



Burley Local School Council Meeting Minutes February 17, 2021

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm.

Roll Call:

Present: Catherine Plocher, Mary Renouard, Amy Walsh, Carolyn Skibba, Rob Moon, Teresa Merritt, Jessy Newman, Elliot Ransom, Katie Hall-Jasinski, Erin Stanfill

Absent: Bob Blitstein

Approval of Minutes:

The Council reviewed the January 2021 LSC minutes prior to the start of the meeting. Members of the LSC asked clarifying questions about why the teacher letter (included as an addendum) did not include the teacher names and Ms. Skibba explained that the teachers were comfortable sharing their names but they did not want the letter to be divisive. Members also raised the issue that there were no parent names on the letter from the Chicago Parent Collective. The council discussed the value of including the names of teachers and parents and Ms. Plocher shared her views as the leader of the school and the need to heal and rebuild community. Jessy Newman moved to approve the minutes without the names and Elliot Ransom seconded. Five council members were in favor but three were opposed which was not enough for the resolution to pass. The council agreed to table the discussion and did not approve the minutes as presented during the meeting.

Fundraising Proposals:

- Friends of Burley submitted four proposals for the Fall Social, Winter Party, Walkathon, and Annual Fund. Carolyn Skibba moved to approve the proposals and Mary Renouard seconded. All in favor.
- PTA submitted a fundraising proposal for Burley Merchandise. Mary Renouard asked about a fundraising proposal for the book fair and a PTA representative explained why there was no need for one. Mary Renouard moved to approve the proposal and Rob Moon seconded. All in favor.

Technology Report:

- Ms. Skibba shared that they are still working to get technology set up in the building in preparation for simultaneous learning.



- Ms. Plocher shared that they will be exchanging technology with some families whose devices have reached the end of their life. Burley received additional equipment from CPS to support some of this.

Principal's Report:

- Ms. Plocher began by sharing updates about the curricular and enrichment activities ongoing at Burley. They are wrapping up the partnership for reproductive education, for example. In addition, the first through third graders are able to finish the Dancing with Class residency they began last year as Kindergarten through second graders, which was cut short due to the school closures. Burley has received another \$10,000 grant this year for kindergarten and first grade and will extend through Burley funds to go through second grade. Ingenuity has supported Burley's grant writing. Afterschool is funded through an OST grant as well and Ms. Plocher shared that today was the first day of some of the afterschool clubs. They are rolling out differently and are prioritizing movement and fine arts. Ms. Plocher described the different clubs that teachers and staff are engaging in for the rest of the year.
- Ms. Plocher described efforts from the school leadership team to build on the Burley traditions they have. Valentine's Day can be a treasured time and everyone couldn't be together so the goal was to give the Burley community a little "hug" through the Valentine's shared on the school fence the week before.
- Ms. Plocher shared updates about reopening, including that the building is almost ready to go. Classrooms and spaces are almost there and there will be more information shared in the weekly email that is forthcoming. Key highlights about reopening are as follows:
 - **Entry and dismissal will be very different.** Ms. Plocher stressed the need for the community to work together on this. Alderman Waguespack has been instrumental in helping Burley to make this process as smooth as possible. Katie Hall-Jasinski raised concerns related to the street closures and Ms. Plocher also shared that the school will need help with the kiss-n-go which is now on Ashland.
 - **The daily health screener will need attention from families.** Ms. Plocher reminded everyone that they will need to complete the screener before they leave the house, ideally around 7:30am, because there is a time delay. Failure to complete the screener will impede efficiency during arrival and may result in students not being able to attend school that day.



- Ms. Plocher shared that she and Ms. Nash are doing their best to keep up with email and get back to people and asked for patience and understanding as they manage and try to find balance.
- Ms. Plocher addressed questions she has received about why Burley shifted to the hybrid schedule prior to the start of hybrid learning. She shared that every school is different and every school is doing what they need to do to make schedules work based on their unique situation. Burley only has four specials teachers so the number of classes they can teach a day is very limited. The specials teachers were teaching more than five classes a day which worked remotely but not with a shift to in-person because they cannot expose specials teachers to more than 10 pods a week and they have been directed to shift specials into five week segments to limit exposure. In consideration of these guidelines and because there were only 20 weeks left until the end of the year, splitting into five-week segments meant they had to start at the beginning of the quarter which was before the return to hybrid. Ms. Plocher shared that they did not take the switch lightly and acknowledged that it would have been optimal to continue with the remote schedule but the school had to make decisions to make it all work.
- Council members asked Ms. Plocher questions about reopening:
 - Amy Walsh asked if Burley was still around 85% planned to return. Ms. Plocher shared that a larger number had pulled out since completing the forms but she has not yet recalculated.
 - Katie Hall-Jasinski asked how many teachers would be on site versus remote and Ms. Plocher first clarified staff versus teachers because there are many adults in the building. She then shared that they are estimating that all but 5-7 adults will be returning. The adults that cannot return will have a remote caseload and a teaching assistant that will supervise the class while the teacher teaches remotely.
 - Katie Hall-Jasinski also asked about whether kids can keep their gym shoes at school but Ms. Plocher did not think that would be possible because there isn't enough storage space since they cannot use the coat closets.
 - Katie Hall-Jasinski asked what two classes are in the field house and Ms. Plocher shared that it would be first and second grade.
 - Amy Walsh asked if there is an update on how many students have left Burley since the fall but Ms. Plocher does not have official data to share.
 - Katie Hall-Jasinski asked why some kids are able to go four days a week versus only two days (Pod A or B). Ms. Plocher acknowledged that there are some concerns about students who would be crossing pods but those



kids have extenuating circumstances that are district-approved for various reasons. Katie also shared that many families felt out of the loop because other decisions were made (e.g., differences in the kindergarten class structure) and Ms. Plocher addressed these concerns.

Financial Report. Ms. Plocher provided an overview of the budget. The LSC approved the transfer of \$90,000 during the January meeting and there hasn't been much expenditure since. Ms. Plocher also noted that the **115 line** has the new \$10K fine arts grant for the residency. Ms. Plocher informed the council that we will need to make some changes during the March meeting.

Public Comment

Ms. Plocher shared via email a sign-up for public comment prior to the LSC meeting. There were no official sign-ups as of 5:51pm before the meeting. Elliot welcomed attendees to sign-up via chat on the spot if they had something to share.

- Rob Moon thanked Ann Williams and/or her staff for joining the meeting.
- Bryan Paull asked about the status of discussions about a 5-day week.
- Heather Thiberg brought up the difficult emotions around attaching names to statements from the beginning of the meeting. Elliot asked if anyone wanted to respond and Amy Walsh asked to reopen the discussion about the signatures. The council discussed the issue further and Ms. Skibba and Ms. Stanfill said they would share the teacher letter with names. Ryan Griffin shared via chat that the Chicago Parent Collective would share the letter with names within two days. The final decision was to approve the minutes as amended to include signatures. Amy Walsh motioned to approve the minutes and Carolyn Skibba seconded. All in favor.
- FT asked why families have not received student agenda/activity books, directory handbooks as they have in previous years and also clarified how families can reach teachers. FT also asked about the list of LSC members and officers. The council will post this online as soon as possible.
- Lindsay Wall shared that she agreed with the comments about names and worries that publicizing names will be used by "the larger political forces that are smearing both sides"
- Ryan Griffin shared his perspective about elevating parent voices and retaliation along with the need for empathy. Ms. Plocher echoed that she felt strongly that if this conversation were able to stay within our community things may be different but that hasn't and likely will not continue to happen and some of that is beyond



our control. Ms. Plocher again stressed that her goal is to help our community heal and Elliot Ransom reinforced this message.

Next Meeting

Next meeting is Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 6:00pm.

Close of Meeting

Elliot Ransom motioned to adjourn the meeting. Erin Stanfill seconded and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.