

St Peter's School Parents Association Meeting

February 27th, 2014

1. Welcome to the UNDERGROUND!

- a. Overview and Tour by Mr. Parker (dparker@st-peters-school.org), Director of Innovation & Upper School Science Teacher.

What happens in the Underground?

The name "Underground" was chosen by student vote (Matt Evans has list of proposed names). The space is meant to look busy, like a hub. A lot of activity happens in this space: Advisory, French exams, a 4th grade test, robotics and woodworking, math classes, and students working on the 3D printers. The space is designed for multiple groups/grades to be working simultaneously on different projects.

3D printing: there are 2 printers and they are strategically placed. One is in the lab and one is outside by the stairs and that one printer is wireless so students can print and build without coming in the room.

The Underground was used for an 8th grade physics project in which they had to construct Rube Goldberg machines to identify places of energy. There were two challenges. The students were divided into groups of three to design contraptions that would move 8ml of water from one container to another. Groups were scored and then placed for the second challenge, which was to build another Rube Goldberg contraption that popped a balloon. But all the groups had to be part of the same contraption and had to work together. The two groups that showed most creativity and success in the first challenge were able to choose to be first or last. The groups in the middle had to compromise their steps to coordinate with everyone else's so that the entire contraption worked from beginning to end. There were about 28-30 steps total. There were 5 fails. The students truly showed how they took ownership of the projects and kept working towards success. Teachers were able to discuss good failure and the students responded. They wanted their projects to work and were not complacent. In the first round, two groups didn't finish. Mr. Parker helped them think through what prevented completion and allowed students the opportunity to have ownership over their own education. The teacher is there for support, but students have to do the work. Some students challenged their peers, etc. This will be part of every 8th grade physics unit.

Mr. Parker would like to acquire a laser cutter for the lab so students can get into higher-level robotics.

Parent question: What is 3D printing and what is the ultimate goal in having students use the 3D printers?

The printers print 3-dimensional, physical objects and are ultimately are a vehicle to get somewhere. There are websites (ex: thingiverse.com) where people have created the objects and you only have to download file. That was initial part of having printers, but that's not where faculty would like the students to remain. There are websites (ex: Tinkercad.com and Sketchup.com) where students can create their own computer-aided design, rather than just downloading and printing someone else's designs. The goal is for the students to design their own objects rather than use other people's designs. The 6th graders are working on a table project. 7th and 8th graders have begun to design their own objects. 4th graders have been working on a prosthetic hand. The printers are the vehicles to get students to produce their own designs.

Ultimately, the goal is to add what happens in the Underground to the curriculum in a meaningful way so that it becomes a part and extension of the curriculum and is not merely 8th graders making cool projects. It will be integrated into all grades.

Online References:

Thingiverse:

<http://www.thingiverse.com/>

Tinkercad

<https://www.tinkercad.com/>

Sketchup

<http://www.sketchup.com/>

Parent question: At what other times can other students come to Underground if not in a class or in an advisory?

Right now, every class is coming down at some point whether to participate in an activity or see what other grades are doing so that all students are introduced the space. There are class projects and they are still working out best times for everything. Much is still to be worked out regarding how to incorporate innovation not as a separate class (5th and 6th graders currently have an innovation class), but as a part of the ongoing curriculum. There will be projects that may require students to be in the Underground and use the equipment there as part of another academic subject. The goal is not for only two grades to have an innovation class, but to thread innovation throughout the entire curriculum.

Parent comment: Younger grades can come down to watch and be inspired by the older students, which is the benefit of all grades being in same building. Kindergarteners came to see the Rube Goldberg projects and afterwards went upstairs to work on their own Rube Goldberg contraptions.

Parent question: Who is doing Lego Robotics?

Currently this is a club during school hours for upper school only, but the goal is to have a Lego team and Junior Lego team and extend to lower school and also have a robotics team for 7th and 8th grades that that is not Lego.

Parent question: Will robotics only be in club? Is their rotation of students who sign up?

Currently the same students are signing up. There is a goal of making it more of a community activity and have it be a part of the afterschool program to expose as many students to robotics as would like to participate. The current during-school-hours-club is just the starting point. There will be more after school options in the future. Just as a reminder, please note that the afterschool programs that exist now did not exist 1-1/2 years ago.

2. Teacher / Faculty Appreciation Luncheon – Diana Urbanchuk (diana@urbanchuk.com) and Stephanie Haugen (fuzzyfriendly@gmail.com)
 - a. March 13th – Conference Day
 - b. Sign Ups

Our teachers and staff are amazing and we want to do something more to show our appreciation than just holiday gifts, etc.

Diana will be asking parents/caretakers to write notes of appreciation and will distribute stationery and collect the notes to distribute. Liz will initiate coffee and breakfast for teachers in April.

The teacher appreciation luncheon will take place on March 13th, which allows everyone to sit and relax together. Teachers will have conferences in morning and professional development services will take place in the afternoon. Stephanie Haugen is assisting Diana with this year's luncheon (Stephanie chaired the luncheon last year).

There is a sign up board in reception to sign up to bring in food. There is a need for everyone to sign up to bring something (it's okay to bring extra!). There is also a need for volunteers to help at the event with heating, service, and clean up, etc. There will be a space for kids to play during the lunch if you don't have care during this time.

Recommendations for providing food and supplies: If bringing hot dish, please heat it before bringing it. It's harder to bring it cold and have to reheat it completely at school. Disposable serving dishes and utensils are preferred if possible. If your item needs special serving items, please provide if possible or let Diana or Stephanie know in advance. Diana will be bringing take home containers.

The e-vite to staff and faculty requested that they note any allergies/food restrictions.

3. Rosetta Lee Presentation – Jess Cronin-Connolly (j.cronin-connolly@st-peters-school.org)

a. March 18th at 6 pm at The Philadelphia School

b. School Visit:

Rosetta Lee is a middle school science teacher from Seattle Girls' School and is a nationally known diversity trainer. Ms. C encourages everyone to go to TPS to see her speak. SPS is cohosting the speaking event with TPS and the program will address how parents can talk to their children of all ages about significant topics such as race, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Lee's presentations give parents real tools, not just theoretical information regarding how to start conversations and respond to questions. If you are planning to attend, please RSVP.

Lee will visit SPS the following day to talk to all students and teachers. There will also be two special assemblies. All are welcome to attend. Ms. C will send schedule information for the day.

4. Spring Auction – Catherine Signorello (csignorello23@msn.com) and Nadine Biles (nadinebiles@gmail.com)

a. March 27th, 2015

b. Class Projects

c. Updates and Announcements

d. Set Up Volunteers

Invitations will be sent out next week. Raffle tickets will be included in the mailing and you may sell or buy. Raffle ticket sales are being matched by alumni. So far \$2000 have been matched. \$1200 in raffle ticket sales were made at presale. Grandparents and family members make excellent raffle ticket buyers. Please take on selling some extra tickets or purchase them yourself. Usually about \$7000 is made from raffle ticket sales, plus what alumni match. Please sell or buy your tickets!

Class projects: if anyone is struggling, Hilary Doyle is helping. If questions, please contact Catherine, Nadine, or Hilary. For upper school class projects, which don't sell as well as lower school projects, please try to make them as personal as possible so there's a student who would really like to have it (especially 8th grade).

Please consider signing up to volunteer for March 27. More information on volunteering to come.

Transportation and parking: There are 4 parking garages around Moore College. Easy to park, or cab, or Uber (Karin Morse has Uber promo codes—please stop into the Development Office if you'd like one).

Auction items due by next Friday, March 6. If you can't get the item in, please send

details and information so the item's description can be included in auction materials. Please contact Nadine or Catherine to discuss special items.

5. Matt Evans, Academic Dean – Updates for Upcoming School year (Mevans@st-peters-school.org)

Activities: They are working on the schedule and program of activities for The Underground. Next year there will be more of a formal sign up. Some of the things done during school hours will become after school programs. Clubs will be added to lower school so those students can be part of the clubs. The robotics team will begin to compete. The students have pushed for this.

Curriculum: The 5th and 6th grade humanities program will be interdisciplinary. For example, when studying the Renaissance, history, art, and English teachers will teach together so there is a thematic approach. Students are currently compartmentalizing classes. This new approach gives students a broader view. More high schools are teaching content topic or themes so that students can look at what they are learning from a broad perspective. SPS will try to do this throughout the curriculum.

There will be a shift towards more project-based learning. This is more aligned with what students will be doing as adults.

Exams will be in different format to help prepare for high school but not on an arbitrary date so it's just information learned by a specific date. The past format of a simple test is not as useful as it once was.

Facilities: Desks and furniture will be updated. This is a deferred maintenance issue. Desks have not been replaced for several years so need to assess the safety of chairs and tables, etc. Furniture makes for excellent donation items!

There is work on building plans for the summer so rooms are the right size. Class numbers increase and fluctuate so there is a need to look at classroom sizes and make necessary changes.

There will be a consideration of The Underground and theater and how best to manage and use these highly trafficked spaces.

Faculty hiring: They are considering needs for next year and making sure contracts are out. This year the date to return contracts is earlier so they can address any needs.

Trips: There will be field trips in all upper and lower school grades. There will be overnight trips for all upper school students; 5th and 6th grades will now go on an overnight trip.

Conferences—As of this spring, upper school students will participate in their own parent teacher conferences, so they can be a part of the discussion about their school experience. Students have been participating in role-playing with their advisors to prepare. This initiative

ensures parents, students, and teachers are all on same page and students can be more reflective and a part of their educational progress.

Professional development day is now combined with parent/teacher conferences.

Parent question: Will students have a chance to learn about club opportunities this year in order to know what to sign up for next year? There may be a club assembly or after school fair. There will be communication about this in the spring.

6. Announcements:

- a. PLEASE NOTE: There is no PA March Meeting as instead we will be supporting Auction Set Up efforts on that day. There will be no PA meeting on March 27th. The next PA meeting is on April 24th in the library.
- b. Spring Uniforms switch on April 1st.
- c. May Day – boys of all grades need white shorts (Preschool – 4th Grade) or white pants (5-8th grades)

Please email the Parents Association at parentsassociation@st-peters-school.org with any questions, ideas or suggestions for upcoming agenda items. Thank you!