

ISC Executive Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2020 via Zoom, 9 AM

Present:

Jenia Keating, Co-President
Caroline Manogue, Co-President
Laura Banchemo, Vice President, Communications
Mary Cooke, Treasurer
Sindy Agudelo-Nelson, Mini Grants Chair
Lou Savastani, Member-at-Large
Cheryl Masterman, Member-at-Large
Shirley Clifford, Member-at-Large
Randi Berry, Member-at-Large
Stephanie Tomei, Member-at-Large
Sarah Altman, Immediate Past Co-President
Peg Wahrman, Luncheon Co-Coordinator
Lisa Prosnitz, Student Wellness Coordinator
Ali Liu-Brown, CARE Liaison

Next meeting: Tuesday, December 1, 9 – 11 AM Via Zoom

STUDENT WELLNESS: Lisa P. attended a recent meeting of the Coalition for Youth of Lower Merion and Narberth, a community nonprofit focused on reducing youth drug and alcohol usage. She also briefed the LMSD Wellness Council on the ISC's push for healthy start times and student mental health issues.

If LMSD returns to remote instruction for grades 6-12, Lisa P. noted that it was possible but not guaranteed that those grades would return to the remote instruction start times that were in place in September.

BUDGET: Mary C. reported that the General Budget lines for income and expenses changed due to the Board's decision not to charge HSAs annual dues this year and the cancelation of the Art Show receptions. With no dues, the ISC's income is \$767, earned from July 2020's "Let's Talk About Race" event's donations. The ISC expenses for its efforts to address racial equity in the District total \$1,350 (\$500 for July's event, \$850 for October's). The General Fund's budget expenses will now total \$5,430. There will be an expected net loss of \$4,462.72. The ISC can absorb this because of the current General Fund bank balance is \$18,111.75.

The Mini Grant account had no changes in the past month and remains \$13,802.30. Caroline M. reminded the Board that these funds are earmarked for 2020/21 grants which were awarded in Spring 2020.

LMSD@HOME: Stephanie T. reported that Mr. Hunter, the LMSD@Home principal, has been forwarding ISC notices to LMSD@Home families in his email updates, and that she has seen ISC notices on the LMSD@Home social media pages. She also reported that the Friday schedule for K-8 will be restructured to include more time for specials.

SCHOOL BOARD/CURRICULUM COMMITTEE: Cheryl M. attended the 11/4/20 Curriculum Committee meeting, during which the committee members discussed SeeSaw's remote learning supports and the new cumulative grading scale for high school. The Curriculum Committee discussed the pros and cons of this change: students will be less stressed with the decreased grade impact of midterms and finals, but they are not allowed a chance to "reset" their grades in the middle of the academic year. Athletic eligibility could also be impacted. Sarah A. noted that with cumulative grading, there were fewer opportunities for a full break from academic assignments, thus removing important mental health breaks. Cheryl M. reported that middle schools were implementing quarterly exams in math and science; these exams were intended to help middle schoolers prepare for high school. Caroline M. mentioned that these issues were relevant to the ISC's January "Hot Topics" meeting on Grading Policies.

Cheryl M. also reported that Policy 213 will be reviewed to remove the Valedictorian and Salutatorian rankings. For this year's 10th grade class (effective 2023), they will introduce the academic honors system of Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude and Summa Cum Laude. For this year's 8th grade class (effective 2025), they will eliminate the Valedictorian and Salutatorian honors and institute a new way of selecting graduation speakers from the student body.

SCHOOL BOARD/REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING: Caroline M. attended the Supplemental Board Meeting on Monday 11/9/20. Supt. Copeland reported that bus drivers were contracting COVID-19 and calling in sick, creating a staffing crisis in the Transportation Department. Prior to COVID-19, the District would combine bus routes to address this, but COVID precautions preclude that measure. Instead, parents may be asked to drive their students to school or be asked that their students attend school remotely. He is waiting for recommendations from the LMSD Health and Wellness Committee by the end of this week, but he expects that LMSD will go all remote for grades 6-12 until 12/7 and for a full week after the Winter Break. He asked the community to do everything possible to mitigate risks and to inform the District if a student is self-quarantining, noting that reporting is only as good as the data that they receive. Supt. Copeland's current thinking is that the elementary grades would not change in this situation, but it depends on the LMSD Health and Wellness Committee recommendation.

Lisa P. asked the Co-Presidents to ask Supt. Copeland how data is getting reported both to Montgomery County and to LMSD. Randi B. asked the Co-Presidents to ask Supt. Copeland why LMSD treats middle and high school grades differently from elementary. Cheryl M. said that it may be related to the behavioral difference in older students, including college-aged siblings coming home at Thanksgiving.

It was noted that the Montgomery County and Pennsylvania Department of Education recommends that school districts wait a week after a spike to see how numbers evolve.

FACILITIES: Lou S. reported that LMSD has hired three crossing guards but four more are needed. The schools' ventilations systems will be upgraded from MERV-8 to MERV-13. This upgrade may make it more difficult to regulate temperatures and may make rooms slightly colder. All schools will install a bipolar ionization system; the middle and high schools will do this first.

HSA PRESIDENTS: Jenia K. reported that their October HSA presidents meeting was productive. The HSA presidents shared teacher appreciation efforts and ideas on how to connect families to each other. They were grateful for the suspension of ISC dues for 2020/21. They discussed how to fold LMSD@Home families into their base school's communications and community. Some school have LMSD@Home liaisons on their HSA boards. Caroline M. noted that the HSA presidents seem very engaged and consistently attend meetings.

MINIGRANTS: Sindy A.N. reported that seven of the 26 of the 2020/21 awardees have submitted receipts for reimbursement. She will reach out the five outstanding grants from 2019/20 and firmly reinforce a 12/31/20 deadline. She was concerned that LMSD's Health and Safety Guidelines may necessitate changes to our current MiniGrant Guidelines, i.e., no manipulatives, no collaborative workspaces or projects. The Board discussed the options of postponing the application process and if/how COVID-19 restrictions would affect the 2021/22 applications. Sindy will review the current MiniGrant guidelines and present them to the board for approval on 1/5/21. In the meantime, Caroline M. and Jenia K. will gauge the HSA presidents' interest and ask for them to solicit the Principals' thoughts.

RACE AND EQUITY: The ISC "Equity 101" event with Dr. Tara Doaty was a great success with many participants. Ali L.B. asked Dr. Doaty if she would do more events, since it is more effective to have her continue her work (as opposed to using different speakers). Caroline M. noted that Dr. Doaty may be doing a Hot Topic in the Spring. It would not be an interactive seminar but instead a report of LMSD's activities in the area of race & equity. This has not yet been finalized.

Ali L.B. attended the first CARE meeting of the year on 10/28/20. It was led by Dr. Tara Doaty, who reviewed CARE's activities of the past year and prioritized the maintenance of a focus on equity for 2020/21. Dr. Doaty asked participants how the events of the past 8 months impacted them personally, impacted the students, or both. She noted that the past eight months have resulted in more passion, more activism, more conversations and a need to address missing links in our history. She was glad to see more student empowerment and activism. Dr. Doaty then asked the participants what they want to do in 2020/21. They agreed that they wanted to find the right language to discuss the issues and to continue to share experiences with each other. Breakout groups focused on "what is the role of LMSD" and "what are the top priorities for this year." They discussed moving the high school programming in to middle and

elementary schools. The “Non-Negotiables” were partnering with parents, communications, and the professional work tied to equity.

Caroline M. noted that the April Hot Topic will likely be “Cultural Proficiency” with Taj Byrd. She and Jenia K. were approached by a high school student group, Together We Rise, which raised \$2,655 for student programs. This group has asked the ISC and HSAs to match these funds. Caroline and Jenia will discuss this with their sponsor, Taj Byrd, and the high school HSA presidents to see how the funds would be spent and report back.

ART SHOW: Stephanie T. reminded the Board that the Art Show dates will be 3/13/21-3/21/21 and that there will be no receptions this year. She reached out to Main Line Art Center regarding their COVID-related closures policy and is exploring options around doing this event on-line.

PARENT EDUCATION SERIES: Karen D. noted that the next event is “Talking to Your Kids About Race” on 11/24/20 at 7pm via Zoom with Taj Byrd, hosted by BCMS. In December, Merion Elementary will host a discussion about nutrition with Karen Castenada and Robin Danowski.

LUNCHEON: Peg W. noted that the traditional event may not be feasible due to COVID restrictions. Instead, she suggested we consider a picked up or delivered box lunch for the administrators. Caroline M. noted that the HSA presidents mentioned using Honey Grow and McSheas for similar appreciation gestures. Randi B. noted that caterers may be better equipped to personalize box lunches.

HOT TOPICS: Caroline M. sent a list of this year’s proposed topics to the Board and noted that the event titles and descriptions are evolving. Currently they are:

November 17	Learning Leadership with Dr. Alexis McGloin and Dr. Gaudioso	Dr. Alexis McGloin Assistant Superintendent and Director of Elementary Education Dr. Gaudioso
December 8	Students’ Well-Being & Care	Rich Marta Adil Nure Terry Quinlan
January 12	Grading Policies and Elementary Report Card Update	Jason Lilly Robin Klaiber?
February 9	Special Education	Kimberly Fraser & Team
March 9	New Middle School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Curriculum (K-4 and 5-8) ➤ Logistics (when and which classes start there, name?) 	Alexis McGloin?

April 13	Cultural Proficiency & What LMSD Has Been Doing	Taj Byrd? Tara Doaty?
May 11	State of the District	Mr. Copeland

ROUNDTABLE: Sarah A. noted that the Achievement Imperative Task Force will meet again and that this group has crossover membership with the LMSD School Board's Ad Hoc Committee.