

Minutes from the February 5, 2014 Inspired Families Association Meeting

I. Math workshops

Workshops were presented by teachers in grades K-5 on math strategies

II. Welcome: Kalena Clarke, IFA president

III. YMCA summer camp presentation: Nick Knauer, from the Anthony Bowen YMCA

Nick Knauer said that they are opening up 35-40 more slots for aftercare in the next couple of weeks. Aftercare costs \$60 member/\$65 nonmember aftercare only; \$50/\$55 for before care only; \$80/\$120 both. The Y are not currently running before care due to lack of enrollment, but they will run the program if they get eight kids.

Summer camp: YMCA Summer camp will have activities at multiple locations in the neighborhood: at the Y, at Meridian PCS, at Harrison park, and at Meridian Hill Park. Some camps include swimming, crafts, etc, and each camp is themed (circus, space, etc). There are also sports. For older kids there are more options: sports, cooking, even some field trips. Everything is weekly, so you can pick and choose weeks. Information will go home with the kids and is available on the website. 7a-6p including before/aftercare. All of the camps are full-day. If you sign up for more than one week of a particular subject (like cooking) each week will be different, so they won't be doing the exact same thing every week.

IV. Principal's report: Zoe Duskin

Elementary team went to a conference and they reflected on how to involve families more, and tonight's math workshops grew out of that. Zoe would welcome feedback from families about how it went and how they can continue to engage families.

Recruitment: Things are going well and the school has a lot of applications already, but we need families to share flyers and information. Having full enrollment is a high priority.

Shaed: The school is continuing to work with the design team and getting permits, etc. They hope to set up facilities tours, but because right now there is no electricity so no light or heat, they will wait until it stays light later before holding tours.

Springboard: Zoe thanks everyone who came to meetings and engaged in conversation about the allegations of student mistreatment. The school did not learn of the incident until January and were not able to respond in a timely way. The school is continuing to work on next steps around its relationship with Springboard and will share information as they have it. Zoe has no concerns about the program that we run on site, and families also have many other options in the neighborhood: YMCA, Beta Academy, Martha's Table.

DC-CAS: The teachers have begun talking about it with students and it is coming up later in the spring. DC-CAS is the week before intersession, a full week of mornings. Third through fifth grades take the test, and their scores “count,” and second graders also take it as a practice test where the scores don’t count. There will also be some practice tests where everyone is taking the test at the same time to get them used to the idea that they have to stay seated, can’t walk around the classroom or school, etc. Zoe asks parents to help school to create a culture of not being stressed out about the DC-CAS. The teachers have talked to the students about the test as something that they have to do and want to do well, but they do not want students to feel that it is something to be stressed out about. Zoe goes to each classroom and explains what it is and that it is a tool for evaluating the school but we don’t want the kids to worry that poor performance will let down the school or anything like that. Zoe says they hope to use this to show that you can love school AND do well on tests.

Questions from families:

Q: Will there be early childhood testing?

A: There are some observers coming from OSSE who are going a classroom evaluation but there are no early childhood tests.

Q: How to prepare my student for testing?

A: Eat breakfast, have a regular routine, regular bedtime, etc. We want to decrease any sense of pressure or stress. And please don’t be late to school! But best way to prepare is to play math games, talk about what they’re doing in class, give them time to sit and read independently on the weekends (to build reading stamina)...

Q: What is the reenrollment process for current students?

A: Reenrollment will be in April. You have to reenroll online and also bring in proof of residency, health forms, etc. New this year, we are not going to accept incomplete paperwork, only complete packages of paperwork. There are new residency requirements this year as well. Siblings who are applying to the school have to go through the common lottery and list the school as the first choice and list the child as a sibling. We anticipate that there will be space for all siblings to be able to enroll.

Q: Can we have open houses during school hours?

A: We are inviting all folks who have listed us as any of the twelve choices in the common lottery to come for a tour of the school during school hours.

Q: What will our relationship be with the Y in the new school year?

A: We are committed to continuing to work with them on PHD in the new year. We have not yet done the competitive bidding process for aftercare providers for the new school

year, although we do anticipate that they will put in a bid. It is a competitive public bidding process and we will consider all bids. It is my understanding that the Y is considering offering busing back to this neighborhood for aftercare as well. It is also my understanding that their preference with other schools is to have the program on-site at the school. In other schools they might bus the kids around for swimming, etc, and bring them back to the school site afterward. Here, they may consider offering transportation back to the Anthony Bowen Y afterward for pickup.

Q: What about school use of the adjacent field next year?

A: The field belongs to the DPR, not the school. Typically schools have the first right of use for adjacent fields such as this one, but it is a public facility and will continue to be.

Q: Is the playground on the list of play dc playgrounds to be updated?

A: The playground on the far side of the field was renovated around four years ago.

V. IFA Initiatives and Events

- a. Family Game Night: February 22, games by Labyrinth game store on Cap Hill. WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! Please sign up via [signupgenius](#) to help with games and potluck.
- b. Inspired Giving Drive: March 31-April 4. We really hope to have 100% participation from families, regardless of the amount given
- c. Inspired Evening: Saturday, April 5. WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! Please sign up if you would like to participate in the planning committee for the Inspired Evening.
- d. Recruitment: We are in the home stretch. We had a Ward 5 open house at Dori and Shemaya Klar's house. Upcoming dates: open houses 2/22; 3/1. Ward 4 house party on the 23rd at Julia's house (Jhowellbarros@gmail.com). Zoe has been reaching out to community organizations near the school, including communities of color, latino families, Ethiopian communities, etc. Please take flyers and place them around town, at DPR facilities and DCPL branches in particular.
- e. New campus transportation: Nichole handed out a flyer, attached, of frequently asked questions since the survey came out. Nichole and Eric thank everyone for responding to the survey and ask people to please respond if you haven't already. We need the information for talks with potential vendors. We are still early in the process, so right now we are still trying to gather information. It would be less expensive if we can get enough kids to run a full bus, but we also can run vans. One of the vendors we are talking to can do either buses or vans. They do not provide a chaperone but would

welcome our organizing ourselves to provide them. Question from family about safety on buses -- We will get information from the vendor about safety provisions and car seats and such.

VI. IFA Group Discussions (notes from report-back at the end of small-group discussions)

a. Volunteer opportunities for families

- i. How to encourage more family involvement? Survey at the beginning of the year asking people what they want to volunteer for and IFA contacts people later for help with that.
- ii. List of volunteer activities with calendar.
- iii. Goal of a certain number of volunteer hours per family maybe down the road?

b. Wishlist for IFA funds

- i. Chess
- ii. Music
- iii. Sports
- iv. Gardening
- v. Playground
- vi. Intersession
- vii. Field trips
- viii. Kennedy center
- ix. smartboards and technology
- x. transportation subsidy
- xi. get more information from families (survey, etc)

c. How to share talents and expertise

- i. Suggestion: fishbowl to put business cards in -- people work places where they might give money, etc. Also have cards for people to write on -- name and talents -- for those who don't have business cards.

d. Best vehicles for communication

- i. Would like a schedule for communication
- ii. some people didn't like google group, some did
- iii. school does not have a staff person to do this, so realize that parents are organizing and communications come in different ways
- iv. request for a newsletter once or twice a month, on paper and via email, on a regular schedule and a specific day



IFA “All Families” Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, February 5, 2014

- I. Math Strategies Workshop 5:30 – 6:00 pm
 - II. Welcome 6:00 – 6:05 pm
 - III. YMCA Summer Camp Presentation 6:05 – 6:20 pm
 - IV. Principal’s Report 6:20 – 6:35 pm
 - V. IFA Initiatives & Events 6:35 – 7:00 pm
 - a. Game Night & Potluck (Feb. 22)
 - b. Inspired Giving Drive (Mar. 31 – Apr.4)
 - c. Inspired Evening (Apr. 4)
 - d. Recruitment
 - e. New Campus Transportation
 - f. Room Parents – Best Practices
 - VI. IFA Group Discussions 7:00 – 8:00 pm
 - a. Wish List for IFA Funds
 - b. Ideal Volunteer Opportunities for Families
 - c. How do we best Share Talents & Expertise & Connections
 - d. Best Vehicles for Communication – What works, What Doesn’t
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Inspired Teaching Transportation/Vanpool Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Will the vanpool be available for preschoolers?

A. Van vendors require riders to be 3 years old at time of ride. If you have a student that won't turn 3 until Sept 30 cutoff, you'd have to wait until after they turn 3 to ride. There will be an adult that will assist the kids off the bus/van once it arrives at the school. The buses and vans have cameras. We will try to coordinate a parent-led chaperone system, but this will rely on the willingness of parent participation/volunteers.

Q. How will a potential YMCA bus influence the vanpool ridership?

A. We have not been given official information as it relates to any partnership with the Y or before and after care with the YMCA. As of now, we are proceeding with plans that there will only be onsite aftercare at the school's new building.

Q. How will sibling discount work?

A. We anticipate that we will be able to offer a *significant* sibling discount for riders. This will depend on the final contract amount, family interest, as well as full-time/part-time participation.

Q. Have you tried to get a Metro bus from Brookland Metro as opposed to Rhode Island?

A. We are in the midst of drafting a proposal that gets submitted to DDOT in March for the following school year. We are suggesting both Brookland and Rhode Island metro stops as options. The ultimate decision will lie with DDOT as to 1) whether our proposal will get approved 2) which stop will fit best in alignment with current routes and 3) the need of the community in our neighborhood including but not limited to the 3 charter schools that are within 0.5 mile from our campus.

Q. Will part-time (morning only) be an option for families?

A. It is our hope that we will be able to offer morning only or afternoon only options. However, this will also depend on the final amount of interested families. We are operating with that as a primary goal.

Q. How did you come up with the price of \$180/month if you haven't received quotes or don't know how many families are participating?

A. We had a preliminary email going around on the google listserv and have been able to estimate interest and neighborhoods in late 2013. Now that we have a survey, we hope to get more accurate information to get the numbers to work. We have been in heavy talks with the same vendor that provides transportation with Washington Latin PCS. They feel confident that they will be able to offer us similar pricing plans as Washington Latin which is a rough estimate of \$10/day roundtrip, 180 school days gives us about \$180/school month. This is just a rough estimate and we hope to have more data after the survey. When comparing the price of the vanpool, if you are currently taking Metro, don't forget to subtract the cost for the adult rider that will no longer be needed as well as the convenience of having front-door service. Also, we feel confident that the \$10/day quote is the high end ceiling of what the final price may be.

Q. What are potential routes and estimated times for the vanpool?

A. Based on the email soliciting interest in late 2013, we saw a heavy desire from Petworth, Shepherd Park, 16th St Heights, Columbia Heights, Adams Morgan and U Street areas from NW as well as interest from Capitol Hill/NOMA/Navy Yard areas. A very rough draft of routes was then made in order to go deeper in talks with the vendors. A NW vanpool route would potentially begin in Shepherd Park/Upper Brightwood, go southbound on 16th St NW pick up in 16th Heights/Petworth/North Columbia Heights friendly location, then stop near Meridian Hill Park and a final stop on the way to the school near the current building (near Cardozo High, 13th and Florida area). When thinking about potential stops, we have to think about traffic congestion, possible areas to pick up and drop off that will eliminate the need circling corners (adding time), parking friendly for parents to wait for bus (especially in hot/cold weather). While we are trying to accommodate most neighborhoods that have a desire, we also have to factor the total time it would take and whether the benefit remains for a rider vs. driving to school. An estimate for stops that look like this { 1. Walter Reed, 2. Upsher Park, 3. Meridian Hill Park 4. YMCA or Cardozo High} would take approximately 30-35 minutes from stop 1 to the school (subtract about 5-7 minutes from each stop). The Cap Hill route would look somewhat like {1. Navy Yard or Anacostia Metro 2. Eastern Market 3. North Cap Hill}. This time estimate will vary more than NW based on final stops and family interest.

Q. Who will be responsible for the vanpool as far as costs, issues, concerns?

A. Because this is a parent-led effort, we are trying to keep the semantics of the vanpool at the family level. Due to all the work that's being done at the school level for the new building, we'd like the contract/semantics to be with the families as it would involve legal implications/insurance/payments that the school may not be able to accommodate in a year with such a big move. However, the school has expressed a great deal of support with the venture. They are also attempting to make a staff member available that will help serve as a transportation rep for issues that arise at the school level (i.e., ensuring the kids that are supposed to get on the van get on the van etc). Lastly, it is our goal that we will help lead the vanpool efforts and turn it over to the school once we are settled in the new building (i.e., school year 2015-16).