

**LYNDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL**  
**PTO Meeting Minutes**  
**May 12, 2015**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- PTO President Carrie Swanson announced that Katie Diaz, coordinator of the May 29<sup>th</sup> Staff Appreciation Day, is seeking financial donations to cover event costs (primarily food) and donations of items for a staff raffle. Donations can be left with John in the office (please include your name with donations). Questions can be addressed to Katie Diaz [mplsdiuz@hotmail.com](mailto:mplsdiuz@hotmail.com).
- Principal James invited parents to join the Leadership Team, which meets one evening a month to discuss school budget, staffing, programming and other topics. If interested contact Principal James at [Andree.James@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:Andree.James@mpls.k12.mn.us).

**ACADEMIC PROGRESS AT LYNDALE**

- Guest speaker Eric Moore, Director of Research Evaluation Assessment for the Minneapolis Public School District, reviewed Lyndale's testing results which are available at: <http://rc.education.state.mn.us/#mySchool/p--1>
- Mr. Moore started the discussion with asking what makes a good school. Participants suggested teachers and staff stability, community, student behavior and other things. (Moore pointed out that this entire year there have only been 3 referrals for behavior problems to the district from Lyndale, which is fantastic!) There are many things that impact how good a school is for student learning and it cannot all be measured by standardized tests.
- Moore showed that the percent of Lyndale students meeting the standards in science and math has steadily grown by 5% for the last three years, which is remarkable. In 2013 the reading standards changed and scores district wide decreased. Lyndale has increased 2% since then which is a

- strong achievement.
- Continued growth from year to year is testimony to the quality of Lyndale teachers. Some schools, in an effort to increase test scores, will focus on students who are just shy of being proficient. That may result in a small bump in ratings, but continued, steady growth shows a school committed to excellence.
  - In 2014 Lyndale ranked 10 percentage points over the district for overall proficiency (Lyndale 54.8% proficient; District 43.1% proficient; State 60.5% proficient) Furthermore, in 2012, Lyndale was 39.8% proficient showing an increase of 15% in two years.
  - While the results are promising, parents voiced concerns that the percent of proficient students is not higher. Mr. Moore cited a few possible reasons including the high rate of English language learners at Lyndale. This impacts student achievement rates in a number of ways:
    - When a student does not know an answer on a standardized test they will take clues from the question to make an educated guess. Students who do not have a standard cultural experience will have a harder time guessing correctly.
    - Students starting school are considered prepared when they have a vocabulary of 12,000 words. Students from non-English speaking homes and low-income families may start school with a vocabulary of close to 2,000 words.
  - Guest Kate Knutson, Early Childhood Specialist with the district, shared these suggestions for parents concerned with their student's academics:
    - Read. Read. Read. Read.
    - Make sure students get the sleep they need.
    - Speak in the largest vocabulary possible. (Use your primary language and have the student describe what they read, ask critical questions, foster sophisticated thinking.)
    - Build persistence. Encourage kids to keep trying.

- Reduce screen time. (Research recommends a maximum of 30 minutes a day.)
- A parent asked why Lyndale does not hold more kids back for academic weaknesses. Principal James explained that the school believes that kids can catch up academically, but socially they continue to develop at their grade level. Thus, holding a 1<sup>st</sup> grader back will cost them a year of social development, which cannot be replaced.

**HAVE A GOOD SUMMER! SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!**

- Keep an eye out for August back-to-school playground nights. Lyndale will also have 'landscape day' the Saturday before the Back-to-School Social. Watch your email for information.
- Thank you Carrie Swanson for serving as PTO President for 2 years!

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