Preston: What did you mean when you referred to the board overturning the decision of a previous board? Wallace: Schools are named by the board that is in power at that time the school was created, so a board would have to overturn a previous board's decision if it gave the school a new name.
- Tiffany then asked Joanna Abrams to come up and explain her concern with Kennard's name.
- Joanna explained that she had come across some information about Samuel Kennard that concerned her, in the sense that he continued to be active in Confederate sympathetic organizations long after the Civil War, including the Veiled Prophet society during the time when the VP society was very much a white supremacist organization. There is a precedent for schools changing their name to reflect a re-evaluation of the historical person; the Nathaniel Bedford High School has changed its name so it seemed like we should explore changing ours too. There have been a number of suggestions through the Facebook page about how to change the name and also other issues related to diversity.
- Tiffany then invited others to speak.
- Derrick Brooks: As an African American, the name change is the tip of the iceberg. I don't think the school should be associated with a man whose beliefs kept his foot on my throat. Maybe we can meet in the middle and name the school after another Clyde Kennard [an early champion of school desegregation].
- Amanda Davis: If it's hard to overturn something another board decided, how many African Americans were on the board when Kennard was named?
- Patrick Wallace: I don't know how many African Americans were on that board, but we can find out. I want to emphasize that this board can do whatever they decide to do. I'm just saying that in my experience it will take a compelling reason.
- Lauren Rea Preston: One of the common things that comes up in this discussion is that if it's a historical person, that they're representative of a historical context. But we're talking more about a historical person, we're talking about what they represent to people. We need to think about the symbolic value of the namesake of the school. Other people said you can't judge people by the standards of the past, but we can and there have always been, in any time in history, people who stood up to injustice. It's a question of who we want our children to emulate. I'm sure there were wonderful things about Samuel Kennard, but we're looking at the greater symbolic power of Kennard.
- Kim Whitrap: I did some research into Samuel Kennard via primary sources at the Missouri Historical Society. I didn't find any "smoking gun" that shows him to be a flaming racist, but he was passionate about the Southern cause and way of life. He was active in the Kentucky Society which tried to carry on the Southern way of life. Some people say that the decision to honor Kennard came after he was dead and was a reflection of where we were then, but that's true today too. History isn't just in the past, we're making history now. It would be profound and momentous to show our kids that we're willing to re-make history. Clyde Kennard would be a wonderful choice.
- Blythe Burkhardt: I agree with everything that's been said so far tonight, but I need some procedural clarification. If we want to engage in re-naming the school, can you point us in the right direction for how to proceed based on an example? Wallace: The policy is clear that the superintendent would need to recommend it to the SAB. I don't want to come across as negative. The SAB is very open and responsive to parent concerns.
- Lisa: Perhaps parents interested in pursuing a "next step" could meet informally after this meeting and talk about how to proceed.
- Tiffany: We would need to figure out as a school--as parents and teachers--how people feel about the issue.

- LeFlore: the teachers were invited to this meeting and the Post-Dispatch article on this topic was sent to them.
- Nicole Blumner: Would the Classical Junior Academy part of the name stay in there, and is the school named Samuel Kennard officially or just Kennard?
- Wallace: That's an interesting question. If the building was re-named in 1980 as Kennard Classical Junior Academy that implies that the Board has already changed the name once. It's semantics but the name Samuel Kennard has already been dropped. It's something we should look at, but the next step for us is to present something to the superintendent.  
Preston: Is there anything related to the deed? Wallace: There could be some restriction in place from when the building was put up, but I don't know that that is the case here. The district would need to do their due diligence to do check on that.
- Sarah Vora: Since this is has become an issue, I've done a lot of research. Maybe we could provide some resources to parents about who these people (Samuel Kennard, Clyde Kennard...) are so they don't feel overwhelmed. I feel proud of our school for facing these issues head on.
- Chad Beffa: The school board members of the past dropped the Samuel years ago. We could contact them and see what exactly transpired with the earlier name change.
- Nicole Scott: I think the issue of diversity at Kennard and the issue of the name change are two different things, two separate issues. I would encourage you as parents to join the diversity committee to deal with the issues in a substantive way.
- LeFlore: I will follow up with Patrick Wallace, and we thank him for his time. I will also look into the previous name change.

### ***Condition of Sidewalks after Snowfall***

- Jerre Parsons: the sidewalks are very dangerous, and so are the steps. Whose responsibility is it?
- LeFlore: I'll report it to facilities and check into it.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### ***Volunteers for Art, Tiffany Tibbs/Sarah Frost Sullivan***

- Sarah Frost Sullivan: We're finishing up props for the Peter Pan musical. We're still looking for help from parents in these last couple weeks.

#### ***Kennardwear Sales, Keica Jones***

- Visit her in the back to buy the last of the Kennardwear

#### ***Book Fair, Dale Greenbury***

- Book fair is next week. It's Wednesday and Thursday and the proceeds support our library. It will be open during parent-teacher conferences. Please support it by allowing your students to buy a book or by volunteering.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Erin Bihr seconded by Theresa Grabau.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Granich-Kovarik  
PTO Secretary, 2014-15



