



Skinner West Local School Council

LSC Meeting

Tuesday, November 14, 2023
5:30 P.M.

MINUTES

Dr. Rhea Bush

Principal

Kevin Bolden

Parent Representative

Dr. Stephanie Frawley

Community Representative

Sheila Howard

Staff Representative

Fadi Matalaka

Parent Representative

Jackie Matthews

Community Representative

Nell Strong

Parent Representative

Dr. Katonja Webb Walker

Parent Representative

Dr. Ramel Werner

Teacher Representative

Vacant

Parent Representative

Vacant

Teacher Representative

Vacant

Parent Representative

I. Call to Order

- A. K. Webb Walker called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m.
- B. Present in-person were Principal Dr. Rhea Bush and Assistant Principal Dr. Jeffery Brown, and LSC members S. Howard, F Matalaka, J. Matthews, K. Webb Walker, R. Werner, and N. Strong.
- C. Quorum in-person was established.
- D. Dr. Bush motioned to allow virtual participation. Voice vote: passed with none opposed.
- E. Present virtually was K. Bolden.

II. Approval of Agenda

- A. R. Werner motioned to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded. Voice vote: passed with none opposed.

III. Approval of October 17, 2023 Minutes

- A. F. Matalaka motioned to approve the October 17, 2023, meeting minutes. Motion was seconded. Voice vote: passed with none opposed.

IV. Announcements & Public Communications

- A. Friends of Skinner West (FOSW) - Amanda Rzepka provided the update. Working on filling Walkathon winner teacher requests. Annual holiday giving drive - working to get sign-up live before Thanksgiving/Black Friday. CPS facilities painting gym starting Dec. 22. Awaiting quotes from CPS facilities regarding vendor options for floor refinishing in order to schedule for spring break. Would like student, parent, and teacher feedback on STEM residency pilot program for third and fifth graders
- B. West Loop Community News - No updates.
- C. PTO - Gallery 111 will take over PTO. PTO will turn over funds to Gallery 111. Working on selecting venue for Gallery 111, then will set date - tentatively looking at end of February or beginning of March. Soliciting auction items.

V. Committee Reports

- A. *Confirm Remaining SY24 Committees*
 1. PPLC Chairperson - R. Werner was elected as chair at the last committee meeting.
 2. Confirmation of Communications Committee Chairperson - Lizzie Kostielny is the chair and provided the update. Would like to redesign/refresh Skinner West website - last update was 5-6 years ago. Topic will be discussed at next committee meeting.
- B. Committee Reports:
 1. Chairperson's Committee - No update.
 2. Special Education - LRE Committee - R. Werner

provided the update. Special Olympics starts bowling tomorrow. Medical festival at United Center in December to get physicals updated and get to meet Bulls players. Then start basketball the following week.

3. School Improvement Committee - K. Bolden provided the update. Committee met and discussed STEM curriculum and STEM Lab. Dec. 6 follow-up. Also discussed supports for newcomer students and social-emotional learning. EPIC - don't have afterschool access but teachers are giving assignments. Dr. Bush is investigating. Funding from the increased enrollment discussed at previous LSC meeting is being used to hire a STEM teacher to work permanently in the STEM Lab. Offer has been made to a candidate, who has accepted. Candidate, Mr. McCarthy, who is a returning Skinner teacher, will start in January. Need to coordinate with the STEM residency pilot program (two Wednesdays per month for remainder of school year).
4. Facilities Committee - F. Matalka provided the update. Dumpsters will be delivered Nov. 17 for decluttering project Nov. 20-22 to dispose of classroom, stage, teacher lounge clutter at both main campus and branch. Winter break projects include: gym painting (sponsored by Friends of Skinner West), custom countertop installation in the main office, fixing the veneer under the counter in the main office, painting the main office and Room 114, install key fobs for staff for back door entry, installing mirrors for dance studio, and deep cleaning of library rug.
5. LSC Advisory Committee - K. Bolden provided the update.
 - a) CPS facilities roundtables are starting next month to discuss and prioritize construction and repairs for schools.
 - b) Last meeting focused on bus transportation for the year. Last year, the district had 692 drivers, this year, the district has more than 700 but they need 1300 to meet all requests. District has received 3,793 travel requests but has no new bus drivers. District says it has been losing drivers since 2016 to Walmart, Amazon, etc. Drivers may return after the holiday season. District is working on raising driver pay and trying to remove the "under the hood" requirement for drivers that required them to be able to fix a bus if it broke down. County now sends replacement buses so this requirement is no longer needed. CPS is actively recruiting for drivers on college campuses for students that may want part-time work.
 - c) Prospective LSC members for next school year need to submit applications before Feb. 8 deadline. New CPS app shows who is running at every school once applications are turned in.
 - d) District's budget roundtables are underway.
6. Bilingual Advisory Committee - Ms. Morales provided the update. Had organizational meeting to elect officers. Elected president, vice president, secretary. Second meeting tomorrow. Currently have 137 students in EL program. Have welcomed 28 newcomer students. Working on list of instructional materials.
7. Advanced Math Committee - Zhu-Song Mei provided the update. Meets quarterly. Next meeting scheduled for Dec. 11.
8. Principal's Report
 - a) Dr. Bush has been awarded ASU+GSV Summit award from the Fund for Public Education, which awards scholarships to 20 principals to attend the summit. Will learn about AI. Will need to change April LSC meeting date to attend summit.
 - b) Nov. 20-24 building closed. Engineers will be here working on deep cleaning.
 - c) Chicago Bulls - Thanks to parents, staff have been receiving tickets to games. Night Out with the Bulls for staff and 200 tickets for middle schoolers this Friday. Bulls PE takeover last week. Former Bulls players did drills with students who had PE that day. Current Bulls player Dalen Terry had food and drills for the students.
 - d) Staffing updates - STEM teaching position has been filled (Mr. McCarthy). One counselor has moved states. Have hired a new counselor to begin in January.
 - e) Next CIWP meeting is mid-December.
 - f) Summative Designation from the State is Exemplary - top 10% highest performing out of all elementary/middle schools in the state. Competing with

schools that have just one profile, whereas Skinner has classical, neighborhood, ELs, and cluster program. IAR growth outperforms the district and the state.

- g) State of the School address coming soon.
- h) Promotion policy meeting. Dec. 4 at 4 p.m. Hybrid. Parents of 2nd, fifth, and 8th grade students should attend. Single subject and whole grade acceleration applications pouring in. First step is for families to apply. Must have a 5 on the IAR in that subject. Students in fourth grade and above are eligible to apply. Then school teams utilize Iowa acceleration scale to make determination for each student based on factors including academics, maturity, family support.
- i) Skinner EL program - Ms. Morales conducts training for staff and constructs EL support schedule for students. Skinner has always had a large population of EL students. Newcomer students get same supports other students with an EL profile. Six teachers have EL endorsements. Newcomer students are placed where teacher has EL endorsement. Additionally, all staff have mandatory district PD on teaching EL students. Audit of EL program happening in November. District will come in and interview staff. When Skinner has teaching vacancies, strong consideration is given to teachers with EL endorsement. District also offers fast track program for any teacher who wants to earn an EL endorsement.
- j) Dr. Bush provided review of EL enrollment data. Skinner has 166 EL students - only 28 are newcomers. CTU-district limit for class size is 32 in K-3 and 35 in 4-8. All of Skinner's class sizes are below 30 except in 3rd grade (one class at 27, three classes of 32) and 5th grade (one class at 27, two classes at 30 and two classes at 31). The total number of newcomer students in third grade is six. Restructured teaching assistant schedules to provide more support in third grade classes. Total number of newcomer students in fifth grade is five. In sixth grade, the average CPS class size is 36, whereas the average Skinner class size is 26. At Skinner, we do not have a very large newcomer population. But we do have a plan in place and EL supports.
 - (1) Comment from F. Matalka: Class sizes are the lowest averages in 10 years.
- k) Addressing public comment from last meeting.
 - (1) Regarding recess supervision - We need more parent volunteers for recess support.
 - (2) Regarding class sizes - Average kindergarten class size is 25.
 - (3) Regarding STAR start date - STAR began Sept. 19. Current waitlist for new enrollment. Not enough staff to cover demand.
 - (a) Comment from J. Matthews: Has there been consideration of utilizing funds to secure an outside vendor to add capacity so more families can participate in STAR? Dr. Bush: STAR has traditionally been run by Skinner staff and would like to continue to provide staff this opportunity. Outside vendors do provide specific programs as part of STAR.
 - (4) Regarding copy paper - We do have copy paper. No additional funds are needed.
 - (5) Regarding newcomer student support - CPS family & community engagement staff offer support to all district schools. School-based support group is collecting nonperishables, coats, and backpacks. CPS is providing extra funding for extended day tutoring support and bus cards.
- l) Budget
 - (1) Student Council fundraiser approval - Student Council is requesting approval to have fundraisers.
 - (2) Enrollment increase funding - Skinner has about \$15k left. Requesting to use \$5k to create bucket to pay teachers for extended day, such as when they review applications for accelerated placement, chaperone field trips, etc. Discussed possibilities of funding.

VI. Old Business

- A. LSC Member Vacancies (2 parent & 1 teacher) -
 - 1. Mr. Ronak Patel provided his personal statement.

2. Mr. Daniel Orofino provided his personal statement.
3. Ms. Smiti Sharma was not present.
4. LSC moved into closed session for discussion.
5. LSC returned to open session. Dr. Bush motioned to open the vote for Mr. Patel to join the LSC as a parent representative. Motion was seconded. Voice vote: passed with none opposed.
6. Dr. Bush motioned to open the vote for Mr. Orofino to join the LSC as a parent representative. Motion was seconded. Voice vote: passed with none opposed.

VII. New Business

- A. Newcomer Students - Dr. Bush provided review of EL enrollment data. Skinner has 166 EL students - only 28 are newcomers. Supports and plan are in place.
- B. Budget - K. Bolden motioned to approve the use of \$5,000 to pay teachers for extended day. Motion was seconded. Voice vote: passed with none opposed.
- C. Student Council fundraiser - S. Howard motioned to approve the Student Council to fundraise. Motion was seconded. Voice vote: passed with none opposed.

VIII. Public Comment

- A. Lizzie Kostielny - When is paperwork due for next year's LSC application? Feb. 8. Asked Dr. Bush for a blurb about her scholarship win, pictures of kids at the Bulls game, info on Skinner's Exemplary designation, and information on needed recess volunteers for newsletter. Bus cards for 7th & 8th graders - CPS website says come to school - bring \$5 to front office, and they order it. Emailed Mr. Roman to get game schedules for all the sports to put on calendar. Has there ever been consideration of having a Black Student Organization or Hispanic Student Organization?
- B. Amanda Rzepka - Request to move LSC meeting location to multipurpose room or cafeteria and not gym. Hoping to have understanding before end of school year of plan for walking math.
- C. Carlil Pittman - Son is an honor roll student and fluent in Spanish but got an F in Spanish. No communication going on with the teacher. Is curriculum approved, or is the teacher putting forth her own curriculum? Can there be an internal audit/survey of students that have not passed? A lot of students are having issues with this particular teacher. Additionally, he runs a youth organization focused on youth voice. When is graduation picture day?
- D. Stephanie Hall - Advocated for student athletes. Students are feeling anxiety. Some staff members are not as warm, can be dismissive. Sports and extracurriculars being used as a pawn. Student government did not occur this year. Black and brown students feel that staff don't believe in them and are always looking for them doing something wrong. Don't have the same support system of staff to go to. Not getting prompt, respectful responses from staff. When was Student Council opened up? Confusion and inconsistency with dissemination of information. Misalignment between instruction, assignments, and tests. Parents need financial support for sports - costs \$450 per student to participate. Launched a fundraiser with Buffalo Wild Wings to donate 10% of proceeds. Field trip - can parents join even if not as an official chaperone?
 1. Amanda Rzepka: Restaurant fundraisers have been for sports programs this year. Friends of Skinner West can coordinate on Buffalo Wild Wings fundraiser.
- E. Daniel Orofino - Discontinuity between staff getting burned out and not wanting to utilize outside vendor.
- F. Jackie Matthews - Exemplary designation is truly an accomplishment. Skinner outperformed the district and state on chronic absenteeism, which many schools that were previously Exemplary struggled with last year.
- G. Ronak Patel - When are school picture dates? Dec. 1. Some parents got contradictory emails from Lifetouch.

IX. Adjournment

- A. R. Werner motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded. Voice vote: passed with none opposed.
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Jaclyn Matthews
 Skinner West LSC Secretary