

## **ACCESS Academy PTA**

### **Minutes of General Membership Meeting**

Tuesday, April 25, 2017, at 7 p.m. in the library, Rose City Park School, 2334 NE 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Portland, Oregon

**Attendance:** 12 people signed the attendance list. Of these, 12 were members for 2016-17. Six members constitute a quorum for a General Membership Meeting.

**Meeting called to order by** President Jennifer Ellis at 7:05 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the 03/21/2017 General Membership Meeting, which were available for review, were accepted, with one correction of the date under "Approval of Minutes."

#### **Principal's Announcements**

None (Principal David Wood was not present).

#### **President's Announcements** – Jennifer Ellis

Teacher Appreciation Week is coming up next week (first week of May). Here's the lineup: Monday -- Note for Your Teacher (or Staff) Day: a table will be set up all week for kids to write notes. Notes can be given to teachers, or put in their office mailboxes.

Tuesday -- Potluck Lunch, including suitable leftovers from auction.

Wednesday -- Fancy Coffee Day.

Thursday -- Bring a Flower Day: Catherine Beckett will bring up vases stored in the kiln room, and invites parents and kids to help fill and deliver vases to classrooms before drop-off on Thursday.

Friday -- Scrip Gift Day: Money collected through checks and online forms will be agglomerated and then split among teachers/staff in the form of gift certificates for the scrip of their choice.

#### **Presentation on Bond Measure**

Jen introduced Aaron Brown, from Portlanders for Safe and Healthy Schools, who addressed the group in support of Measure 26-193, "Bonds to Improve Health, Safety, Learning by Modernizing, Repairing Schools." The bond measure is up for vote in the upcoming special election, Tuesday, May 16.

If the measure is approved, PPS will issue up to \$790 million in bonds to fund renovations and additions at Benson and Madison High Schools, and the complete rebuilds of Lincoln HS and Kellogg Middle School. The bond will also fund mitigation of known health hazards in Portland schools (namely radon, asbestos, and lead), needed (deferred) repairs, and upgrades required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Many prominent figures have endorsed the bond – including Portland city government officials; there has been no organized opposition. When students return this fall there will be a new PPS superintendent and three new members of the school board. Mr. Brown

emphasized that this is the perfect time to pass the bond measure, to help the district move forward to provide a safer, healthier, more modern and efficient infrastructure. At the very least, it makes sense to stop having to spend \$80,000 per month on replacement drinking water.

Franklin and Roosevelt High Schools, remodeled under the 2012 bond, will reopen this fall. The accountability committee for that bond has ensured that all work is being completed on time and on budget. A similar accountability committee will oversee work under the 2017 bond. Franklin High reportedly looks great and serves as a great example of how the community comes together to improve its infrastructure and sense of community.

Former PPS board member Bobbie Regan came and spoke about the bond at the April Principal's Coffee. Mr. Brown reinforced her message: "The appeal of using bond financing is that we're building new high schools and not raising taxes to do it." He confirmed that new bonds in the future will be pitched as renewals of existing bonds.

Mr. Brown invited the PTA to look ahead and tell PPS how it believes funds from the 2017 bond should be spent here at the Rose City Park building. Mr. Brown cited, for example, the need for ADA-compliant entrances, the absence of which he noticed upon arriving for this meeting.

In answer to a parent's question, Mr. Brown confirmed that none of this bond money is allocated for personnel or operating expenses to maintain the new/renovated buildings. Citizens will have to lobby the legislature for ongoing support. In fact, cuts to next year's personnel will go ahead unless we all call legislators now.

A parent asked whether PPS will publish a timetable showing the changes to be undertaken at each school, so that parents can know what to expect and when. For example, the 2012 bond promised an elevator would be installed at their neighborhood school, and it still hasn't arrived. Voters want to see results. The parent recommends that the bond accountability committee communicate more with the community if PPS expects the public to support future bonds.

Mr. Brown answered that accessibility updates for each school under the 2012 bond haven't been released yet; details about what will be done where, and when, under the proposed bond, will be worked out after the bond passes.

Mr. Brown pointed out that, under the bonds, work has started first with high schools and will then move downward, so that the same kids don't have to go through multiple renovations over the years. \$10 million will be used to improve disability access. Fire safety equipment will be added. As PPS plans to renovate some buildings now and the rest in the future, it is not worth installing sprinklers now in yet-to-be renovated buildings. The near-term focus is on improving fire alarms because "fire alarms save lives; sprinklers save buildings."

Mr. Brown requested that ACCESS PTA vote to endorse the Measure.

On motion duly made and seconded, members voted in favor of endorsing Measure 26-193. There were no votes in opposition; there was one abstention.

Mr. Brown distributed yard signs & frames, flyers, and postcards. He invited PTA representatives to pose for a publicity photo holding banners and signs, and they did so. He encouraged us to have our kids fill out and mail the postcards to neighbors and friends.

In closing, Mr. Brown remarked that only 35% are expected to turn out to vote. At that level of turnout, the bond measure would need just 75,000 “YES” votes to pass. Mr. Brown encouraged all present to vote in favor, and expressed optimism that the measure will pass.

### **Treasurer’s Report** – Colin Cunningham

Treasurer Colin Cunningham reviewed a copy of the most recent report of PTA income and expenses. Teacher spending of the PTA funds allocated to them has picked up since last month. In aggregate, the PTA has paid out about 35% of the amount budgeted for this purpose. Jen and Catherine have spoken with each staff/faculty member individually and all have indicated they will spend their allocations by the end of the year.

Expenses relating to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip to Catalina are still being reconciled and paid. Since last spring, the PTA has been acting as a “bank” for this class/family (non-PTA) event. A parent asked: Did last year’s PTA lend, or donate, \$1,000 to this 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip? Some people present understood it to have been a grant, but most remembered it as a loan made for a required deposit. Attendees recalled that the PTA had been reluctant to set a precedent for making large contributions to future 8<sup>th</sup> grade trips. Jen suggested we confirm it was a loan by consulting minutes from previous meetings.

[Minutes of the May 11, 2016 General Membership Meeting: following discussion about the PTA’s support for the 2017 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip, a motion to pay for the \$1,500 deposit did not pass; a motion to loan \$1,500 for the deposit passed.]

This year’s 7<sup>th</sup> grade class has begun discussing plans for their trip next year. The PTA will discuss its possible role for next year’s trip in light of lessons learned from this year’s trip and recommends that parents of rising 8<sup>th</sup> graders speak to those who assisted this year.

\$325 raised through Box Tops for Education was originally allocated to another account has now been correctly credited to the Principal’s discretionary fund.

Money for purchasing a storage container for emergency supplies is still set aside for that purpose; the PTA is just waiting for approvals and PPS paperwork to be processed.

### **Budget “Surplus”** — Jennifer Ellis and Sally Maltman

Jen led a lengthy discussion about how to deal with any funds that remain in the PTA’s bank account at the end of this fiscal year. How much should the PTA keep in its “savings

account,” and for what purposes? The board’s Executive Committee has met to discuss these questions and is seeking input, and a vote, from the membership.

Sally estimated that, if income and expenses follow current projections, the PTA will have about \$20,000 left at the end of the current fiscal year, June 30, 2017. (She reminded attendees that about \$10,000 unspent “surplus” funds, available after the last fiscal year, were carried over to the current one.)

To start discussion, Jen presented a proposal. Assuming there are sufficient funds at the end of this fiscal year, the PTA would set aside

1. \$8,000 to \$10,000 for operating expenses, to have available at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year; and
2. \$10,000 as a future building fund.

The combined total would be up to \$20,000 and it would be a one-time set-aside. If there were more than \$25,000 left then the PTA could do extra projects.

Jen noted that uncertainty has persisted about where ACCESS will be located after next year. Will it remain at RCP, or move to Humboldt or some other location? PPS may make that decision during the upcoming year. In the meantime, \$10,000 could be reserved for making changes to a future building (and grounds), or for making improvements to RCP while ACCESS remains there. For example, a future building might need science lab improvements, and RCP might need an outdoor covered area (perhaps a temporary cover that could move with the school to a future location).

Jen asked those present to share what they thought about the PTA having a “savings” or “reserve” fund, and to consider whether its amount and purpose(s) should be set now or be left unspecified until later.

Several parents voiced support for retaining a cushion of savings. The points they expressed included the following:

--PTA membership income and donations don’t generally come in until October; it would be good for the PTA to be able to pay for expected (and any unanticipated) expenses over the summer and into October.

--We will want to fill the disaster-supply container once we get it.

--In whichever building ACCESS ends up (or stays), its teachers, staff, and students will want to make changes to it that PPS won’t pay for.

Voicing arguments in favor of keeping any savings fund more limited were Treasurer Colin Cunningham and Scholle McFarland. Colin suggested that a \$10,000 buffer (rather than \$20,000) would be sufficient and that members should vote now (rather than later) to designate general uses for which it is intended. Scholle emphasized that most of those who have paid in to the PTA (whether through membership fees, the GIVE campaign or otherwise) want their money to be spent and benefit the school while their kids are still here, rather than be saved up against some vague future need. She echoed others’ opinions that earmarking a portion for a building fund was “moving in the right direction,”

but that it would be important to decide how that building fund would be spent once ACCESS gets further guidance about its location.

Jen then presented a revised proposal for members to consider:

1. An operating fund “savings” baseline of \$7,000 to \$8,000 with
2. A building fund reserve of no more \$10,000.

Amounts would be put to membership vote each year.

Discussion then turned to how such an operating fund might best be used. Since the PTA can't pay for salaries, how can it best support its teachers and staff? Jen encouraged everyone to think creatively.

A parent recommended that these operating funds be used first to meet needs that already exist. For example, doesn't the school really need more Chrome Books? And doesn't Mr. Kreuz want more physical education materials? As long as the PTA has money available, shouldn't he be spared (what he sees as) the need to seek donations online through GoChoose (which he now does). Scholle confirmed that she has noticed a “sense of scarcity” among many of the staff -- they even hoard supplies.

Case in point: Scholle expressed her (and others') exasperation at a recent email sent out to everyone from the school secretary, which asked for donations of extra boxes of tissues. Ideally staff should know about and have ready access to supplies they need. This email illustrated the need for ACCESS to improve communication about what's available where, consolidate the purchasing and distribution of supplies, and to remind staff to ask the PTA to fund “stuff.” There is no reason why ACCESS teachers and staff should have to “nickel & dime” parents for such items – it taxes their time, money, and good will. Jen reported that, on behalf of the PTA, she had responded immediately to let the office know that the PTA would cover any tissue “shortage.”

A member proposed that the PTA use some reserve funds to pay for teacher and office supplies, which would be bought in bulk. For this to work, however, ACCESS would need to set aside space for a central, organized supply “closet.”

A parent recommended that a running list of needs be kept for day-to-day items, with someone from the PTA regularly engaging in conversations (not just email) with teachers or teacher teams, maintenance people, and other administrators and staff, to encourage them to think about and list what they need and want. In fact, Jen and Catherine Beckett started this process this spring when they met with members of the community to encourage them spend the funds the PTA has already allocated to them. It would be worthwhile for such meetings to continue.

A parent suggested that ACCESS apply for grants from Nike, Trail Blazers, and others for sports and recreation items the school can take with it to its new location (see also list of grants at <https://oregon.grantwatch.com/cat/34/sports-and-recreation-grants.html>). Gail reported that she has researched buying a temporary “tent,” of the type that could be used to create an outdoor sheltered space; but that option is pricey – up to \$100,000 – but

perhaps a smaller, wing-like tent could be anchored against an exterior wall, and Beverly Cleary School could also share in grant-seeking.

A member proposed that, if there are funds available after the end of this fiscal year, the PTA pay for bulk purchases of kids' school supplies, as well. The goal would be to reduce this expense (and time) burden on ACCESS families.

Kristi Byfield, wearing yet another volunteer hat as purchasing coordinator for next fall's student school supplies, provided an update. All teachers have submitted their supply lists and ACCESS has signed a contract to obtain individual boxes of supplies for students for 2017-18. It turns out that last year's supplier was adding a markup to fund its not-for-profit activities; this year Kristi researched additional companies who competed for the contract at a lower cost, and Staples won. Students will be able to place their orders online or on paper. Staples will also donate \$200 of supplies to the office.

A parent commented that middle school students often like to pick out their own supplies. A parent suggested that the PTA could choose to pay for (and even distribute) all lower school boxes, only.

Kristi confirmed that the PTA could choose to pay for some subset of the boxes, or for some subset of the supplies ordered from Staples. The contractor breaks down supply lists by items/prices and offers both brand name and generic options. The PTA could easily pick out a set of items, or boxes, for which it would pay. For future years, other bulk-buying schemes could be evaluated.

Kristi, wearing her ACCESS Foundation president's hat, pointed out that from a fundraising perspective it can be problematic when conflicting messages are being put out there from the Foundation and the PTA. Parents may hear that the Foundation is strapped for money to pay for FTEs (staff positions) but that, at the same time, the PTA has an unspent "surplus." How to reconcile these? Important to clarify the message to parents that donations to the Foundation go to teacher/staff salaries but those to the PTA do not, and that they can give to one or the other, rather than to both, if they have a limited amount to donate.

Can the PTA donate to ACCESS Foundation? The short answer is no: the two organizations are chartered to do two different things, the Foundation to pay for "staff" and the PTA to pay for "stuff." The longer answer is no: schools that participate in All Hands Raised (as ACCESS does) agree to keep their foundation funds and PTA funds completely separate.

The discussion concluded with the observation that members of the Foundation and the PTA need to continually remind parents what the Foundation does and what the PTA does, and which organization pays for what.

Finally, on motion duly made and seconded, the members voted to approve the following: At the end of the current fiscal year, \$8,000 shall be set aside as an operating fund reserve,

and \$10,000 shall be set aside as a building fund reserve, these amounts and designations to be reconsidered and voted upon each year.

Jen noted that issues relating to these set-asides could be discussed further at the next General Membership meeting.

**Nominating Committee** – Sue Fisher, Chair

In accordance with ACCESS PTA's Standing Rules, Sue presented the April 2017 report of the Nominating Committee (Sue Fisher, Deborah F, J Grab). The report consisted of a list of the following individuals the Committee has identified who are willing to serve as ACCESS PTA officers for the one-year term August 1, 2017 through July 31, 2018:

President : Jennifer Ellis (incumbent)  
Vice President: Catherine Beckett (incumbent)  
Treasurer; Sally Maltman  
Co-Secretary: Gil Neiger (incumbent)  
Co-Secretary: Lisa Karplus (incumbent)

This list, together with the names of any additional nominees, will be presented as a slate of candidates for election at the May 2017 General Membership Meeting. The PTA continues to look for someone willing to serve as a "President-in-Training" during the upcoming school year.

The Nominating Committee's report is appended to the Minutes of this meeting.

**Other topics**

**Box Tops for Education** -- Sue Fisher

Sue reminds us that each box top is worth 10 cents and the class-to-class competition to gather the most box tops is ongoing. Box tops revenues go to the Principal's discretionary fund.

**Laps for Life Swim-a-thon** – Catherine Beckett

6<sup>th</sup> grader Dylan Beckett led participants from ACCESS and other schools in a successful fundraising event April 23 for a local nonprofit organization dedicated to climate-change awareness and education. Favorable TV news coverage has led to additional donations.

**Auction** -- Kristi Byfield, Chair

Regarding ticket sales, "there are lots of procrastinators this year." A parent suggested bringing a container full of costume items that people can select and put on once they arrive. All are invited to attend, Saturday, April 29 starting at 6:00 p.m. to have fun and support all the ACCESS staff positions that PPS won't be paying for next year.

**Next General Membership Meeting:** May 23, 2017 at 7 p.m. at Rose City Park School.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.**

**Minutes compiled by** Lisa Karplus, Secretary



Access PTA meeting: 25 April 2017

Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is pleased to nominate the following PTA members as officers of the Access Academy PTA Board for the 2017/18 school year:

For the office of President: Jennifer Ellis  
For the office of Vice President: Catherine Beckett  
For the office of Co-Secretary: Lisa Karplus  
For the office of Co-Secretary: Gil Niger  
For the office of Treasurer: Sally Maltman



Sue Fisher, Chair

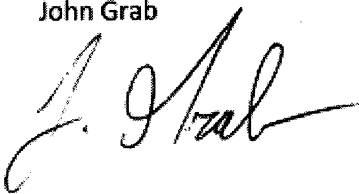
date 4/24/17



Deborah F.

4/25/17  
date

John Grab



date  
4/25/17