

# Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa Education Committee



## NCWP Education Committee Members

Michele Cooley Strickland, M.Ed., Ph.D. – Chair  
Grace Yao – Co-Chair                      Matthew Teclé  
Andrew Kamm                                  John-David Webster  
Denny Schneider                              Bryan Williams

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Meeting Minutes – March 23, 2016

Westchester Library Loyola Branch, 7114 W. Manchester Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90045

1. Members Present: Michele Cooley-Strickland (Chair), Denny Schneider, John David Webster, Matthew Teclé, Andrew Kamm Absent: Bryan Williams, Grace Yao
2. The meeting was called to order by Dr. Michele Cooley-Strickland at 6:37pm.
3. The Committee unanimously approved the Minutes from the February 24, 2016 meeting.
4. The Committee welcomed guests attending today's special meeting, including: Gwen Vuchsas, Rebecca Cunningham, Janet Landon, Katie Loller-Hunt, Brit Morrissey, Marlene Gains, and Anthony Iglesias.
5. Announcements from Local Education Group Representatives included:
  - a) LMU Community Relations – Michele Cooley-Strickland announced:
    - i. LMU Race for Success: Excellent and huge turnout.
    - ii. First Friday: Cold but productive.
  - b) Otis College of Art and Design – Matt Teclé announced:
    - i. The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Otis Kite Festival will be held on Saturday, April 9 at 11am directly north of the Santa Monica Pier. There will be over 3,000 free sustainable kites to give away to any attendees. Kite artists from across the US fly in to showcase their kite sculptures. Ms. Utvich will email principals the poster.
  - c) Others – Gwen Vuchsas announced:
    - i. Teacher Eddy Awards: There will be 20-22 honorees at the LAX Hilton on May 10. All come from local schools and universities.
  - d) Others – Michele Cooley-Strickland announced:
    - i. Wright STEAM Magnet Middle School Tour on April 13, 2016.
    - ii. The next meeting of the LAUSD Instructional Pathways Collaborative Work Group is on April 18, 2016 at Wright STEAM Magnet Middle from 5:30-7pm.

## No Public Comment

## Action Item One: UPDATE: Department of Neighborhood Empowerment's Funding Update: Board Members & Awards to Schools

1. Due to the Neighborhood Councils' letters in opposition to current policy with regards to Neighborhood Purposes Grants, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment has updated their policy to as follows:

*"The Office of the City Attorney does not believe that the conflict of interest laws would preclude a NPG being provided to a school for a general item that is available to all students, e.g., if the grant is for a playground, a board could award the NPG even if the board member's child will use the equipment. However, the board member should disqualify himself or herself so as to avoid any issue under the common law bias doctrine and/or any appearance of a conflict. Disqualification means the board member may not nominate his/her child's school to receive the grant, may not negotiate with fellow board members to nominate the schools of each other's children, may not fill out the NPG application, may not discuss the NPG in or outside of a meeting with fellow board members, and may not present, discuss or vote on the NPG when the item is considered. Instead, the board member must recuse him/herself and leave the room immediately once the item is called for consideration by the board. The minutes must reflect the board member's recusal.*

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Our NCWP Education Goal: *To engage the Westchester/Playa del Rey/Playa Vista community in support of advancing the success of the local elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as that of the local colleges and universities, manifested by enhancing: i) School resources; ii) students' educational experiences; iii) parental involvement; and/or iv) community partnerships.*

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*On the other hand, a Neighborhood Council is prohibited under Government Code section 1090 from providing a grant to a school which that board member's child attends if the grant will offset any identifiable cost for the board member or have any other distinct financial benefit to the board member or his/her child. For example, the board may not fund a field trip that a board member's child would attend if the board member would otherwise have had to pay for his/her child to participate."*

### Action Item Two: UPDATE on the LAUSD Instructional Pathways Collaborative Work Group exploring a single- or dual-instructional pathway at Wright Middle School

1. The Instructional Pathways Collaborative Work Group is exploring new or dual instructional pathways.
2. Ms. Hildreth was not in attendance at the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.
3. The purpose of the latest meeting was to look at ways of expanding enrollment of local residents at Wright Middle School.
4. A secondary purpose was to explore a potential new direction for Wright's instructional pathways.
  - a. This is in response to becoming a Magnet school 3 years prior.
5. Enrollment Numbers
  - a. Academic year 2012-2013: 200 residential students 653 total enrollment
  - b. Academic year 2013-2014: 163 residential students 682 total enrollment
  - c. Academic year 2014-2015: 183 residential students 696 total enrollment
6. Chamber Survey: The LAX Chamber of Commerce is also collecting information from local commercial businesses on their experience with local education.
  - a. The Chamber is exploring advocacy towards the creation of a facilities task force to explore issues of space and crowding in local schools.
  - b. Parents are mostly looking for consistency and peace of mind that there is a set pathway for their child.
7. The NCWPDR Education Committee voted on developing a brief survey on what elements are attractive for parents sending their children to local schools.
  - a. So moved: John David-Webster and Matt Teclé carried.

### Action Item Three: UPDATE on Westchester Secondary Charter School (WSCS) Facilities Challenges

1. Janet Landon: Principal at Westchester Secondary Charter School updated the Committee on developments at her school.
2. LAUSD has offered WSCS a new space even further away than their first suggestions.
3. There are currently 300 students at WSCS.
4. The WSCS have reached out to all political constituents and feel they have exhausted all options.
5. The NCWPDR Education Committee voted on writing another letter to Board President Steve Zimmer to advocate on keeping WSCS in Westchester.
  - a. Motion approved.

### Action Item Four: UPDATE – Tour Local Schools

1. The NCWPDR Education Committee voted on touring local schools.
  - a. Motion approved.

The next NCWP Education Committee meeting is April 27, 2016. Meetings are regularly scheduled on the fourth Wednesday of every month.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01pm.

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