

RE: Caucus Elections for new LRPC Reps, MAY 20

Dear Hillcrest Families and Potential Future Hillcrest Families:

Last May, the Hillcrest community formed a Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) to address four key intertwined issues that were impacting the school:

- Class size at Hillcrest;
- The capacity of the Hillcrest physical plant;
- Enrollment of future kindergarten classes (demand consistently exceeding supply);
- The changing nature of the Hillcrest attendance area.

The LRPC completed a report on these issues in October 2007, and that report prompted the school district to take two steps: (1) to limit the size of the incoming kindergarten class and the admission of students to upper grades at Hillcrest for 2008-2009 and (2) to undertake a more comprehensive evaluation of enrollment policies specifically focusing on the numerous schools throughout the district that are now facing excess demand. This evaluation is currently being undertaken by OUSD staff in conjunction with a Special Subcommittee of the Board of Education. The Special Subcommittee expects to offer its overall recommendations to the Board of Education sometime in June 2008, with a new policy hopefully to be adopted in time for the Fall 2009 enrollment window (which runs from December 2008 to approximately January 15, 2009).

The School Site Council has requested that the LRPC stay active at least through the next school year in order to monitor and work with the school district and board as these potential enrollment-policy changes are researched and enacted. As the LRPC includes representatives from the various grade bands at Hillcrest (as well as the School Site council and the PTA Board) its makeup must necessarily change as representatives' children progress to new grade levels at the end of this school year. Thus, caucus elections to select new LRPC reps will be held on May 20.

Committee Make-Up

The LRPC has voted to retain the existing core makeup of the committee, as outlined below. (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 2008 to June 2009. 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.)

- 1 representative from the current Hillcrest district with pre-school age children who are at least 2 years away from potentially entering Hillcrest (ages 0 to 3)
- 2 representatives from the current Hillcrest district with pre-school age children potentially entering kindergarten in Fall 2009 (ages 3 to 4)
- 1 representative of the incoming 2008-2009 kindergarten class
- 2 representatives from Grades 1 to 3 (current K to current Grade 2)
- 2 representatives from Grades 4 and 5 (current Grades 3 and 4)
- 2 representatives from Grades 6, 7, and 8 (current Grades 5, 6, and 7)
- The principal

- 1 Hillcrest teacher
- A representative from the Hillcrest PTA board
- A representative from Hillcrest's elected School Site Council
- A non-parent member of the community (neighbor)

Please note that there will be NO ALTERNATES. This means that anyone who volunteers for this work must plan to participate and be available to his or her caucus.

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. Caucuses will be held on **May 20th at 7 p.m.** at Hillcrest unless an alternate date/time is selected and advertised a week in advance via email and on the Hillcrest website to all parents in the group.

Individuals interested in serving on the committee who have children 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 maintaining a unified voice and point of view to the district. The work requires advocacy and consensus-building skills.

Individuals interested in serving on the committee who do not currently have children enrolled at Hillcrest are encouraged to submit a nominating note to current caucus representatives for pre-K (Tom DaSilva, Sally Ann Friedman, and Simon Cawley).

The School Site Council, the PTA board, and Hillcrest teachers will establish their own procedures for selecting their representatives.

Milestones and Next Steps

Here are the committee milestones to be reached before school ends this year.

- May 12 (Mon.): Beginning of the period in which nominations and self-nominations for new potential LRPC reps will be collected in the school office.
- May 15 (Thurs.): End of the period in which nominations and self-nominations are collected.
- May 16. (Fri.): Nominations will be published via email to caucuses.
- May 20 (Tues.): Date on or by which caucuses will meet or have met to select their representatives.
- May 27 (Tues.): Joint meeting of the outgoing and incoming members of the Hillcrest Long Range Planning Committee

While the new members of the LRPC may find additional specific tasks to accomplish, the outgoing members provide the following list of overall goals for the incoming group based on our experience to date:

- Monitor – and contribute to – OUSD board, special committee, and staff efforts to create a more permanent, transparent enrollment process for entering kindergarteners in the current Hillcrest attendance area.
- Communicate developments regarding OUSD activities around enrollment to caucus members.
- Work with Long Range Planning Committees, PTAs, and other individuals at neighboring school sites to address the challenge of enrollment and overcrowding in all area schools.
- Continue to press for an enrollment policy for Hillcrest that supports its K-8 mission and drives – over time – total on-site enrollment to 310 students (absent campus expansion).

Please keep in mind that the LRPC is an advisory committee. It does not hold the power to make decisions but it can provide data and input to the OUSD staff and Board of Education so that any decisions are well-informed. Also, this year the LRPC completed its report and undertook actions by consensus. This led to a good working relationship among the members of the LRPC, and it is the desire of the current members that good working relationships continue. Members who join the committee need to be prepared to work hard and to communicate regularly and clearly with their caucuses. While members will naturally represent their demographic constituency, they should be consensus- building individuals who can think and act beyond the needs of their own families.

With sincere thanks to all of you for your support over the past year,

The Hillcrest Long Range Planning Committee