

Venice Neighborhood Council
Education Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Meeting Summary

In Attendance

Andrea Castellanos, Bud Jacobs, Chantel Hunter-Mah, Joelle Dumas, Robin Lithgow, Zeena Plaska

Absent:

Lydia Ponce, Ruth Seroussi, Idalia Munoz

There was an announcement from Guest, Fang Huang, a parent at Broadway Elementary who brought up a concern regarding Venice residents not being allowed to attend their local neighborhood school if they are in the Mandarin Immersion Program. The sibling policy was discussed, the class offerings at Braddock mentioned and the expansion of the program at Broadway discussed. The committee chair will contact the principal and local district to find out some of the issues involved in this situation.

The agenda was approved and there were no minutes from the January meeting discussed because the meeting was cancelled.

A couple of items from the January VNC meeting were discussed regarding Coastal Commission approval of the beach ice rink, concerns from the Venice Boardwalk representative regarding noise, safety and event planning at the beach (all of which were defeated by the VNC), and the LUPC approval of the Ray Kappe renovation.

The holiday gift program was discussed extensively. All thank you letters have been sent, and the contributions of BGCV, Joelle Dumas, Chantel, Lydia and Ruthie were all graciously noted. The holiday toy drive was an enormous success.

A discussion took place recognizing Michelle King as the new LAUSD Superintendent. Mrs. King is very familiar with the Venice area and will be a welcome ally in the schools' efforts to increase enrollment and publicize the good work happening in our schools.

Increasing enrollment was discussed and some strategies currently being used to connect local families to their neighborhood schools were highlighted:

- Develop a strong relationship with pre-school programs and lock families into local schools at the earliest of ages. The strong parent group from Walgrove Elementary who has been together for years and is planning to move in mass to Mark Twain .
- The committee supports Venice Chamber of Commerce efforts to publicize the strengths of the school programs through realtor tours and open houses.

- Encourage family tours like the ones being conducted at Westminster and Mark Twain.
- Increase principal visibility in the community and around each school so families know who is responsible for education in the neighborhood and welcoming to local students.
- Encourage bus tours for parents from neighboring communities to see the school (Mark Twain)
- Emphasize the great work being done in school gardens , foreign language instruction, and the arts.

The legislative report was given by Zeena and highlighted bills from Ben Allen's office and Ted Lieu's office. Also comments from State Senator Burke's office were shared.

The Boys and Girls' Club "Youth of the Year" ceremony was described and each member of the committee was invited to the event which will be held at Google on March 2. For ticket information, contact Andrea Castellanos.

A generous donation to Westminster School from a new restaurant, Salt and Straw, was mentioned and attendees were encouraged to stop by and thank the new owners for their support of public schools.

The meeting was dismissed at 7:45 and the next meeting will be Wednesday, March 9 .