



ISL-Westbank PTO Meeting, ISL-West cafeteria, 6pm

December 16, 2011

Kevin Parker opened meeting. Mr. Parker gave a special thank you present to the Menchaca family from the PTO for their continued efforts, and putting up the holiday light display. Mr. Parker continued that Thank you to the audience for those that participated in the Noel on Newton St. this past weekend. Mr. Parker stated that it is important for us at ISL-West to continue our efforts to make a presence in community events to keep our name in the community at large. Mr. Parker also extended a thank you to those that participated in the coffee and cookie drive, as it was our first fundraiser of this sort and was a big success. Robin Bordelon was asked how many participated and she answered 26 orders were placed. She also answered she did not have the exact amount of profit for our campus, but it was over \$1000. Mr. Parker continued with the meeting to say that the Papi's Club (formerly known as the Dad's Club), would like to extend an invitation to the men of ISL families, grandparents, uncles, etc. that are interested in joining to please attend the next meeting on January 10 at 6pm in the cafeteria.

Mr. Estrella then took the floor of the meeting and greeted the audience. Mr. Estrella spoke about immersion and proceeded to show the audience a video that lasted about 15 minutes about language development and the process of learning a language.

When the video ended, Mr. Estrella expanded on the ideas the video discussed, touching on the immersion process in language development. Mr. Estrella expanded that using multi syllabic words with our students expands their vocabulary and gives them a head start in the immersion/development process.

Mr. Estrella stated that he wanted to be clear on a few things. Firstly, the behavior calendar, he continued, to be more specific, what behaviors make a child change their color on the behavior chart? He states that at the beginning of the school year, we identified minor infractions and major infractions. Colors change when a rule is broken, not listening to teachers after directions have been given AFTER a warning has been given. For a minor infraction to go on "Red," a student would take 8/9 times of infractions/warnings minimum for the color to be changed to "Red". Any direction/rule, for example, to sit down, when a reminder is given, the next infraction, the color would change. Students do have the ability to go back up the color chart. Mr. Estrella expands with the idea that students do know the expectations at this point in the school year. Mr. Estrella states that routines are in place and expectations are well communicated. Mr. Estrella asks that parents please review the behavior charts on a daily basis, the teachers expect this of them. Mr. Estrella asks that parents discuss the calendar daily with their children, no matter what color they receive. Mr. Estrella states that a blue on the chart is not ok, and that we have high expectations. Mr. Estrella continues that building good habits is important, especially in Kindergarten. Mr. Estrella continues that the teachers expect greens on the calendars every day at this point in the school year.



Mr. Estrella states that as a side note, we have had faculty at every PTO meeting. He states that we want the faculty to be available to speak on classroom events. Senora K is here tonight along with Ms. Butts. Mr. Estrella continues that if there is an issue to please bring it up with that person first, then go higher up. Mr. Estrella states that being a parent at ISL, he appreciates that there is always an administrator around. He wants to make sure that he is visible to everyone. Mr. Estrella continues that he always will respond to any issues with what is in the best interest for the students and the school. He expands that our goal is to improve student achievement. Mr. Estrella continues that the role of the PTO is awareness. He states that another role is raising funds, and activities are another role PTO is part of. Mr. Estrella states that a major role of the PTO is volunteering. Many things that we can get done at this school that other schools cannot are from volunteers and donations. We want to contribute to this neighborhood. Mr. Estrella continues that we have had community events that we participate in. We want to be sure that people know we are here. Mr. Estrella then gives examples of events we have recently participated in: Holy Name of Mary Fair, Algiers Point Holiday, Algiers Point Tours, Noel on Newton Street. He states that part of this is community building and part of this is getting our name out there. He states that at the end of the school year, we will look at the calendar of events and see what we keep on the upcoming calendar, and what we do not continue.

Mr. Estrella comments "let's make sure that we are here to build these children up, learning the language, becoming globally aware, and realize that they are part of a community". He expands that we want to make sure that everything we do is to support the ISL mission.

Mr. Estrella states that right now we have 2 applicants for the Chinese immersion. He continues that we are thinking of doing something different. We need an identity on the westbank campus, so we hope to offer Mandarin as a 3rd language next school year. (The audience applauds). I was hoping that everyone appreciates this (more applause). He continues that we are still in line with our mission, and that the class would be offered once a day.

Mr. Estrella states that ISL does not believe in homework, however, if a student shows they may need some extra practice, work may be sent home. He expands that this should not be a laborious task, taking no more than 10 minutes per evening. Mr. Estrella continues that something will be sent out in Tidbits soon to help students in class, but this may be the first of the year before we have it in place.

Mrs. Treadyway says that she gets homework every night, Mrs. Williams expands that projects have been given and graded and she did not feel a child that worked hard on a project should receive a B when the project was open to interpretation. Mr. Estrella states that the Rubric is followed on any projects given, and to please see the classroom teacher with any classroom concerns.

Mr. Estrella states that there are decisions as a parent you can drive, example given, circus arts at the Eastbank campus.



Mr. Estrella relays that he will start "Coffee with the Principal" beginning in 2012. He continues that communication is very important. He states that he is available most of the time for appointments, and his coffee chats will rotate times to accommodate parents. This will be similar to Brown Bag lunches with Mr. Wilson. He states that he loves what we do here at ISL and what we offer.

Mr. Estrella states that he would like to apologize for the minutes not being posted, and that we will begin posting meeting minutes now on the website. He continues that we believe in being transparent. We want to accommodate for those that are busy. Mr. Estrella continues that we allow parents to come have breakfast and lunch with their child, as well as 30 minute classroom visits. Mr. Estrella states that this is something not all other schools do.

Mr. Estrella relays that we do have silent lunch here at ISL-West. He jokingly comments that the children talk all day long, in class, recess, and PE. He wants to close by saying that there are things available here that are not at other schools.

Mrs. Kareores (Senora K) explains that the silent lunches serve a purpose. She states that by the time students receive their lunch, they only have approx. 20 minutes to eat. She continues that if they don't have enough time to eat due to too much talking at lunch, they won't have a productive afternoon due to being hungry. She states that having a silent lunch serves a purpose and that the lunch lines move much quicker.

Mr. Estrella speaks about what happened at the bonfire. He states that a sibling of an ISL-West student was almost kidnapped by a stranger, and to please be aware of your surroundings at all times. Ms. Williams then states that this was her child, and the man in question did not even turn around so she could not identify him. Robin Bordelon then stated that she has ordered the Stranger Danger videos, and that they will be incorporated into a future Fun Friday event.

Mr. Sean Wilson then addresses the audience. Mr. Wilson talks about the Brown Bag lunch. He expands that ISL has been given the approval to open a school in Jefferson Parish. He gives accolades to Mr. Estrella for defending the application, and he also gives the Development team of Pam Stewart, Tiffany Carter, and Karla Rivera thanks for guiding us in the application process. Mr. Wilson poses the question, "how does this affect me?" to the audience. Mr. Wilson answers that parents and students will have more opportunities on where to send your child. Mr. Wilson continues that we are opening up choices and the idea that the Board does not want to change the school, just to offer more opportunities. He states that we are a Type 2 school, we can have students from anywhere in the state, and the JP school is a Type 1, meaning they will only have the ability to accept students from within Jefferson Parish.

Mr. Wilson states that we do not have a site yet but will start the student application process for Jefferson Parish in March/April.



Mr. Wilson states to close things. Mr. Wilson explains, what at we offer at ISL School , 1. Chinese as an identifier, for our identity at ISL-West so that by the time our students go to middle school, they will be trilingual. He states that the way we make these things happen is because we get a certain dollar amount, but that is not covered by the state funding. He continues that we need to fill the deficit and your contributions make that happen. He states that we provide our students with what they need to make these students competitive in the real world. Mr. Wilson states that he has had the opportunity to visit other immersion schools and that 90% of the full language immersion schools are private schools, and ISL is public coming to us at a discounted rate. Mr. Wilson stated that it is your contributions that make these things happen. Mr. Wilson states that what your dollars fund are the nurse, counselor, library, and art programs among other things. He states that we also have an art auction to bridge the gap that provides services we offer. The cost to educate an ISL student is 11,000. We receive \$7800, so there is a \$3200 shortfall per student.

Tiffany Carter then speaks; she is from the Development Department. She states that the Refrigerator Art Gala takes place on Sunday, March 25 from 6-9 pm at the Foundry in the Warehouse District. She explains that this event is a fun event for parents and friends of ISL to come together to buy art and mingle for a great cause. Ms. Carter states that the Fridge Art Committee needs volunteers to make this event a success, and she then passes out a committee sign- up sheet.

Mr. Wilson states that one last thing to mention is communication. Talk to your child's teacher, they have the most information on what is going on with your child. He continues that you would then go to Mr. Estrella with any issues after speaking your child's teacher, after speaking to Mr. Estrella if your issue is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you would see Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson states that he will ask "What are you looking for?" He expands that the teacher is your primary contact point. If after speaking with Mr. Wilson your issue is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you may submit something to the Board of Trustees. Mr. Wilson states that he is mentioning this because ISL prefers you to take the proper route to resolve any issues.

Ms. Menchaca raises her hand and asks that parents donate board and card games to her so that she can send games to the troops in Afghanistan. Her husband's brother is deployed there and wrote her to say they are playing the one Monopoly game they have over and over in their free time, as they do not have any other games available. She ask that parents can also donate a dollar or so for shipping if they wish, as she is sending this herself, and shipping can be quite costly.

Chantell Reed addresses the audience giving thanks to those that have participated in recent efforts, and apologizes for being late due to a family emergency. She then continues that the PTO has door prizes to distribute, and confirmed with Robin Bordelon that all parents in attendance put their name in the fishbowl for the drawing. Gift certificates were given to the winners of the drawing, Leah Gradiz, Kelly Williams, and Kevin Parker won the door prizes from the drawing.



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The meeting closed at 8:15pm.