

PTO GENERAL BOARD MEETING
Mary Lin Elementary School
586 Candler Park Drive, Atlanta, GA
Thursday, April 30, 2009
6:30 PM

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 PM by Clare Richie. She then introduced Springdale Park Elementary Principal, Ms. Yolonda Brown.

Extended Day

Ms. Brown shared information about the possibility of an extended day at Springdale Park Elementary School:

- An extended school day consists of 30 additional minutes. The local school determines how the 30 minutes are utilized during the day. If Springdale Park Elementary chooses to offer an extended day, the school staff will determine how to utilize the time once the entire staff is in place.
- Officials at APS, and Ms. Brown, are in favor of an extended day at Springdale Park Elementary. However, a majority of community stakeholders (parents-one vote per household, teachers, and the principal) is needed to approve extended day. Extended day must be approved prior to knowing the details as to how the extra time will be utilized. One example of how additional 30 minutes has been utilized: an APS middle school now allows for 2 ½ hours of reading.
- Funds for extended day cannot be re-allocated for other programs
- There is no hard data on how the prospect of an extended day affects teacher recruitment. No effect on teachers from Morningside Elementary (already on an extended day); non-Morningside teacher recruits were made aware of the possibility and did not seem to be a problem
- The original rationale of the extended day program was to allow for an additional 30 minutes of instruction / enrichment without taking away from other activities.
- Arguments against extended day:
 - students are ready to leave school at 2:00 PM, not much can be accomplished afterward
 - Testing shows no advantage to offering an extended day

Uniforms

- APS cannot mandate uniforms unless they are provided to all students. APS standard is to achieve 80% “buy-in” from stakeholders (families of students, school staff). If vote is 75-80%, the principal may decide either way. (Ms. Brown is 100% in favor of uniforms.)
- The school decides how much variety will be built into the uniform choices. Tops may be sweaters, polo shirts, oxford cloth shirts, etc.; bottoms may be pants, skirts, shorts, etc. Ms. Brown agreed to put together some options so parents could see what uniforms may look like.
- Concern was expressed about the overwhelming discrepancy between the number of Morningside families and Mary Lin families. There was discussion about possibly weighting votes from Mary Lin.

- There is enough time to choose uniforms and have them by the opening of school.

Mascot

Becky Mick reported on the progress of choosing a mascot:

- Springdale Park students offered suggestions for a mascot at the school-wide playdate
- Ms. Brown will meet with the students at Mary Lin and Morningside
- Vote will take place prior to the end of the current school year

May Day Fundraising Event

Karen Van Atta reported on the plans for the May Day Fundraising Event

- Event will be held on Saturday, May 2nd, 4 – 8 PM, at the Hearth
- Three goals of the event
 - Build community among Springdale Park families
 - Allow students to meet one another
 - Raise money for the PTO
- \$10 suggested donation at the door

Fundraising Letter

Elizabeth Lieberman reported that the PTO is ~30% toward its goal of collecting \$50,000 by the first day of school, and she encouraged those in attendance to please spread the word.

Volunteer Needs

Clare announced that volunteers will be needed on an on-call basis from July 15 (projected day to receive Certificate of Occupancy) until the first day of school. Specific volunteer needs:

- “Daily Volunteer” coordinator
- Media Center, especially fiction
- volunteers for enrichment clubs / activities

Transportation and Safety

- Ms. Brown reported that the Transportation and Safety task force met on Thursday, April 23, with members of the city council and several community representatives. General issues were discussed; action items were assigned to subcommittees; next meeting is May 14.
- **Mary Stouffer reported that the Transportation and Safety Committee needs** volunteers, particularly liaisons for bus, pedestrian, and carpool. Bus ridership is being strongly encouraged to minimize carpool/park&walk needs as space is tight
- Mary Stouffer also reported that parking on Springdale is “no parking anytime,” and she informed the Atlanta Police Department that parents are still parking there. This action was a result of complaints by the Druid Hills representatives at the stakeholders meeting, and Mary Stouffer’s personal review of the situation on Springdale. Note that Whitney Woodward has continuously asked parents not to park there in all her newsletters and emails to K parents.

- She also reported that APS still has no contract with the Druid Hills United Methodist Church (DHUMC) and no documented transportation plan for buses, carpool, pedestrians or parent parking (although various ideas were discussed at the stakeholders meeting). The current agreement that APS/MES K Annex has with DHUMC includes parking for teachers at the southwest corner (Ponce/Briarcliff) near the playground, parking for contractors against the north wall, and there is no contract for parent parking for the K annex. The DHUMC has allowed parent parking for dropoff/pickup only as a courtesy, and otherwise uses the parking lot for preschool/church business.
- Mary Stouffer reported that the idea for the stakeholders meeting was to get everyone on the same page, improve communication and move the process along.

General Q&A

- After Care – Class A Consultants has been chosen to provide on-site aftercare.
- Curriculum – still in process; requires input from staff (not fully in place yet); PTO will not be involved in this process. Curriculum decided by principal and her staff. Parents may e-mail Ms. Brown directly with input on curriculum. Change school council to Local School Council.
- School Council – will most likely be elected in August.
- Music – will be offered at Springdale Park Elementary
- Challenge Program – will be offered at Springdale Park Elementary
- Staffing – 85% of teaching staff is filled; still need to hire 3 classroom teachers, 1 art teacher; teaching staff will be announced via the website, with bios of the teachers posted.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Fazenbaker