

PTA

General Membership Meeting
May 17, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

PTA President Michael Kubler called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
Jen Holcomb, Secretary, was unable to attend. David Fikstad took the minutes.

Review of the Minutes

The minutes for April 19, 2012 were reviewed and approved for inclusion in the record.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The following items were discussed:

- Request for an audit committee. Two or more volunteers who are not signatories on the accounts are needed to audit the PTA records for the 2011-21012 fiscal year. Kristyne McCants volunteered and Alexis Kubler indicated that she may be able perform this task.
- School administration has requested \$198 for the Oaks Park field trip planned as part of 8th Grade promotion. The PTA has traditionally funded this activity, but there is no line item designated for this purpose. Jonathan suggested using funds from the Academic Activities budget, which currently has \$375 available. There was some discussion whether Academic Activities is appropriate, or whether a new line item specifically for this purpose.

Motion to use \$198 from the Academic Activities budget to fund the Oaks Park Field Trip; seconded and passed with all in favor, 1 abstention.

- Administration would like to spend the Analia and John Earhart Fund of Tides Foundation grant on the following:
10 iPads (\$379 each), a docking station, and a wireless access point
Total Cost \$5,500

The grant provides \$3,000, and the auction raffle earmarked for technology earned \$580, leaving \$2000 unfunded. Can the PTA provide \$2,000? The PTA Technology budget is spent for this year, and the PTA has approximately \$8,000 in reserve.

Question: Why 10 iPads, rather than the number for which funds are already available. Answer: The proposed items are bundled together by the supplier.

Question: Are the laptops in the cart currently being used? Several people responded to the affirmative based on student reports or experience volunteering or substituting in the classrooms.

Some possible advantages of iPads were mentioned, including reduced potential for distraction or what the students call "off-task" behavior, and the availability of many iPad specific educational applications.

It was suggested that remaining funds from the Intel volunteer matching contributions could be used for this purpose. These funds are earmarked for science generally and are administered by the school. It was suggested that computing equipment would fall under this category. Michael will pass this suggestion on to Principal Bagby.

It was also suggested that a targeted appeal for funding for this purpose would likely be successful.

Motion to fund any unmet expense for this purchase from reserve funds, tabling the discussion of a targeted fund-raising appeal until a later time; seconded and passed unanimously with 1 abstention.

The point that available funds from the Intel contributions will be investigated first as a possible source of funds prior to using PTA funds.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Principal Bagby was unable to attend, report was given by Michael Kubler.

- Principal Bagby and Sue Anne Higgins are in negotiations regarding increasing the number of students in Access in the next school year. A decision is likely very soon.
- Principal Bagby does not have any insider information to offer regarding the deal with Portland City government to fund \$10.7 million of the PPS budget shortfall. She is cautiously optimistic. If this agreement were to pass, it would restore funding for partial FTE's for Christopher Lamp and Tini Maier.

ELECTIONS

Elections were held for the following positions during the 2012-2013 academic year. All candidates ran without opposition and were elected unanimously.

President: Kristen Sheeran
Vice-President: Michael Kubler
Co-Treasurers: Jonathan Dubay and Luci Hise (continuing)
Co-Secretaries: Krystine McCants and David Fikstad

We'd like to especially thank our current secretary, Jen Holcomb, who has been doing a terrific job for three years and whose son is graduating from Access this year.

NEW BUSINESS

PTA Political Advocacy: Michael Kubler, who is spear-heading this effort, wondered if there would be interest in partnering with other schools to promote a mayoral debate with an education focus. Students could be involved in preparing questions. This would be a nice follow up the the Project Citizen work that has been going on in Ms. McBride's classes. There was interest in this idea and in promoting a debate for races that are more closely tied to school funding, such as school board. It was also suggested that a forum for the teacher's union would be instructive. Michael will continue to work with Ben Cannon and with State and Regional parents groups on this.

June PTA Meeting: Traditionally the May PTA meeting is the last one of the year. It was suggested that it may be useful to have an abbreviated meeting in June.

Welcome Event for New Parents: There was interest in holding a welcome event for new parents. It was suggested that it may be possible to have an informal meet-and-greet and McMinnimin's that could combine the functions of a June PTA meeting, a new-parent welcome, and a fund-raiser, perhaps for the technology purchase discussed above. Michael will investigate and set a date.

Summer Picnic: In previous years, there has been an all school picnic during the summer, which also serves as a welcome event for new families. Judy Berck volunteered to organize such an event. It was estimated that this would cost about \$100. Funding for this could come from the Social Activities budget. However, it would occur between the end of the fiscal year at the end of the June and the approval of a new budget in the fall.

Motion that line-item funds for the 2011-2012 budget continue to be available for their indicated purpose after the end of the fiscal year until such time as a new budget is approved for 2012-2013; seconded, and passed unanimously with 1 abstention.

Access T-shirts and Jackets: Gigi Cooper has been handling these, and requested feedback. There was enthusiastic support for them, with people feeling that they really help to create a sense of cohesiveness. It was suggested that the sales be as early in the year as possible to allow new families to buy them. The idea of a swap (for items that no-longer fit) was proposed as part of one of the upcoming PTA events.

Back-to-School Events Next Year: The following events have been scheduled by Principal Bagby:

Ice Cream Social 4:30-6:30 pm 9/4/2012

Back-to-School Night 6:00-8:00 pm 10/4/12

A great deal of dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the 4:30-6:30 time for the Ice Cream Social (and for all events scheduled so early in the day) due to the difficulty for working parents from all over the city to attend at this time. It was suggested that this issue had been raised with the administration in the past and that the time is inflexible due to constraints on teacher availability. Michael will pursue this, and will request that, at minimum, the administration schedule information briefing or other substantive activities for the later part of the scheduled time.

Fundraising Plans: The plan for fund-raising in the next school year were discussed. Issues raised included:

- General support for minimizing the number of fund-raising appeals during the year. It was suggested that fund-raising appeals are particularly demoralizing for those families who do not have adequate funds to respond.
- Support for the PTA's choice to provide discretionary funds which allow them to fund events like field trips without repeated requests to the families.
- A suggestion that the \$100 suggested contribution be broken down to explain that \$x will go to fund your child's classroom activities and \$y will fund... It was hypothesized that this may increase participation at the \$x contribution level, while hopefully not reducing participation at the \$100 level.
- A suggestion that requests for contributions at the start of the year explicitly include a pledge option for on-going payments or future payments.
- A suggestion to time fund-raising requests at the beginning of the year and near the tax deadline in the spring.
- A general dissatisfaction regarding a state and school funding system that necessitates extensive fund-raising by families with children in public education. It was noted that this creates an inequitable educational system, and that the 30% charge on funds raised by Foundations fails to adequately address this lack of equity.
- A suggestion to facilitate donations either through online transactions or by acquiring the equipment needed for credit or debit card processing. (It was noted that the capability for online donations already exists on the BigTent website.)

Announcements

- Bollywood Dance is coming up on May 25th. Because the Social Activities Chair foolishly scheduled this for Memorial Day weekend, the need for volunteers will be especially acute, so please volunteer if you can.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00