ACCESS PTA meeting 10/15/09

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm by Kim Grimme.

Principal's Report: Mark Sandilands
- Had principal's coffee last Thursday, notes were taken and posted on BigTent.
- Clarification from that meeting: Smith school in SW is not an option at this time and he has no idea where we are going.
- Information about math curriculum: Scheduling someone from the district to come and talk about the curriculum, hopefully by next principals coffee in December and possibly at the next PTA meeting.
- Artist in residence Sarah Ferguson has been in school working on clay projects, will be back in a few weeks to help with glazing. If you want to help, contact your homeroom teacher for grades 1-4, or Mr. Holm 5-8.
- Larry Adrian coming to work on a mural, which "will be portable" (can be mounted but then moved.)
- State testing: Online testing this year, will start in a couple weeks for grades 3-8. Specifics: Math & reading (hopefully done by Thanksgiving); science, only for grades 5-8 (farther out); no online social science testing; writing testing is in Jan/Feb (this year some schools are piloting 7th grade online instead of handwritten)
- Question raised regarding testing: will you gather any quantitative information to be gleaned from the testing beyond simply meeting the standards? A: No.
- Mobile laptop cart just arrived; soon the 15 laptops will be set up. The laptops will not only be used for testing but also for classroom use.
- Phones: being installed where teachers can call out from the classroom instead of going to office or using personal phones. Teachers will have voicemail (where calls get routed during the day).

Report from Sabin Community Garden committee: Greg Gruszczynski, Isabel LaCourse, Kate Gigler, Jonathan Dubay
- Greg reported this is only the 2nd full year of the edible garden. There is a native garden as well. Focus goes on edible, but native needs help too. Invite all ACCESS parents/kids to get involved
- Work Parties: currently planned for January (seed planting) & February (more focus on native garden).
- Fundraising: Currently have $10 in garden committee funds, looking to do some fundraising (lemonade stands, fruit sales from local farmers).
- Committee work: meets every 4-5 weeks.
- Q: For the community service program at ACCESS students can't get credit for working for the community garden...unless they can donate the results/food to local places they then CAN get credit (meals on wheels, etc). Would this be possible? A: They are still working on what happens to the food and determining how it is all going to fit together. Mention was made of starting a "green team" to address the food growing and distribution issues, in which case it could be added to the community service job listings.

- Kate Gigler IRCO, explained how the garden team is structured: Sabin PTA has funded a garden coordinator, Isabel LaCourse, (who also teaches SUN classes funded thru SUN). Hours are 3hr/day for the school, the rest is for SUN.
- She helps teachers who bring Sabin kids into the garden as learning opportunities, works to develop curriculum for teachers to use in the garden, and coordinates work parties.
- Hopes for the future hopes: tool shed, seed starts (both as a fundraiser and a learning opportunities).
- Isabel LaCourse reported that they are working on how to share the space, to allow for proper allocation both for the SUN and Sabin teachers and students; has curriculum available to the teachers both at Sabin and ACCESS.
- ACCESS teachers can use the garden, Ms. Clarke has worked with them in the past, can coordinate times with Isabel.
- Jonathan Dubay reported that the teachers can access garden resources to combine with curriculum, and suggested that parent volunteers can work to coordinate with Isabel: make sure teachers they know she's there, help schedule times.
- Infrastructure needs besides the tool shed? Stewardship: get kids involved especially in the native garden, by learning where to walk, etc. "It's all about what is growth and how do we honor and respect that."
- Q: Has website been updated? A: Looking for volunteer help with the website, it was suggested a technology class could update the website.
- Q: Sabin is putting out money for things going on here, but maybe there is a need for an ACCESS liaison/coordinator that could then help with participation and fundraising. A: Current budget has about $250 in a line item for the garden, which can be used simply by submission of receipts, .can discuss adding to this amount in the future.
- Q: ACCESS may not be doing enough on our part, doing our fair share. Other ways we can help? A: writing a grant, which not only can raise money, but the time counts towards volunteer hours as "matching funds" (valued at $12.50/hr for some grants); also can procure "In-kind donations"; be the ACCESS garden committee liaison; manage the website.
- Q: Who do we contact to volunteer/work with classrooms? A: Isabel isabel@sabingardens.org; possibly work with the ACCESS volunteer coordinating committee
- Kate will post work party dates on BigTent
- Q: Why does work in the garden not count towards community service hours at ACCESS? A: Doesn't qualify under the program's current definition of community service: "Work for an organization that helps people in need."

Report of the Nominating committee: JaneAnne Peterson
- Report was read, full content posted on BigTent, content attached as Appendix A to the minutes.

Election of the Executive Board: Kim Grimme
- There were no nominations made from the floor. Brief information was given by the candidates:

- David Fikstad offered to take questions from the floor, re: experience, goals. Never been on any board, been an at home parent, involved with girl scouts, has three school-age kids (5th grader at ACCESS, 3rd grader at Sabin, 4 yr old in Sabin pre-k)
- Jenny Holcomb: 14 yrs of PTA experience, could not attend tonight due to other commitments
- Amaya Urzaa: worked as a banker, currently a business appraiser, parent of 5th grader at ACCESS
- Lise Brackbill: new member of the PTA, used to be a librarian. On the board of Mothers and more, active in the school, including room parent, organizing summer playdates, and coordinating Run for the Arts. Parent of an ACCESS 1st grader & 4th grader
- Q: Any ideas of what direction you'd like to see taken by the PTA? A: More interaction/cooperation/communication between Sabin and ACCESS, or wherever we end up.
- The request for additional nominations was again issued. It was announced that there was a quorum of 24 as of 7:20 pm, and that the membership is only voting for the executive board
- According to the bylaws, it is allowable to elect all nominees a slate since they're running unopposed.
- Motion: elect the slate as listed; seconded. Hand count vote: 20 in favor, none opposed, 4 not voting. Passed.
- Nominating committee was discharged.
- David led the meeting from this point forward.

Secretary's Report: David Fikstad
- Secretary report is on record and has been posted on BigTent. Two sets of minutes are to be entered into the record: Sept. general PTA meeting AND Executive Board/Committee chair meeting from Oct. 1.
- Q: do the minutes need to be approved by the people involved? A: Yes. A vote was called, and the minutes were approved and entered into the record.

Treasurer's report: Liz Adams
- A summary was given, the full report will be posted on BigTent, and will be added as an appendix to the minutes
- The Treasurer's report was entered into record.

Committee Reports:
- Judy Berck, Community Service: change drive was a success, thanks to the parents and community for donating
  - Every penny is going directly to buy food for the Clark center monthly meals (cost $200 per month).
  - Drive was within $100 so community service committee will donate in order to cover that final month's meal.
  - Mark was very supportive of this drive; the class competition was successful part of the event.

- Mention was made that the PTA should thank Mark each time when he leaves the meeting & for his reports to the PTA.
- Gail Shaloum, Volunteer committee: had a request to have a meeting of the class liaisons, will discuss what's been working and what could be even better.
  - Q: How well are the liaisons known by the other parents? A: could post a list of who they are.
  - If you've signed up to volunteer, you've probably been contacted. Don't really need more people in the classroom.
  - Q: Would the Volunteer committee be the ones to help coordinate the garden volunteers? A: First should contact Jonathan for the school-wide liaison position, and then have one per class, perhaps contacted by the class liaison.
- Kim reported that when you pass the background check, you receive a nametag, which is kept in a box in the office. When you arrive, find it and put it on, sign in.
- There was a request from Mark that all PTA members pass a background check since we are all technically school volunteers.
- Beccy Tyler, Fundraising: book sale went well
  - 2 weeks until we hear final results; lots of teachers' books were purchased.
  - 3 teachers came and performed, DVD available
  - Chinook books: still running, brought in about $300 (poss. Up to $400, can be sold until December).
  - Box tops: 220 so far, $22.20, money for nothing, cut it and bring it in.
  - GIVE! Campaign, Alison Abell: has raised over $3000, work on those $750 for full time teachers, a reminder is coming on BigTent.
- Q: Is the Paypal button working? A: Will figure out if the one click works.
- Q: Do you think that you'll get enough response just through email, or would mail be better even though the mail would be expensive? A: It is possible the envelopes from the beginning of the year have been lost by parents
- Q: Is escrip up and running? A: Looking for volunteers.
  - Need somebody to point people in the right direction and give reminder to sign up on escrip, code already exists.
  - Fundraising committee is responsible for escrip, but could work with communications to help publicize
  - BigTent has the functionality to access online vendors directly from BigTent (PTA would receive a cut), could look into registering the group in order to then just have click thru. Would want to make sure that there are no fees.
  - Q: Would it create a lot of advertising on the BigTent site?
  - Sacha will create a report on what is involved to set that up on the click thru on BigTent.
- Gail Jeidy, Social Committee:
  - First event is Tuesday, 10/20, swimming at Mt. Scott pool, change from the original location, 7- 8:30 open swim. (Reason for switch: Oaks park wanted a commitment 100 people)
  - 2 upcoming events in Nov.: game night (11/10) dance (11/13)

- o Looking for a volunteer to head up family science night in January, volunteers to chaperone the dance
- Kim Grimme, Teacher appreciation: next event is breakfast on 10/25, start setting up around 8:00, will have something on BigTent to RSVP what you're bringing.
  - o There is a bigger staff this year, so we do need food. Please get involved.
- Mona Vij, Communications:
  - o There is a great need to set up rules/policies/permissions re: BigTent, for membership and administrators.
  - o Liz will give training on how to use BigTent, not only for the new executive board, but also for interested parents in how to become a reporter.
  - o Also offered to provide training to teachers and the classroom liaisons.
  - o Active content providers make it go well, and keep it updated.
  - o All BigTent members should log into their profile to update, esp. grade updates.
  - o Q: Shouldn't deliberations and decisions regarding BigTent access and usage be public, since the PTA in general is open and transparent?
  - o A: Need to balance the need to maintain privacy and safety, while still giving complete information in the printed minutes.
    - ▪ A vote was taken previously by the Executive Committee; currently the moderation of BigTent falls under the auspices of the communications committee.
    - ▪ Prior accusation that the BigTent site was a "puppet site for the administration" has raised concerns.
  - o Q: Does the community want to be censored?
    - ▪ Deletion of posts for inflammatory content has been very rare.
    - ▪ Things need to be transparent, but also postings do need to be monitored, not the same thing as being censored.
    - ▪ Possible to have someone else monitor it?
    - ▪ Not only need to address the problems regarding policies (who can join, who can monitor), but also need make it clear that it is owned by PTA
  - o Q: Should BigTent be under the auspices of the PTA?
- Motion: table the discussion of the BigTent Rules/Policies/Permissions until the Nov. meeting. Seconded. Passed, none opposed.

Standing Rules: David Fikstad
- Motion: table the standing rules discussion until the next meeting. Seconded. Passed, none opposed.

T-shirts: Liz Adams
- Happening soon.

New Business
- Steven Alexander suggested further discussion holding up end of financial responsibility with regards to communal resources like the garden.

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- Concerns were raised regarding the history of the split and potential for residual bad feelings.
- The discussion regarding contributions to Sabin, specifically parity vs. equity, was tabled for next meeting.
- Interest in creating forums on BigTent to discuss these topics

David adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.