

ACCESS PTA Board Meeting Feb. 10, 2016

Call to order – Welcome, introductions - 6 p.m.

Principal's report - Mr. Wood (6:10-6:50 p.m.)

Admissions update for next year: Applications are now up on line. This year there is explicit information on the web site about openings available for next year. Our current enrollment is 352 and we will not be growing next year. It seems that we will continue cohabiting with Beverly Cleary, and that their size will be the same. ACCESS will admit 13 1st grade students, 40 3rd grade students, and 2-3 at each of the other grade levels. There are 3 information sessions set: Wed. 3/2 from 9-10 am, Wed. 3/16 from 6:30-8 pm and Thurs. 4/7 from 6:30-8 pm. The deadline is later this year as TAG testing won't be done until spring break, and we are committed to every eligible family getting outreach from a current family, so the application deadline is 4/15/16, with families getting notification in May. Testing for all 2nd graders finishes this week. 2nd graders were tested with the full COGAT this year instead of the screener. Mr. Wood will speak with all the school TAG coordinators next week to let them know about ACCESS. There will be no middle school specific information because there will be so few middle school students added this year, but there will be breakout sessions during the information nights by grade level. It was asked if current 5th grade students should come to learn about middle school, and Mr. Wood said that that would be a different session, but that later in the year there would be an information night for students and families transitioning to middle school.

Educational Options updates: ACCESS and all other Ed. Options programs have been asked by the board to submit a plan that would better explain who the school serves, what current outcomes are, as well as to answer some more subjective questions such as how we create a sense of community in which a sense of cultural isolation is reduced. Mr. Wood would like to get community input about the answers to these more subjective questions. One question is whether we need to change size or grade configuration, and this is a good opportunity to ask for increased size and also a high school program. Another question is how we meet both the academic needs and the social needs of the students. This plan is due Feb. 29th. The site council has met about this, and there are 3-4 questions which could use community input. At some point the board will formally review all focus option programs and decide who is up for formal review first, which Mr. Wood suspects will be the language immersion programs. This process is causing some stress in other focus option schools, and Mr. Wood thinks that this should not be the case, but rather that this is a good opportunity to share our story and what we do, as well as our need for growth. District policy actually states that every 5 years ed option programs are supposed to be reviewed; it's just that the district hasn't been really doing this. Jonathan Dubay and David Wood will finalize the questions by 2/12 and get them out to families next week.

A parent asked about having heard at the DBRAC meeting that ACCESS requested to move to Humboldt if we are moved. Mr. Wood noted that there is almost universal agreement in the ACCESS community that we need to grow, and that there are few buildings currently available in PPS where that would be possible. It has been clear since before we moved into this building that we would be moved again, likely in 2017. This building will almost certainly be reopened as a neighborhood school to relieve overcrowding in NE. Humboldt is one of few available locations where we could grow. Tubman is also a possibility, but this would politically be more difficult, and Kellogg would only work if we weren't co-located there, which would be very unlikely. The district will almost certainly need to make decisions about district-wide grade configuration before deciding

where ACCESS could be sited. Mr. Wood also clarified that ACCESS will remain 1-8 (and not be reconfigured), and that it is actually designed to be 1-12.

High School Update: We are supposed to be a grade 1-12 program as designed by the board. Mr. Wood understands that not everyone felt great about the presentation by the Grant principal at the last board meeting. For a few years there was more of an ACCESS at Grant program, with a cohort course freshman year for all ACCESS students, but this has not occurred for several years. The original mandate doesn't specify the format of the high school program, but the majority of families want it to be within a larger HS program with more opportunities than an isolated ACCESS HS program could provide. The site council has drafted a proposal with a number of specific requests, which include a dedicated administrator at the high school who will work with us (likely a vice-principal), a dedicated counselor, appropriate course placement for our students, access to advanced coursework even if they don't come in with HS credit, and not having to wait until junior year for that, and the resurrection of a one course cohort class per year for students who want that. Mr. Wood feels that this would strike a balance between the need for the variety of courses that a neighborhood HS offers plus a wide variety of students, while at the same time meeting the academic needs of ACCESS students. He met with Shea James, the director of PPS high schools, and Andrew Johnson, the TAG director, and provided them with the report from the site council with the specific requests. Earlier in the year he met with all of the high school principals. Tomorrow he will meet again with Shea James and Andrew Johnson and out of that meeting should come a time line by the fall of 2016. One challenge will be that PPS has largely committed to a "freshman community" model that intentionally spreads out freshman among the different freshman communities. By March or April we should know what to expect for 2016, and the plan for long term will come later. It's also possible that the board could decide to not guarantee ACCESS students admission to any specific high school other than their neighborhood high school, and that they could say instead that all neighborhood high schools need to meet ACCESS students' needs, but he thinks that is less likely. Mr. Wood will be asking/surveying families of current 7th and 8th grade students to find out how many would likely stay together as a cohort if there were a robust high school program available.

Financial Report (6:50-7pm)—Abbie Rankin, Treasurer. We are at \$1,400 in profit for scrip. We got \$1,800 from Laurelwood from the dine out, and we have more dine outs planned. The librarian has put together a list of books that she wants to purchase with her \$1,000 budget. The list is largely focused on middle readers because this area has the greatest need and there is also the need to complete some series. A parent asked if we will keep our librarian next year, and Mr. Wood replied that the district has said that all K-8 programs get a full time librarian, so we should still have a librarian. Mr. Garcia has won many awards with cash prizes that he has spent on science supplies for the school. This year he has won yet another award and he would like to travel to Nashville to present at the Nation Convention for Science Education to accept the award and present at the conference, and is requesting to use \$500 out of his supply funds to travel to the convention. A motion was made to approve \$500 for Mr. Garcia, and it was seconded and approved.

Abbie also suggested that \$20 a month be approved for the person organizing the monthly teacher appreciation lunches to augment food contributions if needed, as sometimes extra food is needed. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to do so.

Old business (7:00-710pm)

Approval of January meeting minutes was postponed until the next meeting.

Talent Show. There are 37 acts now, and it will be good! Many acts have been combined to get it down to 37 acts. The performances will be Friday 3/11 and Tuesday 3/15 at 6:30pm with a 1:30 school show on 3/11.

Yearbook – Volunteer recruitment ideas were discussed. No one has signed up yet to lead the yearbook, and we need an adult volunteer to do this. They meet 5th period from 1-2pm 4 days a week. It was asked if we could get a HS or college volunteer to do it who could get credit for volunteering. It doesn't need to be the same person all 4 days a week. Mr. Wood will also talk to the 2 student teachers who are here and see if they are interested. Christine Nagel used a program last year that could be used again, and it is pretty easy to use. Ms. MacK and Mr. Harkness are running the leadership class and Mr. Wood will talk to them again to see more specifically what support they currently need.

New business/announcements: (7:10-7:20) There is no Valentine's day dance this year (which would typically be this week), but the dance committee started meeting this week and there will be a middle school dance soon.

A parent asked about the Facebook conversations about a lack of detail on report card, and it was requested that Mr. Wood address this issue (some schools have much more detailed report cards). He notes that we have chosen to give all kids what is essentially a middle school report card because of our walk to math program, and he thinks we should revisit this. Also some parents find the legend confusing and may not realize that there is more explanation of the legend on Parent Vue.

Mr. Wood noted that this year we can't have our usual weeknight ice cream social with teachers present right before school starts because school starts on a Monday, so it will have to be on Sunday afternoon without teachers attending. Because of this we can have a second after school event with teachers later in the year, so next year we will add a second conference/evening event in the spring.

Adjourn – 7:20 p.m.

Next General PTA Meeting – 7 p.m., March. 9, 2016