

September 21, 2016 FHS PTSA General Meeting

President Susie Silva Strommer opened the meeting at 7pm and welcomed everyone.

Introductions.

Approval of minutes

Susie asks that we approve the minutes from the last General Meeting, May 2016. *Beth Azar motions to approve the minutes. Darcy Mundorff seconds. The motion is passed.*

Educators of the Month

Susie encouraged people to nominate an Educator of the Month. Forms were provided at all tables.

Guest Speakers, Elisa Wong, Pam Garrett, Advanced Scholar Program (ASP)

New ASP co-coordinators Elisa Wong and Pam Garrett provided an overview of ASP and how it will work this year under new leadership.

Pam Garrett: Ms. Garrett provided a brief history of the program at FHS. ASP has been at FHS for 8 years. It began as part of a Gates Foundation Grant to FHS and Benson High School. Elisa Wong worked on the grant at Benson as did current FHS Principal Juanita Valder.

The idea was to inspire students to reach for higher goals in school, particularly students who do not traditionally take AP classes. ASP asks students to commit to taking 4 AP classes or 3 AP and 1 dual credit class before they graduate, get involved in school-based clubs or sports, and to meet regularly with an assigned mentor group made up of a staff member and a mixed age group of other ASP students. In the end, students receive a certificate and graduate as members of ASP. Started with 30 students, now it's up to over 600. It has changed the culture of learning at FHS. Many kids aspire to it and even those who don't complete the program, push themselves to try and can still put it on their resume.

The ASP kick-off meeting is this Friday Sept. 23 during tutorial. This year they are adding online applications along with paper applications that parents need to sign. They are expecting 600 kids to show up. They are publicizing the event.

Elisa Wong: Ms. Wong gave more details about the AP program at FHS. There are now 17 AP courses offered at FHS, more than any other PPS high school. There is also the dual credit program where students can earn college credit at PCC, Mt. Hood CC and OIT. These courses are great for students staying in the Oregon University system. The credits might not be accepted outside Oregon as required classes, but might be as elective credits. Students and parents should look carefully at course offerings during forecasting and think about dual credit and AP options.

There are lots of options. They are also hoping to eventually add two new AP classes: AP seminar, which is interdisciplinary studies and research, which teaches students how to research and study topics from many different angles; and AP Research Project, which is a thesis or capstone project class where students work all year on a topic and complete a thesis or project at the end. FHS is in line to be invited to a training so they can offer this to students. It might happen in a couple of years.

Juanita Valder: Ms. Valder emphasized that the biggest part of program for Franklin has been how it turned around the culture of learning in the building, especially for first generation immigrant students and students from backgrounds that do not have the tradition of AP and advanced scholarship. The mentors, which are teachers, admin staff, etc., spend time sharing their own experiences with the students and it has encouraged a culture of pushing all students to reach for accolades at the top. The program has been noted nationwide and boosted our graduation rate. Also, truly, the national attention and rigor of the program is catching the eye of colleges. It shows colleges that students have the grit to get through the rigor.

The mandatory college and career class (CCE) that all freshmen take is the first step into ASP, emphasizing that the expectation is that every student will go on to some kind of postsecondary option.

Because the program has gotten so big and it's critical to keep mentor groups small, the program may need to do some reorganizing. One possibility is that freshmen will enter the program through their CCE class and their teacher there (who is also their English teacher) will be their mentor for freshman year. Then the other mentor groups can stay smaller with just upper classmen. Freshmen would still have access to upper classmen through new programs designed to connect freshmen ASP students with other ASP upper classmen.

Questions:

Is there a benefit to freshmen applying since they can't take AP classes yet? Yes, they should. They will benefit from the program and the assemblies that the program will have throughout the year. Later in the year there may be opportunities for freshmen in ASP to shadow upperclassmen in AP classes to find out what it's like.

Can remedial students take AP classes and be successful? Yes, those kids can take AP classes. That was part of the idea of the program, to cut down barriers to AP for ALL students. The idea is to open doors to these classes with the support of the mentors. Not everyone will finish the program, but they can still benefit and participate.

Juanita: The program is now being replicated at three other high schools. FHS is the touchstone that folks are looking to find out how to do it. And now that it's growing, they will watch and see how we are doing that.

How does dual credit work? Students have to register at the college. Teachers are supposed to help students do that by getting them online and showing them how to do it. That should be built into the class. If it's not, admin will need to take a look and make sure all teachers of these classes know how to do it.

Guest Speaker: Otto Schell, Oregon PTA, Measure 97

Measure 97 is proposing a corporate tax on large C corps that do more than \$25 million in business in Oregon. The money will fund education, healthcare and senior services. Currently Oregon is 50th in the nation for corporate taxes. Been there for a while. In 1970s corporations paid 17-18% of the state budget. That number has gone down by more than 2/3, which means everyone else picks up the slack. Measure 97 creates a minor change in existing tax law. It's a one page change. Oregon PTA wants people to share this information with others who don't understand the measure. This is a change in existing tax law based on sales. If a business makes \$25 million in OREGON sales, they pay an extra \$25,000. The measure has 1000 endorsements. 300 small businesses, etc. It will only win if parents help us. The opposition has a lot of money from big business. He asked parents to help by committing to vote yes and to work at phone banks and to canvass. There is a lot of information on the Measure 97 website: www.voteyeson97.org.

Treasurer's report, Amber Wagner

Amber passed out the budget the FHS PTSA approved last May. She explained that the lion's share of our budget goes toward grants to teachers, staff and students. However, the PTSA is transitioning from a spring grant cycle to a fall grant cycle (and sometimes both spring and fall). Because we had two grant cycles last year and we will be moving to a new building over the summer the Board has decided to have NO grant cycle this school year and start fresh in the new building with a Fall 2017 grant cycle.

Amber asked that we approve two minor changes to the current budget: the Board asked to increase the PTSA contribution to student recognition events, which are spearheaded by V.P. Emily Mathers for honor roll and the Franklin Strong Awards. And the Board added a line item for a new accounting software program that charges an annual fee.

Questions?

One woman mentioned that she wrote a grant for a group last year and it hasn't spent the money. Should she mention it to them? Darcy Mundorff, who chaired the grants committee last year, said that they have a deadline by which they need to spend the money and that a reminder will go out to everyone who has not spent their money a few months before the deadline.

Laura Smoyer (last year's treasurer) mentioned that Char and Sara Tetro successfully completed an audit of the PTSA finances.

Roger Kirschner motioned to approve the changes to the budget. Chris Myers seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Amber briefly discussed the Treasurer's report that details what has happened so far this year. She wrote a check to Principal Valder for the funds the PTSA provides her each year and the PTSA has given its annual donation to the Portland PTA. In October she will receive money that came in during registration for membership dues, senior grad party and other donations, that is shunted through FHS.

Administrative News, Principal Valder

Registration went pretty well, despite the glitches with schedules. The PPS IT department went down at the end of last year so FHS was behind in getting schedules out to students.

Being in the Marshall space is bittersweet. It will be the last time Franklin will open in this building and then we will have to rethink everything in terms of the new space. That said, things went smoothly. Right now, every time the school has an event or process, they are sitting down after to debrief and think about what it will look like in the new space, "so we are not 100% doe-eyed when we move."

Back to school night went well. Wonderful to see how many parents attended.

Re-started site council with Lisa Zuniga as the new Chair.

There are many other parent group meetings coming up (Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, BSU).

The newsletter didn't go out last week because of a glitch with the listserv. We are working to update it. She is promised that it will be ready by Friday or Monday.

The PTSA supported the admin team to celebrate honor roll students from last spring semester. About 450 kids got cookies and pins.

We purchased everyone a water bottle. We feel it was a good investment. It shows spirit and alleviates the craziness of hundreds of little paper cups being thrown away every day.

Reminder to parents that we are in the second year of a biennial budget so PPS is looking toward the next budget. It is also a teacher negotiation year. They have made some changes in the process. They are doing some pre-meetings that seem to be fruitful. Seems more positive compared to three years ago.

Homecoming is coming with a football game and dance right after in the cafeteria.

Questions:

Are we on track to move into the new building? Yes. Most definitely. We are on track. They are framing the interior walls. We've been meeting regularly, scheduled weekly meetings with reps from the district. In Oct we will start meeting with teams from Roosevelt and Grant. We will be helping Grant make a smooth transition to the Marshall building and Roosevelt will be helping us transition into the new building based on their experience this year. We will be taking teachers out to the new building again soon. We are also approaching the drop dead deadline to place items in our time capsule that will be placed at the new building.

What is our enrollment? 1,626 as of last Friday. We are less than 10 students off of our estimates for this year in terms of staffing, so we're pleased with that.

Do you expect that number going up in the new building? Yes. All predictions are that we will continue to grow.

Is there any chance that graduation will be in the Bowl at the new building this year? No, the last thing going in will be the turf on the football field and that will be just before the first football game next year. It definitely won't be ready in May. In addition, the size of the football stadium at Marshall is a bit bigger than what we will be moving back to and we learned from last year (having graduation here in the stadium) that it was very crowded. When we asked last year's juniors (this year's seniors) whether they would want to limit guests (to 3 or 4 per student) and maintain tradition by staying outside or be able to invite more guests and have graduation at the Coliseum they opted for the Coliseum.

Where will summer sports practice happen? We will have to share the Marshall athletic fields with Grant this summer. Grant also might have their back to school night here at Marshall this year. It's all in negotiation.

A last point: A neighborhood advocate raised some concerns about school safety around the issue of the homeless and the clean-up of the Springwater corridor on Sept. 1. We did not want her concerns to blemish the image of FHS as a safe place. We had some meetings around this. Several sites near campus (particularly next to the McDonalds on Powell) have been cleaned up. Personally we have not seen much difference; the campus was safe before and is still safe. We did have some extra security around the campus on Sept 1 and a few days after. We have a wonderful campus security staff and a resource officer. The school has done a good job making our presence known and we have not had any major safety concerns.

Executive Board Reports

President: Approving PTSA Standing Rules, Susie

The PTSA needs to approve the Standing Rules every year. The Board is asking to make some changes:

- Changing the PTSA General meetings from monthly to 5 times a year and changing the time of executive board meetings from 6:30 to 7pm.

- Under officers and elections: eliminate “ticket sales” and add “up to 3 minority parent representatives.”
- Budgeting procedures: increasing the amount that a line item can go over budget without a vote of the full membership from \$25 to \$100.

There was a request from a member that we vote independently on each item. She was opposed to the idea of reducing the number of General Meetings. Several people spoke in support of the move as a way to increase participation and reduce the time commitment for parents.

There was a motion by Esther Crowall-Duncan and seconded by Chris Myers to approve the changes to the budgeting procedures. The motion passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Laura Smoyer, seconded by Roger Kirschner to approve the changes to officers and elections. The motion passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Amber Wagner, seconded by Darcy Mundorff to change the time of board meetings and reduce general meetings from 9 to 5 per school year. The motion passed with one dissenting vote.

Membership, Betsy Salter

Last year we had 225 members and Oregon PTA gave us a goal for this year of 240. We are at 245, already above our goal. Betsy explained that Oregon PTA is working to secure member benefits. They are working with businesses to give perks to members. She and Susie met with Kingpins bowling alley and they will give members 2 for 1 benefit. She had a problem printing membership cards. She had some but will need to get the rest to people at the next meeting. For those who still want to join it is easiest to sign up online at: oregonpts.or/join.now

Communications: Beth Azar

Beth works with Juanita to send out the weekly Bulletin. She let parents know that they can send her items for the newsletter by 3pm on Thursdays to here email that is available on the FHS PTSA section of the FHS website: commfhspts@gmail.com. She also posts items on the PTSA Facebook page.

Volunteers, Amy Dirk

Amy has entered all of the parent interest surveys into a database. She received data from about 165 individuals. The next event will be the homecoming dance and she will create a sign up for that. Also Franklin’s first clothing center date is Nov 7, Monday. 9-1.

Legislative update, Rebecca Eaton

Water: testing has been completed throughout PPS. We won’t have a lead issue in the new building.

Carol Smith resigned: the intent is to hire someone new by the start of next school year. It is unclear what the parent process will be for that.

Fred Meyer cards: please re-up.

A vote on the facilities Bond has been moved to May.

Old Business

Mascot Change, Mia Pisano Yang

Mia gave a brief history of her work on the proposal/campaign to retire the FHS nick-name/mascot from “Quakers” and initiate a community process to bring in a new nickname. She has much more information than she had time to discuss and is happy to provide that to anyone interested. She and Susie emphasized the importance of moving quickly on this issue as, if a change is going to happen, it needs to happen before everything in the new building is branded with “Quaker.” Juanita mentioned that some things already have been.

Why change? “I’m a Quaker, because that’s my religion,” said Mia. Since 1647 Quaker has meant that someone is a member of The Religious Society of Friends. Ben Franklin was the founder of UPenn, which used “Quakers” as their nickname because they were affiliated with the Quaker religion. However, Benjamin Franklin wasn’t a Quaker nor did he ever claim to be. Despite that, in 1915-16, sports writers started using the Quaker nickname for FHS likely because of Franklin’s affiliation with UPenn. Mia acknowledged that a lot of people are really attached to the nickname. But we have an opportunity to change that and to cheer for something that reflects the school and that is more appropriate. No other religion has its name as a mascot. And PPS has some clear policies about the role of religion in education (Mia has documentation on this). She suggested that using the Quaker name as a mascot is a violation of this policy. She also has petitions signed by Quakers asking for PPS to consider a change. She is not proposing a nickname. Rather, she would like to see a process that involves students. She emphasized how much fun material there would be for a new mascot based on Ben Franklin’s life.

Susie mentioned the new FHS brand developed in partnership with NIKE that includes the saying Franklin Strong and a new logo that includes the clock tower and a lightning bolt. Mia added that Site Council last year developed a new mission and vision statement for FHS, so a new mascot/nickname might be right in line with where the school is headed.

Susie stated that, after a long discussion, the board has decided to support a nickname change but that it is up to the general membership to vote. She opened it up to questions.

Is there a drop dead date to make this change? Susie responded that the deadline was “yesterday.”

If we vote to endorse this effort, how rapidly could we bring it to fruition?

This is without precedent since 1980 when Cleveland changed its mascot and at the time, the principal simply did it without asking. There was a groundswell from that community. So far the district has given two different pieces of guidance. 1. to bring it to the principal and she would bring it to her area director and they would decide whether to proceed. They would then form a committee, and proceed from there.

2. Follow the renaming process as for renaming a building. This would start with a proposal to the superintendent, which would go on to the school board.

If it's a rule and it's in violation of the rule, shouldn't we be able to go that route? Possibly, but there needs to be support for the change first.

Principal Valder said that she would get behind the change if there was a groundswell of support for it. Until now it has been Mia on one side and a very vocal group of alumni in opposition. If she saw a lot of support for a change, she would feel in a better position to begin a process.

Laura Smoyer made a motion to endorse changing the FHS nickname. Jill McArthur seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business, Susie

Susie is also the auction co-chair and she passed out save the date/business donations fliers and encouraged people to help out.

Darcy reported that the Pizzicato fundraiser raised \$675. She plans to schedule another in Jan or May.

Lisa Zuniga announced that the wreath and garland sale is under way and handed out fliers to people. Wreaths will be delivered to people's homes on Dec. 2. Deadline to order is Oct. 28.

The next General meeting will be Novemer 16 and the headline speaker will be teachers of the new Courageous Conversations class.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

These minutes were prepared by acting secretary Beth Azar.