

K-8 UPDATE

By Mikala Woodward

Work on Curriculum & School Policy Unveiled

Many of you have been longing to see some concrete progress on our K-8 Planning – it feels like we've been gathering information, identifying options, and discussing issues for months. Well, we've finally got some exciting things to show for it, several of which were unveiled at our last K-8 Community meeting of the year last Thursday. (As always, if you'd like to know more about any of these K-8 developments, e-mail orcak8@yahoo.com or talk to Ben.)

In particular we're excited about the K-8 curricular frameworks we have developed for both environmental sciences and anti-bias/equity. (A K-8 framework means it's not just a 6th grade curriculum, but a cohesive plan for all nine years at Orca K-8, with concepts that build on each other from year to year, and which can be taught in a variety of ways.)

Katherine Law and Ben worked with District staff to create the **Environmental Science** curriculum framework, which will link to environmental justice & sustainability issues through National Science Foundation science kits, the Garden and Nutrition Committee,

Lisa Carscadden has done an incredible job on the **Anti-Bias/Equity** materials, working with Orca staff and others to create a resource book full of curriculum ideas and activities to support the social justice concepts she has outlined. The K-8 Anti-Bias/Equity framework and resource book will be presented at the Race Forum's Literacy and Cultural Relevancy Family Night on Tuesday, May 29th (along with the video "Words of Power" featuring Orca students, tips for analyzing bias in children's books, and fun activities for kids & adults. The event starts at 6 pm; snacks are provided. Please come!)

Orca's **Discipline Policy** is coming together too, with an explanation of our Positive Discipline philosophy and the Orca Way that will be part of next year's handbook. Thanks to Kelly Warner-King for all her work on this!

Hopefully most of you are aware of the new **Decision-Making Structure** that was developed by the K-8 Process Committee – briefly, we're merging the PTA Board with the Leadership Team to create a Leadership Council to allow parents and staff to collaborate on important decisions at Orca. The plan has been approved by the staff and the PTA, and the Nominating Committee is hard at work putting together a slate of PTA candidates to fill the parent slots on the Leadership Council.

Still in the works are details of the middle school schedule, athletics, and afterschool activities, among other things. Stay tuned for more information as soon as it becomes available!

K-8 Work Continues: Summer Plans & Opportunities

Whitworth Building Projects: The Facilities Committee has developed a list of Whitworth improvement projects that we'll be tackling over the summer – these include a mural at the front entrance by artist and Orca mom Michaele Miller, removal of some chain-link fences, minor changes to playground equipment, painting exterior doors, and building raised beds for the Garden program. If you're available to help, contact Monica Coulter at monica.coulter@comcast.net or 760-5125.

School Handbook: Over the summer we will also be working on the School Handbook, which will orient families and staff to our new building and the Orca program. If you'd like to help with this, please contact Kelly Warner-King at kellywarner-king@comcast.net or 568-0802.

Orca Vision: Throughout the K-8 planning process, we've referred to the Emerging Orca Vision we developed last fall, testing it out on such issues as decision-making, curriculum, and discipline policy. This summer we plan to refine the vision in response to these discussions, and create a mission statement that expresses the heart of our vision. If you'd like to work on this, contact Koichi Kitazumi at koichi@kitazumi.com or 721-1958.

Welcome to Whitworth Community Carnival Friday, August 24th: We are planning an end-of-summer event to welcome Orca to the Whitworth building and introduce our school to the Whitworth neighborhood. Planning is still in the early stages – contact Monica Coulter at monica.coulter@comcast.net or 760-5125 to get involved.

PTA Nominating Committee Report: Next Year's PTA Board Needs YOU!

The Nominating Committee got a bit of a late start this year, because the PTA Board was in the process of being revamped as part of our new decision-making structure. This means we've got to move fast – next year's Board will be voted in at the End of Year Celebration on June 21st. We have some amazing people stepping up, but there's still room for you to volunteer! See below for 2007-2008 PTA Board Job Descriptions, and feel free to contact a member of the Nominating Committee for more info: Mary Elder (722-3699 maryselder@gmail.com), Jeff Freshley (722-0049 jeff@freshleyhess.com), Julie McCann (723-2763 julie@softlabour.com), Heidi Raykeil (763-3866 hraykeil@comcast.net), or Mikala Woodward (722-5177 jojoma3@aol.com).

In particular, we're looking for a Treasurer for next year. Please note the deal has been considerably sweetened by the fact that this year's Treasurer, Darryl Pahl, has volunteered to serve as Assistant Treasurer next year. This will make both the summer hand-off and the daily year-long workload **way** easier. If you've got financial facility, a responsible nature, experience with Quickbooks, and want to serve Orca in a vital capacity, please let us know. Darryl can answer questions about the job itself: darryl@dfnetresearch.com or 725-6113.

2007-2008 PTA Board Job Descriptions

Six. Or should we say, Sensational Six? Next year, families at Orca will have a voice via the representation of six amazing parents and guardians who act as both PTA officers and members of the Orca Leadership Council. Their jobs will be demanding. Time, dedication, availability, and diplomacy will be required. But the rewards promise to be great. They will set objectives and policies, evaluate programs against Orca's vision, and have a real hand in making Orca K-8 a stunning success.

President: The President represents Orca families, bringing direction and momentum to what needs to get done at Orca. The President sets PTA agendas and presides over general PTA meetings, coordinating opportunities for Orca families to discuss school-wide issues and give input and feedback to the Leadership Council. PTA Committee Chairs and employees/contractors report to the President.

Secretary: The Secretary represents Orca families with a special eye towards communication. Serving on the Leadership Council and playing a vital role on the PTA Board, the Secretary records and distributes the minutes of Board & General meetings, and coordinates school-wide communication via the Weekly Bulletin, e-mail lists, the web site, and other venues. The Secretary also conducts official PTA correspondence and maintains the organization's records.

Treasurer: The Treasurer represents Orca families in the financial arena. This includes budget management and planning, regular financial reports, processing of income and expenses, tax-related paperwork, and lots of detailed accounting and computer-aided bookkeeping (using the online version of QuickBooks). The Treasurer serves on the Leadership Council. **Note:** the Treasurer is encouraged/expected to serve as **Assistant Treasurer** in the year after being Treasurer, to support the new Treasurer and assist with day-to-day bookkeeping and long-term budgeting. The Assistant Treasurer is not a Leadership Council position.

Three Vice Presidents / Pod Representatives: The three Vice Presidents represent the three Orca Pods on the Leadership Council. (Note that Orca K-8 Pods will be slightly different: K-2 = K-Pod, 3-5 = L-Pod, and 6-8 = Middle School.) The Vice Presidents are charged with keeping families in their Pods aware of school-wide decisions and discussions, and bringing families' ideas, concerns, and input to the table. Each Vice President will work closely with the Teacher representative for their Pod on the Leadership Council and Room Coordinators in their Pod to coordinate activities and address issues related to their Pods.

In addition to representing their Pods on the Leadership Council, the three Vice Presidents provide leadership support to the President, and are responsible for coordinating general PTA activities such as fundraising, orientation for new families, and legislative duties.

Committee Chairs: There are, of course, a million ways to serve the school besides serving on the PTA Board. We are hoping to have next year's Committee Chairs lined up by the end of this school year. If you're interested in heading up a Committee, please contact the PTA Board at orcapta@yahoo.com. Current Committee Chairs, please let us know your plans for next year by this Thursday, May 31st. Thanks!