

To: Board of Education
From: Sally Pryor
Date: February 9, 2009
Re: Update on Green Team Committee

Background

In spring 2008, the Board authorized the creation of a new District 64 committee to coordinate environmental sustainability efforts at its schools and on the District level. The committee was asked to identify ways to enhance and build upon environmentally friendly initiatives already in place, and to develop and coordinate the accomplishment of specific goals throughout the District.

The Green Team Committee was convened officially on October 30. Members include parent and District 64 staff representatives from all schools and offices, community representatives, and building and District administrators. The current roster includes: Carpenter – Debbie Graziano (staff), Kathy Jozwiak; Field – Maureen Borowski (staff), Jane Everett (staff), and Tim Mauery; Franklin –Megan Sutter (staff), Dana Wessel and Tricia Edelstein; Roosevelt – Julie Voigt (staff), Assistant Principal Andy Petrolina, Linda Bruce, Jenny Duerkop and Laura Wilkens; Washington – Janet Johnson (staff), Kendra Griffin and Jean Costigan; Lincoln – Kathleen Pancini (staff), Assistant Principal Tim Gleason, Ann Tennes, Jim VanderKloot, and Claris Olson; Emerson – Kristen Graack (staff), Cathy Murges (staff), Assistant Principal Tim Benka, Karen Heick; community – Andy Duerkop and Valerie Hughes; Director of Buildings & Grounds Jim Wuerffel; Public Information Coordinator Bernadette Tramm; Purchasing Manager Betty Lattanzio; and myself, as chairman.

Committee Goals

At the initial meeting, committee members brainstormed possible goals for 2008-09 and beyond, and prioritized a lengthy list of suggestions at subsequent meetings on December 4 and January 8. The committee agreed to establish “SMART” goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time specific.

The identified goals are to:

- Increase paper recycling and reuse boxes
- Begin recycling aluminum and plastic items
- Provide specific instructions for students and develop “buy in” from teachers, administrators and custodians on the importance of the activity
- Encourage reusable containers at lunch
- Use green supplies for the District.

Committee members volunteered to facilitate the work of smaller groups based on these broad concepts. In addition, the committee also identified possible goals for subsequent years, which will provide an ongoing source of activities going forward.

Additional Projects

In addition to working to achieve these larger goals, the committee also has identified a series of projects it would like to sponsor regularly each year. These activities not only provide an opportunity to actively support environmental goals, they also help a “greener” way-of-life become more firmly entrenched in our District 64 culture.

Projects conducted or scheduled thus far include:

- Cell phone recycling – January – Working in coordination with the non-profit Cell Phones for Soldiers organization, used cell phones were collected at all District 64 schools during the month of January 2009.
- National Green Week – February – to begin in 2010.
- Healthy Living Month – April/ Neat to Use Your Feet Week – additional support will be offered through the committee.
- Athletic shoe recycling – May – Several middle school students and staff volunteered in 2008 for this project sponsored by the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) as part of Nike’s Reuse-a-Shoe program. Their experience will be used as a model to expand the opportunity on a District-wide basis on May 13-14 this year.

Progress on Other Green Initiatives

The District is continuing its commitment to energy conservation and environmentally friend initiatives. Substantial progress can be reported on two efforts, which have not only reduced our environmental impact but also save money for the District.

- **Electronic Distribution of School Take Homes** – After a successful pilot at Washington and Emerson during the 2007-08 school year, all seven schools in November 2008 shifted to electronic distribution of their Thursday Take Home newsletters. All schools now post the Take Homes on their school Web sites, where they can be downloaded; parents receive an e-mail from the principal via the school List Serv informing them when a new issue has been posted. Common attachments for all Take Homes are posted on the District 64 Web site, which also is linked to every school Web site.

Based on preliminary findings, we believe that the District is saving more than 55,000 sheets of paper – 11 cases – and many hours of photocopying machine use and volunteer time for assembly for each issue. At a cost of \$32 per case, this is a savings of \$352 for the paper alone. During a full school year, 17 issues will be produced resulting in projected savings for paper alone of almost \$6,000 annually. Building principals, school secretaries, District and school webmasters, and parents are to be commended for their cooperation in achieving this remarkable savings that reduces the environmental impact while also improving communication.

- **Energy Education** – This is a continuing project for District 64 that now spans 65 months, or more than five years of effort since June 2003. The result has been an energy savings to date of \$891,189 or about 16%. As shown on Attachment 1, the program expects to continue yielding benefits on an ongoing basis. The District’s designated energy educator, Jane Everett, also serves on the Green Team Committee and can help expand the effectiveness of the committee’s efforts in this area.

Looking Ahead

The committee agrees that overall coordination and strong communication links will be essential going forward. The District 64 Web site will be a primary means for communication among the schools and with parents and the community via the newly created Green Team Committee page: <http://www.d64.org/page.php?pid=354>. In addition to publicizing current projects, the committee expects to create a “bulletin board” area on the Web site where ideas being implemented in each of the schools can be shared. Teacher resources also will be added.

In addition, committee members have developed a list of specific areas where they felt the District could provide some support and leadership. We have identified a communications loop so that building principals and District administrators are briefed about current committee activities and asked for their cooperation on key steps that must be taken to achieve our goals.

One of the first major steps related to the paper recycling goal, for example, is the transition to the new District 64 waste haul vendors: Groot Industries, Inc. for our Niles buildings and Lakeshore Waste Services LLC for the Park Ridge buildings. These vendors incorporate single stream recycling in their services. The committee is providing guidance on the steps needed to publicize the availability of recycling at all schools, encourage compliance, and educate students and staff on the new procedures for recycling at all District 64 schools.

The Green Team Committee has set a brisk pace. Under its leadership, support for a wide array of environmental initiatives will grow and expand in coming years throughout District 64.