

PTA meeting 5/13/15

Call to order 7pm

Principal's update

We have a new 5th grade teacher named Bridget O'Hagen for next year. She has more than 25 years of teaching experience, with 10 years in international schools, and experience in gifted education. She is currently a TOSA but felt called to come back to classroom teaching.

Ms. Tini accepted a full-time position at Jackson MS, so she will not be back as librarian next year. Mr. Diltz will be the full-time Media Specialist next year (i.e. librarian), and Mr. Wood will hire a new 0.75 FTE technology teacher. Mr. Wood wants these two teachers to work closely together.

We still need to hire 2 new teachers: one for the middle grade math/language arts position and one for the 0.5 time music teacher. These will both be outside hires.

Admissions update: The committee met many times recently and made decisions about admissions, with letters going out to new students Friday 5/15. There are 101 applicants admitted, out of 270 applicants. Many more are free and reduced lunch eligible than before: 31% vs. 13% of the current students, and 22% are underrepresented students of color. 15% are twice-exceptional (SPED and TAG). Students come from 52 different schools.

The New Family Open House is on Wednesday 5/27, and we need more current families to volunteer to participate.

There will be two 4th grades and two 5th grades next year, instead of blended classrooms, and it is expected that students will loop with their teachers and stay with the same teacher for two years. Next year Mr. Wiesner and Ms. Egan will work together as a team and teach the two 4th grade classes, and Ms. Byrkit and Ms. O'Hagan will work as a team and teach the 5th grade classes. The following year the teachers will be teaching the opposite grades and the students will stay with the same teachers.

The students are done with the Smarter Balance testing, although results will not be back until the fall.

It was asked how current 5th graders will learn about what to expect in middle school, and Mr. Wood and Mr. Harkness will be going into the classrooms to talk to 5th graders about this the first week in June, with information will be sent home for families. 7th and 8th graders will likely be able to choose music as an elective, but we don't know yet if that will be available to 6th graders. All middle school students will likely have one class choice to make.

Upcoming activities this month:

May 15 Camp ATOM

May 26 Beatle Mania! Choir performance- lower grades- 6:30pm

May 27 New Families Open House, all grades, 6:30-8pm (volunteers still needed)

May 28- Renaissance Fair- presented by upper grades, all are invited

May 29 Last Middle School Dance 6:30 to 8:30pm, 5-8th graders

Financial Report- Abbie Rankin, Treasurer

Updates: The dine-out at Pizzicato earned \$481+, and Scrip profit is \$1,800.

Funding requests: Mr. Diltz requested 3 sets of the new OBOB books for next year, which would be \$1,580. A motion was made to fund this, and it was approved. There is also a list of technology requests, and Heather Kent and Mr. Wood are going to work on a more specific plan for this. It was pointed out that there are many educational grants available and that requests are more likely to be funded if there is PTA support and they are already partially funded, so this may be an option for the technology requests.

Budget planning for next year will occur over the summer, and requests from this year will be reviewed to see if the budget for next year should be adjusted. A draft budget will be available in September, with the plan to ratify the budget at the October meeting. It was suggested that speaker fees be added for next year (for authors and other speakers). Mr. Wood suggested that we might need a budget for music. Instruments should be available through the district, but we don't know how much they will cover other supplies (sheet music, etc.)

There needs to be a year-end budget audit, and Heather Kent asked for volunteers as it can't be done by board members who are signers on the account. David Fikstad volunteered, and they are looking for one additional volunteer.

Site Council- Kelly Cutler.

The site council is working on a vision statement revision, possibly including something about outreach to the community. Kristin Westfall, the Grant Vice Principal, came to their last meeting and they asked her about services and classes for ACCESS students. Parents noted that the original approval for ACCESS by the board was for a 1st through 12th grade program, and they asked for information about how students who graduated from ACCESS are faring in high school. The site council plans to do a survey to find out how ACCESS graduates are doing in high school. A parent asked if Grant HS had added back the advanced classes that they had cut, and we weren't sure how many if any have been added back. Mr. Wood noted that Mr. Harkness is working on having a fact sheet on each high school about how many advanced classes are offered, etc. The last site council this year is at the end of this month.

It was mentioned that TAGAC did already do an extensive survey of all TAG students in 2012 which yielded comments from over 1200 TAG students, and that the feedback on services to TAG students in PPS schools was overwhelmingly negative. The only school with a positive score was ACCESS. Cleveland had the most positive (least negative) score among the high schools. It was also noted that Madison is actually the high school with the greatest number of AP classes per capita, so which high school is best for TAG students is not immediately obvious.

David is going to meet with a PPS data analyst within the next year to do a 3 year look at how ACCESS students are doing in high school. His hope is for next year to have more information gathered about high school. He also notes that there may be a majority of new members on the school board after the upcoming election, and we don't yet know how that will affect gifted education in PPS.

Foundation Update- Val Aitchison. In a week or so the foundation will know how much money was raised at the auction. They will then do a supplemental fundraiser once they know the difference between what was raised and what we need to fund our goal programs. There will likely be an additional \$20,000 that we will need to raise. Kristi Byfield, auction chair, noted that the Foundation will need more volunteers for the auction next year, and that one specific need will be for one parent in each grade to organize the class art projects for the auction. She will chair the auction again, but would be glad to have a co-chair if anyone is interested in volunteering. The foundation will need a new treasurer for next year. This year 290 adults and 149 students attended the auction and last year there were 197 adults and 151 students. The amount of money raised, however, was close to the same. The class art projects raised less money this year than last, and they hope to strengthen that for next year. The foundation can do as many fundraisers as they want outside of the auction, and that largely depends on having volunteers who have the enthusiasm to organize this. It was noted that there may be new families who would be willing to become involved. Lydia Dennehy will be the PTA volunteer coordinator for next year and it was suggested that she ask for Foundation volunteers when she is recruiting PTA volunteers.

Old Business:

April minutes were approved.

There will be a volunteer recognition event this spring, and a couple of PTA members are working on this. This will likely occur during the all-school assembly the morning of June 8 from 8:40-9:40.

New Business:

Election of new PTA officers:

There was discussion about whether there should be a president-elect position, and whether or not the V.P. should be combined with a president-elect position, and this was not resolved. There were no new nominations and no volunteers for PTA office positions. A motion was made and approved to re-elect Heather Kent for president, Abbie Rankin for treasurer, and Louise McHarris for secretary.

There was also a discussion of having a Community Outreach Committee chair so that we can make an effort to do year-round outreach. Mr. Wood will be attending the PPS "Principal and Pastor Gathering" next week, which involves churches that are involved in the community. There are some PPS schools who partner with churches in their neighborhood who help in the school, which is only one model of community involvement.

Communications Committee meeting report: At their last meeting the committee addressed what our "elevator pitch" could be, and how we can succinctly describe ACCESS to people. Pamela Kislak was involved with a district workshop at Richmond about this, and they had participants answer 3 questions: 1) what do you value about your school, 2) what are misconceptions about your school, and 3) what are counter-stories about the misconceptions.

June 3rd there will be a Communications meeting and all are invited, to discuss our online information, a brochure, and other issues related to essentially marketing our school to the community. There are many different audiences we need to consider: classroom teachers, SPED teachers, counselors, principals, parents, middle school students, elementary school students, board members, etc. Over the summer the Communications Committee will work on this.

June 11th is the last day of school and Field Day. There has been discussion about an after-school potluck and student/family event on the 11th after school, which will likely occur immediately following school.

A parent asked about the early release on the day of the Rose Festival and if any classes are participating. The 3rd grade teachers are taking their students to participate, but all students are released at 11:20, so it is not officially a school event. Students from other grades who are interested in participating could ask the 3rd grade teachers if there is enough room for them to join in.

There will be no PTA meeting in June. Regular PTA meetings will resume in September.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.