

**Lyndale Community School  
PTO Meeting Minutes  
February 10, 2015**

**SCHOOL CHOICE TIME**

Families throughout Minneapolis are busy choosing what school their children will attend in the fall. Mr. Arredondo thanked the parents who volunteer time to conduct school tours to prospective families and those who participated in the Minneapolis School Choice Fair. It was recommended that tours be limited to 5 or 6 families that they not be held on Friday afternoons.

The open house for prospective Lyndale families hosted at Jon and Margo Geffen's home on February 7 was a success with 6 to 8 families attending, a lot of good food and coffee, and at least one family committed to Lyndale!

**MID-YEAR STATE OF THE SCHOOL**

Lyndale Community School receives Title 1 funding due to the number of students receiving free and reduced price lunches. As a Title 1 school, Lyndale is required to give three "State of the School" presentations each year. Principal James and Assistant Principal Arredondo started the "Mid Year State of the School" presentation with the following information:

- School demographics: 590 students; 52% English Language Learners (ELL); 70% Free or Reduced Price lunch eligible; 12% Special Education; 8% Homeless or Highly Mobile.
  - The percentage of HHM students has increased from 4% this time last year to between 6% and 8% this year. Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) determines where HHM students attend. Lyndale has a higher percentage of HHM students for a number of reasons. Magnet schools do not reserve spots for such students and each time a student

leaves Lyndale it creates space for a new HHM student.

- Student absenteeism is down! Last year the school set a goal of increasing attendance in A and B from 81% to 90%. (Group A is students having fewer than 8 absences; B is 8 or more but less than 12.) This year Lyndale students are at 93%! (A=69%; B=24%)
- 88% of staff choose to take advantage of optional Professional Development training.
- Historically Lyndale has suspended very few students. Thus, the district's new policies regarding suspensions has little impact on the school. (14/15 - 2 suspensions; 13/14 - 2 suspensions; 12/13 - 1 suspension; 11/12 - 2; 10/11 - 0; 09/10 - 0).
- Similarly, there has been a 50% decrease in the number of times that students have had to leave the classroom for behavior issues.

In addition to being a Title 1 school, Lyndale is also a "Focus School". This designation is determined by the Minnesota Department of Education, based on a school's Multiple Measurement Rating.

"Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) is given to all schools in the state on an annual basis and measures school performance in the areas of proficiency, growth, achievement gap reduction and graduation rates. A second rating, the Focus Rating (FR), is also used to measure a school's success in reducing achievement gaps between student groups."

<http://www.education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/ESEAFlex/MMR/index.html>

As a Focus School Lyndale is required to administer specific tests throughout the year. One of these is the Optional Local Purpose Assessment (OLPA), which students took in January. This test measures where students are in regards to standards for the entire year. Thus, students are tested on subjects that have not been taught yet. While the results are helpful for measuring growth from

the middle of the year to the end of the year, when they are compared to the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) tests, the initial results can look disheartening.

The OLPA and MCA are administered in similar ways, but the MCA is not taken by very early English language learners or students receiving specialized education. Because the OLPA is taken by everyone, the results show lower achievement than the MCA tests.

This test does not take more than a few hours to administer since it is all computer based, and thus has little impact on classroom learning time. It also helps Lyndale assess the conditions under which the students are taking the tests. This may impact how and when the MCA tests are administered. For example, it was noted that students being tested were distracted by the noise of students in the hall. In the future, the tests might be administered when students are not accessing lockers outside of the media lab.

Parents and families automatically receive MCA results but not the OLPA results. The OLPA results are available from teachers by request.

In response to the results parents inquired about what the school is doing to ensure improved performance on the MCA. Principal James and Assistant Principal Arredondo mentioned a number of actions including:

- Spring Break Academy - This year Lyndale will host a week of invite-only classwork over spring break to help struggling students catch up.
- The additional support of educational specialists enable classrooms to work in small groups that specifically cater to students' academic levels. At times classes are able to break into 5 small groups allowing for more individualized instruction.

Most students are close to the proficient level, just not quite there.

Lyndale is well aware of the school's strengths and challenges and has faculty continually working to assess and implement plans that will benefit students' specific needs. The first part of the year sets a foundation - letting students and teachers get to know each other and learn how to best work with each other. The second half of the year, January through May, is a time when student learning peaks. The OLPA test results provides the school with guidance on what areas need to be focused on. Principal James and Assistant Principal Arredondo stressed the importance of families continuing to work with and support their children's education and to keep in touch with teachers. Lyndale is close to benchmarks that will help remove the 'Focus School' label. With support and work from students, families, teachers and staff, we can do it!

## **MURAL PROJECT**

Lyndale parent Laura Flynn, in collaboration with Ms. James and Ms. Walker, is working with area artist Gretta McLain to coordinate the design and installation of 3 murals (one on the large exterior wall facing the playground and two smaller images over the doors). They submitted a lengthy and in-depth proposal to the Minnesota State Arts Board which could fund the program. If accepted, money would be provided for a series of events to gather ideas and stories from the school community. Based on that, Ms. McLain would design the pieces and have everyone participate in creating the mural over.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Stay and Chat - Friday, February 23. After dropping your student off in the morning stay for coffee and talk with Principal James and Assistant Principal Arrendondo.

Lyndale Community School is going to see the Twins play the Chicago White Sox at 7:10 pm on **Friday, May 1**. Details on tickets will be shared as it is available.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

The Lyndale Leadership Team (the district refers to this as the school's Site Council) meets once a month to discuss and make policy decisions. Anyone is welcome but participants should be able to commit to attending every meeting which is 3:30 - 5:00 on the last Wednesday of the month (except December). For more information contact: [Andree.James@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:Andree.James@mpls.k12.mn.us).

5<sup>th</sup> grade graduation celebration is coming up and needs a few volunteers to help it run smoothly. Historically parents of 4<sup>th</sup> graders have done this but anyone is welcome. If available please contact Bridget Gernander at [bridget\\_cathleen@yahoo.com](mailto:bridget_cathleen@yahoo.com).

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 10, 6:00 p.m.**

Prepared by Christine Daves, PTO Secretary and mom to Elliot (3<sup>rd</sup> grade).