

PTA

General Membership Meeting
September 12, 2012

CALL TO ORDER

PTA President Kristen Sheeran called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Kristen Sheeran introduced the PTA officers:

Kristen Sheeran, President
Michael Kubler, Vice-President
Jonathan Dubay, Co-Treasurer
Luci Hise, Co-Treasurer
Krystine McCants, Co-Secretary
David Fikstad, Co-Secretary

Kristen mentioned that despite PPS' struggles last year, it was a good year for Access. The student population has been allowed to grow and there is evidence to suggest that many within PPS are seeing ACCESS as an asset to the district.

Kristen would like a primary focus of the PTA this year to be strategic community partnerships that help to build on and increase this good will. (Another primary focus should be fund-raising—as always.)

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Principal Bagby would like to encourage parents to contact her in person, by phone, or by e-mail any time they have an issue they would like to discuss. She welcomes such communications. In particular, if any of the parents at the meeting tonight have something that was not discussed or would like to continue a discussion from the meeting, please feel free to contact her.

- Principal Bagby mentioned two new staff members
Heather Kelly, 8th Grade Language Arts and 6/7 Social Studies
Katrina Devore, Counselor 4 days/week
- Student population has increased to 219 this year and the new students have been welcomed warmly and seem to be fitting in well in their new school.
- ACCESS is scheduled to move to a new location in 2013. She believes that will still happen, indeed, must happen due to the growth at Sabin. She will keep the community informed whenever she receives information, and will particularly notify the community if situations arise that would benefit from parent involvement or advocacy.
- Sue Ann Higgins, former Director of Education Options, has now been promoted to Chief Academic Officer. She has been a strong and consistent advocate of ACCESS, so her promotion to a position of higher authority and responsibility is very good news. Her position as head of Ed Options has not yet been filled.
- Collaboration with other principals in the district has improved significantly. She has started to receive calls from other principals in the district recommending placement of students from their schools at ACCESS, something that has not happened in the past.
- Classes this year include a 1/2 blend, 2/3 blend, two 4/5 blends, and a partially blended 6th and 7th grade.

- New developments in middle-school curriculum include:
 - A parent volunteer will provide art two times per week.
 - The new counselor will teach a Wellness 2 class with a focus on game-playing. Many of the conflicts observed on the playground center around establishing and navigating rules for games, which is one area this class will seek to address.
 - Homeroom has been eliminated, so all periods will now be 1 hour long.
 - Spanish for 6th graders has been cut due to budget reductions. This time will now be used for a research class led by Christine Maier, which will also include curriculum from PSU, leadership, and art activities from Run for the Arts.
 - Principal Bagby is interested in offering both Chinese and Spanish as after-school classes. She has contacts and can facilitate setting up such a program.
 - Mr. Garcia is pioneering a science research class with the support of PPS office for curriculum development. This is a collaborative effort with PSU, and includes use of some high-powered microscopes donated from PSU for part of the year. Other schools in the district, such as Grant High School, are very interested in observing and learning from this program.
- Elementary school students will continue to have the same enhancements as last year, including art with Christopher Lamp, library with Tini Maier, and wellness with Mr. Holm.
- The collaboration with Portland State University is strengthening each year, including placement of 4-5 student teachers in classrooms for all or part of the year. (ACCESS also helped to facilitate placement of a PSU student teacher at Sabin.)
- The iPad's purchased last year with the TIDES Foundation grant and PTA funds have been a great success, both with the students and with the instructors. She plans to use principal's discretionary funds this year to purchase more for the instructors. She would very much like to see the PTA assist in providing additional technology funds this year for purchase of more.

Questions:

- A concern was raised regarding the loss of 6th grade Spanish, the scheduling of a study hall, and the decision to use an online course for pre-calculus.
 - Principal Bagby regrets the loss of Spanish due to budget constraints. This will be partly offset by the increased instructional time from 1 hour periods in the 7th and 8th grade. She is also interested in offering additional language classes as an after-school program.
 - She strongly stated that the research class replacing Spanish time will not be a passive study hall, but will include instruction on research as well as leadership and art enrichments.
 - She would prefer to have the funds to hire a part-time math teacher for pre-calculus. The online course is taught by a human instructor and the school will work closely with the office of online options to try to ensure that the students utilizing the online course are receiving the support they need.
- Have there been any space-utilization impacts resulting from the increased population at Sabin and ACCESS?

- Several of the counselors and para-educators have been impacted, but no classrooms have been impacted.
- Is there a short-list of possible locations for ACCESS?
 - PPS probably has a short list of possible locations, but they have not shared that with Principal Bagby.

POLITICAL ADVOCACY REPORT—MICHAEL KUBLER

- Activity has mainly focused on the capital bond proposed for the November election. Michael, who is involved with public safety in his working life, is particularly concerned about the poor earthquake safety of existing PPS buildings. Jonathan mentioned that there is a video posted on the PPS website on this topic:
 - <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/buildings-and-learning/7111.htm>
- The bond also includes some rebuilding to improve the functionality and address some of the disparity between the facilities in Portland and those in the suburban districts and other districts throughout the country.
- Grant, which all ACCESS students may opt to attend regardless of their home district, is planned for earthquake retrofitting in the first round.
- Michael plans to arrange for lawn signs to support the bond campaign for possible distribution after school and will certainly have them available at the next PTA meeting. He will also be walking door-to-door with a group on Saturday, Sept. 15, from 10 AM to 1 PM.
- Should the bond pass, it is expected that there will be further opportunities for citizen involvement in the administration of the bond funds and in the next steps.
- Are there opportunities for the PTA to become involved as a group?
 - Michael expects better opportunities for combining with other regional PTA's to advocate for educational reforms after the election.
- How does the amount of the bond compare to that in the previous election?
 - The yearly amount is somewhat lower due to a longer term on the bond.
- A concern was raised with the lack of advanced courses available at Grant, and it was suggested that this would be a good opportunity for PTA political advocacy on a local level. In particular, the ACCESS PTA may want to support an on-going campaign to develop an International Baccalaureate program at Grant, similar to that existing at Lincoln.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- The audit report for 2011-2012 fiscal year was presented and the complete report is available at
 - http://www.bigtent.com/usr/files/72077926_2_00_ACCESS_PTA_Financial_Review_2011-12.pdf
- The only significant deviation observed was a delay in reconciliation of some of the summer bank statements during periods when the office (and mailbox) were inaccessible.
- The current balance sheet was presented and is available on BigTent at
 - http://www.bigtent.com/usr/files/72077883_2_00_ACCESS_Academy_PTA_-_Balance_Sheet_Standard_Report_September_2012.pdf

- The draft budget for 2012-2013, as well as the budget for 2011-2012 and actuals for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 can be found at

http://www.bigtent.com/usr/files/72077948_2_00_2012-13_budget_draft.xls

Significant changes recommended from the previous year include:

- Line items for Book Fair Proceeds and Lego Robotics are zeroed because these funds no longer pass through the PTA bank account.
- Expected income from matching funds is significantly reduced because Intel matching funds ear-marked for Lego Robotics will no longer pass through the PTA.
- Classroom expenses is increased to \$8,400 due to a increased staff FTE's.
- Expected income from the Give! Campaign is increased due to increased student population.
- Line items for PTA Clothing Closet and PTA Financial Aid have been added. Last year it was suggested that parents would likely support these programs independently, however that was not found to be the case.
- A new fund-raiser for Textbooks has been added, to be led by Jonathan Dubay. This will support purchase of hand-writing textbooks in classes beyond the Halliburton 2/3 blend.
- A recommendation was made to increase the expense limits for the Chinook book and logo shirt fund-raisers so that a PTA membership decision will not be needed if these are unusually successful (requiring more book or shirt purchases).

Increased expenses for these will be more than offset by the increase in revenue.

Motion to modify the Chinook and logo shirt fundraiser expenses was made, seconded, and passed without opposition.

Motion to pass the proposed budget as amended was made, seconded, and passed without opposition.

- Kristen reminded everyone that the technology budget is lower than the previous year because the PTA had voted to dip into reserves to support the iPad purchases last year. In order to respond to Principal Bagby's appeal for additional iPad purchases, we really need people to support raising these technology funds.

ACCESS FOUNDATION REPORT—PAMELA KISLAK

The ACCESS parent community also supports a foundation, which raises funds that can be used to fund additional teachers or staff support. The auction this year will be March 8, 2013. These events really help to bring together the whole community, including children who can attend a party held in parallel. Most of the food is prepared by members of the community as well. Please contact Pamela Kislak pkislak@gmail.com if you would like to help with the auction in any capacity.

NEW BUSINESS

Several areas that badly need support were identified:

Social Activity Committee: This includes dances, after-school activities like Science Night, and in-school activities Teacher Appreciation Lunches and Field Day. David is particularly interested in help restoring the Book Fair to its former glory (before he took over) and also in getting new and exciting ideas for all activities. Please contact david.fikstad@gmail.com if you can help.

Fund-raising chair or co-chairs. There are many ways to earn money for school programs that could be exploited if we had people to champion them. Please contact ksheeran@ecotrust.org if you can help in any capacity. (For example, we currently have no one to manage the Chinook book fundraiser.)

Bus Routes: PPS contracts with a private company for bussing. Principal Bagby has observed that no one has looked at optimizing the bus routes based on the student population distribution for many years, and has wondered if members of the parent community would be interested in examining the routes to identify improvements.

Equity and Diversity: ACCESS population demographics do not reflect the demographics of PPS as a whole. There is interest in forming a committee to investigate ways to improve the identification and recruitment of students who would benefit from an ACCESS education from within under-represented groups, schools, or neighborhoods. Please contact ksheeran@ecotrust.org if you are interested.

Soap-Box Racing: A member would like to gauge the level of interest in participating in a soap-box race, either on our very steep neighboring streets or by participating in the annual event at Mt. Tabor. Information on this can be found at

<http://www.gravityracingchallenge.org/>

<http://westernreservepublicmedia.org/gravity/gravity.pdf>

Please contact anna.kullgren@gmail.com if you are interested or would like more information.

Increased PTA Involvement: There is interest in discussing ways to increase parental participation in PTA meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00