

**DRAFT TCGIS PTO Meeting Minutes**  
**March 1, 2010**

**Attendees:** Leslie Watson, Ursula Hargens, Kari Swedberg, Lisa Anthony Thomas, Renee Moelders, Ina Elliott, Kari Swedberg, Michelle Sheire, Kris Hennelly, Susanne Grimm, Liane Gale, Karola Rauer, Heidi Zimmermann, Kim Kompel, Chris Weimholt, Gina Vader, Sue Burke Westacott, Nicole Grenz, Kami Blackwell Kinney, Kate Olson, Lisa Friedman, Annika Fjelstad, Rebecca Johnson, Molly McBeath, Jo Nelson.

**Location: TCGIS**

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by PTO president Leslie Watson.

**Approval of Agenda.** As a call for new business did not result in any requests, Chris Weimholt motioned to approve the agenda, Kim Kompel seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**Approval of February Minutes:** Sue Burke Westacott moved, Heidi Zimmermann seconded to approve the February minutes and the motion passed unanimously.

**School Board Report.** On behalf of the TCGIS Board, Board Member Kim Kompel thanked the PTO for all of its hard work to put on a fabulous party for Maskenball. She then provided a summary of the February 23 Board meeting that was dedicated largely to budget discussions. A list of ideas for budget reductions was established. Combining English sections was identified as having the least negative impact onto perceived values of the TCGIS community (currently, each class is divided into two sections), slightly raising class size limits, reducing specialist hours, re-organizing teaching positions at the middle school level, re-negotiating the cost of the Amity interns (if cost savings are accepted, TCGIS has to guarantee the accommodation of at least 20 interns/year), and implementing Q Comp (a state level quality compensation program), especially if revenue can be generated from it. TCGIS had signed on onto the state's Race to the Top grant application that proposed to implement the Q Comp system in participating schools. Among the least acceptable options were the elimination of the Amity program, holding off in implementing the third language, combining classes, not increasing administrative staffing, not expanding past K-5 until the budgetary situation recovers, and cutting all specialist. These opinions are going back to the Finance Committee, which will put together potential budgets under different scenarios.

Leslie Watson asked whether the Board would seek parental input regarding school priorities. Kim Kompel stated that it is still being explored how to request parental input. Sue Burke Westacott asked when we will know whether we will receive the hold-back. Kim Kompel replied that we may not have the numbers until fall; therefore, we will have to budget with different scenarios, but that traditionally the school has budgeted conservatively. Raising class size was also discussed. While the community values the small class size, this measure would be one of the only ways to generate more revenue. Currently, the class limit for K and 1 are 22, and from 1<sup>st</sup> grade onwards it is 20. At the school board meeting, a motion was brought forward and passed to raise the class size limit for K and 1 from 22 to 24 students, with the stipulation that each of the classes would have an intern.

The Board also approved a new administrative position, a Site Administration Manager, which is currently being advertised on the school website. Annika Fjelstad added that the position

would also be advertised on other websites that advertise administrative positions in order to attract professionals with a school finance/ business background. Knowledge of German is not required. Kim Kompel then reported that results from the High School survey indicated a strong interest in pursuing a High School option. A TCGIS High School Research Task Force is in place that through MAIN (Minnesota Advocates for Immersion Network) and Tara Fortune (CARLA) will try to secure funding for research and planning. Other items mentioned were the midyear evaluation of the director, and a draft of the 2010/2011 school calendar that will be open for parent comment soon. In addition, the Board approved hiring full-time teaching positions for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Treasurer's Report.** A discussion ensued about whether there are or should be stipulations regarding use of the discretionary funds by teachers. No motion was carried forward, but there was general agreement that teacher classroom funds should be used only for expenses, projects, and supplies directly related to the classroom. Current fund availability is \$4,000 - \$7,000, depending on whether we need to pay the architect for the playground plan. Even without any fall 2010 fundraising the PTO would have enough money to front Maskenball and fall discretionary funds for teachers.

**Education Support Committee:** Ursula Hargens gave an update on the School Clean-Up. On March 13 at 11 a.m. we will clean and organize the school. During the second date, methods for displaying students' work in the building. A funding request was made for \$500, which would cover the decal for the front door, cleaning supplies, and some map rails. There is also a need for bulletin boards outside classrooms and offices, which may be part of a second phase of the project. A discussion ensued regarding the map rails. Renee Moelders made a motion for a funding request for up to \$500 for the first phase, which was seconded by Gina Vader. Leslie Watson added a friendly amendment to do the project in phases in coordination with teachers. The motion passed, with 23 in favor and 1 opposed.

The remainder of the meeting was spent in discussion with Director Annika Fjelstad. Annika Fjelstad first thanked the PTO for all of its activities and stressed that she has come to this meeting more to listen than to talk. The topic she had chosen was "Assessment" and offered one phrase to keep in mind "What you measure is what you treasure". She went on to ask the following questions: What do standardized assessments mean? Are those numbers important? Do they represent who we are? What do we really care about? How do you measure and communicate that? Annika Fjelstad stated that it is easy to talk about assessment backwards, to discuss the different labels, numbers of grading. But should you start the discussion by formulating expectations, and defining the stages all kids should go through and to make sure that all kids go through those. There are a number of assessment models and Annika Fjelstad is interested in parents' preferences. After small group discussions, some of the parents' input ranged from the opinion that feedback/communication with teachers should be increased, to an interest in a holistic assessment that takes into account social behavior besides academic performance, to parents preferring designated ways on how teachers and parents communicate.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

*Prepared by Liane Gale, PTO Secretary*