

**CITY OF GREENBELT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Tuesday, February 24, 2015. Meeting was held in Council Room and presided over by Chair, Susan Breon. The meeting started at 6:05 pm.

PRESENT:

ACE: Susan Breon, Don Rich, Jon Gardner, Dave Whiteman, Melinda Brady, Janet Mirsky, Rosalind Ceasar, Leta Mach.

ACE Club Facilitators: Bonnie Merryman (SHLES Reading Club), Leslie Tapscott (MES Reading Club)

Visitor(s): Naema Ahmed

ABSENT:

ACE: Elsie Waynes, Sudhanshu Sinha, Veronica Martin-Fredrick

Club Facilitators: MES Science Club

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The minutes of January 27, 2015 were approved without amendment.

MEETING WITH CLUB FACILITATORS:

Following introductions, the facilitators were briefed on the role, programs and activities of ACE; events leading to the establishment of the ACE clubs; and the evolution of the clubs since inception.

Report From Bonnie Merryman, SHLES Reading Club

Bonnie said this is her 5th year running the club. She focuses on 3rd - 5th graders and limits participation to students without behavior problems or learning disabilities because the club serves as an extended learning program. This year, she has 20 students.

She said when she first took over the club she tried a book study, but found students forgot the readings between meetings so she switched to following monthly themes e.g. St. Patrick's Day, or seasonal themes e.g. Halloween. Recently though, she follows suggestions made by the students e.g. she had a Reader's Theater because the children wanted to act. Sometimes she plans the meetings to address gaps in the children's knowledge.

Meetings typically start with a word search followed by a reading activity e.g. knock-knock jokes, crossword puzzles etc. She said that sometimes children make items e.g. bookmark, that they take home.

Scheduling meeting times and retaining members is one area of challenge because of the many other after-school programs at SHLES. One way Bonnie has navigated this is to coordinate her schedule with other teachers. She noted that because some students remain in the club from year to year she is constantly challenged to come up with fresh activities.

Jon asked if the children did any writing. Bonnie said she did not specifically target writing, but many activities involved writing or typing.

Susan asked how ACE could help improve her program. Bonnie indicated that she found it encouraging, and the children found it exciting, when they were visited by Don last year. She suggested that ACE members could visit periodically or else recruit community volunteers who will visit more consistently and develop relationships with the children.

Report From MES Reading Club

Ms. Tappscott started the ACE Reading Club at MES last year with one club. This year, she is running two. The 5th grade boys' club meets on Tuesdays or Thursdays and has about 10 members who were selected based on teacher recommendation. They are assigned readings from a book selected by the group and they discuss their reading at the club meetings.

Leslie also has a group of 2nd graders who are identified as highly-able students but are not enrolled in TAG. They meet to read and do art/hands-on activities.

She said that last year, students lost learning between meetings and so this year, she is limiting books to short readers (one book per meeting) for the 2nd graders, and with the older students she is pulling them out for a quick mid-month reminder meeting.

As to how ACE could enhance the club, she suggested that having small-book sets would be helpful. Members advised that she apply for ACE grants to buy the books. Bonnie shared that she has used her teacher's privilege at the public library in the past to get extended borrowing time and request multiple copies of books.

Both teachers reported that students are very enthusiastic about the clubs. Bonnie said her students have indicated that they would like to create reading games for younger students and so she is exploring how to use them as mentors.

Jon informed Bonnie of ACE's interest in starting a science club at SHL. She offered to float the idea with some colleagues. Jon suggested that since it is too late to start a club, the person could hold a one-time event before the end of the year to pique the children's interest for next year.

FEEDBACK

Meeting with Facilitators

Members all agreed that it was an informative discussion. Susan asked that a meeting with facilitators be included on the calendar for next year. She also asked that Rosalind send follow-up Thank-Yous to the facilitators.

Advisory Committee Chairs' Meeting with Council – Susan told members that the different committees reported on their programs and activities. Council also expressed its appreciation for the work the committees were doing. She said there was a discussion of the Code of Conduct along similar lines as was discussed at the last ACE meeting. Leta pointed out that the Code is an attempt to specify the expectations of Council's role and citizens' roles as it pertains to serving

on advisory boards. She said Council expects to receive feedback and to revise the Code as needed.

Susan said there was also a discussion of how Council made referrals to committees e.g. timing of referrals, expectations when a referral is made, and advising committees following the submission of a report.

Leta explained that it was difficult for Council to give immediate feedback following the submission of a report because depending on the issue at stake there could be a long lapse before action is taken. However, she said there is supposed to be an online resource to help committees track the progress of reports. She offered to find out the status of that form.

Regarding Jon's suggestion that a Youth Advisory Committee member sit on ACE's meeting, Leta responded that ACE could directly petition YAB to designate a member to sit on ACE. Susan said she will work with Rosalind on that.

FIS work session – Dave said he was not able to attend. Leta reported that Principal Abi & Ms. Kristy attended and briefed council on what the school was doing - their green sustainability program, the upcoming renaming of the school etc.

Dave asked if there was discussion of the old Greenbelt Middle School sign. Leta said the school indicated they were familiar with the history and were making all attempts to protect the building's historic qualities. The school said it was working with the Greenbelt museum to put up an exhibition in conjunction with the renaming ceremony. The school intends to recycle the bricks from the old administration building when it is torn down in spring.

PETITION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Rosalind circulated copies of the petition. Susan requested that members give immediate reactions but defer detailed discussion for the next meeting.

Leta informed members that the group that submitted the petition had submitted a proposal to become a Contribution group but the Parks and Advisory Recreation Board, which reviews those proposals, did not think the group met the criteria. In any case, the city has currently put all such requests on hold as it reviews its Contribution group determinations.

AOB

Liaison Assignment

It was decided that Melinda will be assigned to GMS to work with Veronica.

Chris Manino's Request

Mr. Manino, ERHS, received a grant to purchase special effect lights for a theatre production. He is requesting permission to divert the money to purchase lights for a blackbox theatre that the school is modeling out of a classroom. Members approved his request on the basis that the second project is in the same category as the first, and would serve an even larger school population for a longer time.

How to motivate schools

Jon suggested that liaisons attend PTA meetings periodically since this affords face-to-face interactions with school administrators. He also suggested working through principals' secretaries.

EDUCATOR AWARDS PREPARATIONS

Rosalind reported that she has received nominations from all schools but is missing narratives for two of the nominees. She asked the liaisons to follow-up on that. She said the names have been submitted to the offices of MD Delegates and Councilman Turner. She said she has not heard back from the office of Lupi Grady as to whether she will issue certificates or attend the event.

Liaisons are to edit the narratives for their schools and submit them to Susan by Friday for the final script which is due to Rosalind by Monday. Susan will provide the punch for the ceremony. Members are to arrive by 7pm to set up refreshments.

NEXT MEETING - The meeting ended at 8:43 pm. The next meeting will be a regular meeting on March 24, 2015.