

Wanted: Hard Working Parents for the Long Range Planning Committee

School Site Council Outlines Open Caucus Approach to Select Committee Members

The School Site Council, an elected body of Hillcrest parents and teachers, which also includes a staff representative and the principal, has been charged with helping the Hillcrest community create a process for choosing members of the Hillcrest Long Range Planning Advisory Committee. The Hillcrest Long Range Planning Committee is an ad hoc advisory group of parents and community members made up, largely, of area parents – families with children that span pre-school ages all the way to age 14.

The following document outlines: 1) Suggested goals for the Committee; 2) The makeup of the Committee; 3) How Committee members are selected; and 4) Milestones.

Suggested Committee Goals

The Long Range Planning Advisory Committee will advise the Oakland Unified School District – *by mid-August of 2007* – on issues that will determine the quality of the K-8 educational experience at Hillcrest. The School Site Council desires that the Committee – which is advisory in nature – speak with one single voice. Members who join the committee will work hard for a very short period of time – about three months. And while members will naturally represent their demographic constituency, they should be consensus building individuals.

While the Committee itself will organize, choose its leadership, and its goals, it's the desire of the Hillcrest School Site Council that the Committee address four key, intertwined issues which impact our K-8 community:

- Class size at Hillcrest
- The capacity of the Hillcrest physical plant
- Enrollment of future kindergarten classes
- The nature of the Hillcrest attendance area, and how it is changing

Committee Make-Up

It is the desire of the School Site Council that the process of selecting members of the Committee be as transparent as possible. This document outlines how the existing Hillcrest community will choose its representatives.

Based on the consensus built at the May 4, 2007, ad hoc joint Hillcrest PTA and short-range Planning Committee meeting, the new Long Range Planning Committee will be made up of the following representatives from different parent groups. (For the grade groups already at Hillcrest, the list below refers to the grade a person's child will be attending over the *next* school year, September 2007 to June 2008. For example, if your child is currently in Grade 5, you'll be in the Grade 6 to 8 group. If your child is currently in Grade 3, you'll be in the Grade 4 and 5 group.)

The makeup of the Committee:

- 1 representative of a pre-school age member of the community – at least 2 years from potentially entering Hillcrest (ages 0 to 3)
- 2 representatives of the incoming 2008-2009 kindergarten class who live in the current district (ages 3 to 4)

- 1 representative of the incoming 2007-2008 kindergarten class (ages 4 to 5)
- 2 representatives from Grades 1 to 3 (ages 6 to 8; current K to current Grade 2)
- 2 representatives from Grades 4 and 5 (ages 9 to 11; current Grades 3 and 4)
- 2 representatives from Grades 6, 7, and 8 (ages 12 to 14; current Grades 5, 6 and 7)
- 1 Oakland Unified School District administrative representative
- The principal
- 1 Hillcrest teacher
- A representative chosen by the Hillcrest PTA
- A representative from Hillcrest's elected School Site Council
- A non parent member of the community (neighbor)

Choosing Committee Members

Each Hillcrest group will meet as a caucus to select its own representatives. Each caucus will be organized by room parents, or persons designated by the room parents if the room parents aren't able to organize a caucus. (For example, for the Grades 4 and 5 group, the current room parents from Grades 3 and 4 will organize a caucus.) Each caucus will determine its own open, inclusive process for selecting representatives. Meetings will be held at a location of each group's choosing (Hillcrest will make the school available for caucuses – ask Mrs. Rothenberg.) The location and time of all caucuses must be advertised a week in advance via e-mail and on the Hillcrest Web site to all parents in the group.

Individuals interested in serving on the committee and currently enrolled at Hillcrest are encouraged to submit a nominating note to their caucus, stating their reasons for wanting to serve on the Committee. You may self-nominate, or nominate others. There will be a box in the school office to collect the nominating notes. Remember, when thinking of joining the group – the work is hard, but critical to building a unified voice and point of view to the district. The work will be relatively fast (recommendations by mid-August) and it will require great consensus-building skills.

Milestones and Next Steps

Because the Committee needs to form and organize quickly, here are the School Site Council's milestones – all before school ends this year.

- May 7 to 12 School Site Outreach to Room Parents and parents of children not yet enrolled in the school
- May 8 (Tues.) Beginning of the period in which nominations and self-nominations are collected in the school office
- May 15 (Tues.) End of the period in which nominations and self-nominations are collected
- May 22 (Tues.) Date by which caucuses will have met and selected their representatives
- May 29 (Tues.) First organizing meeting of the Hillcrest Long Range Planning Committee

The School Site Council, the PTA board and Hillcrest teachers will establish their own procedures for selecting their representatives. The School Site Council will reach out to community members to fill that slot. The principal and the School Site Council will reach out to the Oakland Unified School District to fill that slot. The School Site Council will reach out to parents of students who haven't yet started at Hillcrest with information about the Hillcrest process for selecting representatives.

The School Site School wishes that the newly formed Committee come up with suggestions for solving the four key issues with one, unified voice. While the Committee is encouraged to use all resources at its disposal, Committee meetings will be undertaken only by the Committee's chosen representatives. However, to facilitate communication and open community dialogue, the Committee will hold regular public forums and representatives are encouraged to hold forums for each constituency. The primary purpose of the first meeting of the Committee will be to organize itself, to elect a president and a secretary; to set goals; and to establish milestones, a schedule and a method for open dialogue with all community members.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call one three parent School Site Council representatives below (e-mails in the directory):

Bruce Hirsch, 658-5466, ephbah@lmi.net
Molly Kihanya, 428-0483, mjamble@hotmail.com
Charles Pelton, 652-6776, charles@modernmediapartners.com

With apologies for the length of this note,

The Hillcrest School Site Council

Chang-Tai Hsieh (chair), Barbara Buswell, Joan Cannon, Jeremy Gorman, Bruce Hirsch, Carolyn Hutton, Molly Kihanya, Kellie McElhaney, Charles Pelton, Claudia Staniford, Beverly Rothenberg