

ACCESS PTA

General Membership Meeting
August 16, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

Michael Kubler called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m. The meeting was held in Mr. Garcia's classroom.

INTRODUCITONS

- Introductions were made by all present at the meeting.
- Mrs. Montano (Access 7th/8th grade Language Arts/Social Studies teacher) and Erin Bagby (our new Access Principal) were present and introduced. Erin Bagby's email address is EBagby@PPS.net She encourages parents to contact her freely.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT RE: COUNSELOR

Due to budget cuts, the District has assigned a .3 FTE counselor to Access for the 2011–2022 school year. This equates to approximately 1 day a week. Erin is interested in discussing the possibility of using funds raised by the Access auction to increase the counselor position to .5 FTE. The counselor at Access last school year was a .5 position. However, rather than having set full days, she travelled in and out of the school throughout the day and throughout the week. This model was found to not be ideal.

The counselor's role is social/emotional guidance. Counselors can also help with scheduling, but mainly work with the social/emotional piece, the Peer Mediation Program, and inclusion issues.

Discussion of this issue included the following comments/questions from parents present at the meeting:

- Students need consistency and reliability with respect to a counselor. A .3 FTE position does not afford sufficient time to create this consistency and reliability.
- Q: In addition to the counselor, we share a psychologist and a speech therapist, what roles do they play?
A: Those services are only provided on a referral basis and are tied to an individual student and that student's needs. The Access counselor is an "on-call" position and works with all students.
- At Access, the counselor's background may be even more important than the time. A .3 counselor who is trained to deal with students on the spectrum, may be better than a .5 counselor who is not so trained.
- Erin has researched the issue and has found that Access cannot share a counselor with Sabin. However, there is a possibility of sharing a counselor from Skyline who does have training with students on the spectrum.
- There is a possibility of using funds for the counselor that would otherwise be used for the Peer Mediation Program and have the counselor be responsible for

the program. There is general agreement that with the Peer Mediation Program, a counselor would be instrumental in helping to run the program.

- There is general agreement that the Peer Mediation Program is useful both for the students who act as peer mediators as well as for the Access student body in general. However, the program needs to be overseen on a more active basis.
 - In the past, the counselor has devoted time to recess supervision. Sabin has won a grant for a structured recess program that will be in full swing this year. With the Access student population, unstructured recess time is sometimes more challenging. Perhaps we could use some funds for some type of structured recess time or use the counseling FTE time in this same manner. Another option would be to use parent volunteers who are trained for this model of program.
 - In the budget cuts from last year, a speech pathologist part time position was cut, an education assistant was cut, funding for Mr. Lamp (the art teacher) was reduced.
 - The counselor at Access last school year focused more on the elementary grades. There was a clear need for a counselor to work with the middle school students, there simply was not enough time.
 - Erin does not know the exact cost difference between a .3 and .5 FTE counselor position. However, she knows that there are Union issues in taking away a .5 FTE and then putting a .5 FTE back in the fall. Those Union issues will not arise with replacing the .5 FTE position that was taken away with a .2 FTE counselor and a separate .3 FTE counselor. So, the .2 counselor position will have to be a separate person from the .3 counselor currently assigned to Access.
 - Some parents see a concern with using two different counselors (a .3 and .2), as opposed to one .5. In fact, some think it would be a waste of money.
 - Perhaps the .2 FTE position could be responsible for leading the Peer Mediation Program?
- ❖ Erin would love parents to email her at EBagby@PPS.net with any comments or concerns regarding the counselor situation at Access.

PURCHASE OF QUICK BOOKS FOR TREASURER. Jonathan Dubay and Luci Hise are the joint treasurers for PTA this year. There is a request for the purchase of Quick Books to manage the books. Quick Books is \$180 on sale at Office Depot. Motion was made to approve the purchase of Quick Books. Seconded. Approved unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

School Clean Up Day (aka Community Care Day) is Saturday, August 27, 2011. Further details will be available on Big Tent. All are encouraged to come help us ready our school for the new school year! There will be a district wide appreciation festival at Wilson High School following, at 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Grants for Access: The Access PTA would like to have a real drive toward obtaining grant funds for Access. Our vice president, Kristen Sheeran, has a lot of experience with grant writing. She is interested in creating a grant writing committee and has offered to head the committee. Anyone interested in being a part of this committee (all skill sets welcome) please contact Kristen.

Ice Cream Social, Thursday, September 1 at 4:30–6:30 p.m.: This is an event held at the school before school starts. Access families come to the school for an ice cream social/open house. At this event, students are provided their school supplies purchased through Schoolhouse Supplies or through the alternative offered this year. The middle school students get their schedules. Last year, the ice cream social was held on the Wednesday before the first week of school. On behalf of the teachers, Mrs. Montano would like to see the ice cream social held on Thursday, September 1, rather than Wednesday. This will allow the teachers more time to ready their classrooms. The general consensus is that the event should accommodate the teachers foremost. Therefore, **the Ice Cream Social will be Thursday, September 1, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.** David Fikstad will be in charge of ice cream. Tom Beckett will help David.

PTA Meetings will be held on the **third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Sabin/Access library.**

FINAL COMMENTS:

There is a desire for Access to “give back” to other TAG students in the district as well as to form connections with the Sabin student body.

Michael Kubler would like the PTA to help bring in Access alumnae to come talk to Access students and share their stories of success.

Mrs. Montano, on behalf of all teachers, thanks all parents for the assistance and support throughout the school year.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.