

## **ACCESS PTA**

General Membership Meeting

October 20, 2011

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Michael Kubler called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

- The PTA Standing Rules have been posted on Big Tent. The Standing Rules must be updated and filed with the State PTA by the end of November in order for us to be in good standing with the State and National PTA. The Standing Rules will be voted on during the November meeting.
- PTA Minutes are posted on Big Tent.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion to approve minutes from September 15, 2011 PTA General Membership Meeting. Seconded. Minutes from September 15, 2011 PTA General Membership Meeting approved unanimously.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Copy of the Profit & Loss v. Budget is presented. Balance sheet is presented.

We are currently in good standing with Oregon PTA and National PTA.

The Give campaign is at \$7,000 (70%). You can donate to Give online through PayPal.

The Oregon PTA website takes membership dues online with no penalty to the PTA.

This year, the budget committee made a decision to not contribute to nonprofit organizations as a group. There are currently two requests from nonprofits that individuals can contribute to: (1) Portland Clothing Council donation; (2) Student Aid Fund, e.g., to cover glasses or other student needs. Checks should be made directly to the non-profit organization.

Two requests for line items:

(1) Post approval for the native garden fundraiser that has occurred in Mrs. Clarke's class. Mrs. Clarke's class offered plants were for sale during Back to School Night. \$302 was raised to go towards class projects involving pollinators. We need to approve the checks made out to the PTA so that they can be used by Mrs. Clarke's class. Motion to approve request for funds. Seconded. Approved unanimously with no discussion. [Note on fundraising ideas: if a fundraising event is conducted on behalf of the PTA it needs to comply with certain rules and regulations imposed by the IRS. The general membership must vote on all fundraising projects to protect us from state and/or internal audits. If nonprofit status is lost, it is expensive to regain the status]

(2) Our librarian Ms. Tini (.5 FTE for Access) attended a conference regarding materials for gifted students (Bibliotherapy for Gifted Students). See September 15, 2011 minutes for further discussion. Request: (a) purchase a Lit Set that teachers can use for small group discussion; (b) purchase additional books for the library with stories including gifted students. This line item request is in addition to the \$500 library expense and the \$350 teacher grant Mrs. Tini has already received and used. She is asking

for \$620 that will go towards these two book purchases. These books will be applicable to all grade levels. Presumably the books will go with Access if Access is relocated. Per Ms. Tini, the Access staff is in favor of these proposals.

- Q. Can we see the book title list?  
A. Ms. Tini may have that information?

- Q. Will the teachers actually use these books in small group discussions?  
A. Per David Fikstad, Ms. Tini reported that the teachers are very enthusiastic about the proposal.

The funds will come out of PTA reserves of \$8,599. Motion to approve the \$620 expense. Seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ❖ **Social Committee: Volunteers are needed for The Vampire Ball** (dance for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades), held on Friday, October 28, 2011. The Social Committee could also use **volunteers to help with activities on the day of Halloween**. There will be a Halloween party from 2:00 to 3:00. Donations of candy, treats, liquids would be wonderful. There will be a singing concert in the cafeteria during the 2:30 to 3:00 p.m. portion of the party in the cafeteria.
- ❖ **Grant Committee:** The first grant request went out this week for science lab funding in Mr. Garcia's class. The Grant Committee is creating a spreadsheet of all grant opportunities and including grant proposals that have been made in the past. The Grant Committee has also reached out to the Access teachers to identify classroom/teacher needs.
- ❖ **Membership Committee:** There are currently 66 PTA members.

## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Eryn Bagby would like to recognize the following:

- (1) "How Green Is Our Grass Committee" led and staffed by Jonathan Dubay organized the planting of the new grass on the field, and who then watered, and tended the new grass on the field;
- (2) "Getting Our Children to Sing Committee" led and staffed by Jane Ann Peterson. Jane has been working very hard with all grades to provide the singing concert at the Halloween party.
- (3) Thank you to all who provided food for the staff.

**Volunteer Request:** Eryn would love **additional parents on Recess Duty**. It is always nice to have extra bodies during recess. Soccer balls are still a large item of dispute, so **donated soccer balls** would be wonderful.

Conferences will be Thanksgiving Week. Middle School will be on rotation in the auditorium. All other grades will be on an appointment basis.

Eryn recently used Foundation funds to hire two “teachers in training” from the Portland Teachers Training Program to work in all classrooms across all grade levels.

Eryn loves our children. They are a delight to work with every day.

### **SPECIAL GUEST SUE ANN HIGGINS**

A special presentation by Sue Ann Higgins and Judy Brennan from the PPS District office on the state-of-the-school had how to maximize the effectiveness of parental advocacy.

Per Michael Kuebler: Early in the year 2011, Sue Ann Higgins attended a PTA meeting to report on where the Access Program stands from a PPS District point of view. Since that meeting, Michael Kuebler, Sacha Gilbert, and Sue Ann Higgins have continued to meet to discuss the future of Access – how it can/should grow, where it can/should grow. This is a really productive partnership and we want to focus on the future.

From Sue Ann Higgins, Executive Director of Education Options (Judy Brennan from Enrollment and Transfer Office was also present): Eryn Bagby has huge passion for the Access Program. The Foundation and Auction has really paid off in terms of additional resources for Access. Those resources are incredibly important.

It has been ten years since the original proposal for Access went to the PPS Board. Sue Ann has been reviewing the proposal as well as additional correspondence between the board and Access over the past 10 years. The history of Access is a sensitive one and Sue Ann takes the history seriously and carries it with her. s

As we all know, the spring bond measure failed (by just over 600 votes). This changes a couple variables in terms of where students are located and in what properties in the district. These variables include: (1) a re-initiation of the Grant Feeder School Boundary discussion, (2) Access’s role in that discussion, and (3) will Access move, and if so, when? And where?

There is not a lot of new information on these issues. Last Spring, Sue Ann reported that the Access program issues were being separated from boundary discussions. This remains true. Access is not a “neighborhood school.” (Forrest Park is the largest feeder to Access, followed by the Sabin community.) Access, as an alternative school, is a “program by application.” Legally in Oregon to include certain students and exclude others, the program must have “an alternative education” status. That said, it would be naïve to ignore the fact that Access is impacted by the boundary discussions.

If Sabin does not grow and Access does not grow, the two schools “sit alongside each other quite comfortably.” However, these two “ifs” are unlikely. The community, the PPS District, and Eryn Bagby would like to see Access grow. To grow a more robust program, Access needs to grow students and staff. The building is currently at capacity so both programs are being constrained. Sabin, as neighborhood school, trumps in terms of space.

Sue Ann Higgins has met with Michael (as PTA President), and Pamela Kislak (Access Foundation President), and Eryn Bagby to start formatting a parent survey to provide data to assist the district with information to help in evaluating potential sites. Another important issue: The Access program's socio-economic profile does not mirror that of the district. We want to let parents of students who would be well served to come to Access know about the program. We really want Access to be equally available to everyone.

Part of Sue Ann's job is to support the sustainability of Access. There have been a few recent success stories on this front. For example, one of the community conundrums last year was around the loss of 1<sup>st</sup> grade at Access. There was a collaboration of support last year, and 1<sup>st</sup> grade was added back this year. Another sustainability piece is the size. For example, PPS will no longer support any program smaller than 250. Therefore, Access needs to grow. Co-location brings additional resources and allows a program to split overhead (e.g., custodial support, library, etc.).

Q. Do you know how many TAG students from across the district are from low-income families? If the district is not making this identification, we can't begin to reach these families.

A. Yes, we do know that across economic spectrums there are students who are not in Access who qualify to attend Access. Sue Ann does not know the exact number, but can probably get it for us.

There are currently 28 students on the waiting list for Access this school year. These are students who qualified, could not get in due to space, and asked to be on the waiting list (but there could be more that did not ask to be on the waiting list).

There is no question that the Access Program will continue. The only issue is "what adds roots to the program?" Should we be trying to develop a lab school? What other options should we be looking at? There are lots of advocates and real investment at the District level for Access. There is a real continuity of commitment for Access.

Q. What is the timeline of the Grant feeder school discussion?

A. Per Judy Brennan, community meetings are being scheduled for all the affected schools. The Sabin meeting is next Thursday (the 27<sup>th</sup>). Judy urges parents to go to the "enrollment balancing" section of the PPS website for more information. Judy acknowledges that the proposals are likely to look similar to last year's proposals. She is hoping for a Board Vote in January. If that vote puts Sabin on a path to grow more than it is growing right now (Sabin has a very robust elementary program this year with more than 70 kids in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade), that will start the time clock ticking for where Access will go.

Q. When we talk about growing Access, is there a proposal to change the admittance requirements (for example, to lower the Access requirements from 99% to 97%)?

A. No, that is not on the table. Although, Sue Ann gets a lot of email regarding this issue.

The Access parent community wants to work together to really think of out of the box ideas. We are willing to come together and brainstorm, to work, to creatively step into the future. For example, one idea is to build a "container school" using a plot of land from PPS and 40' shipping containers. See Big Tent thread "innovative ideas related to buildings" for further information. It costs the district more than \$300,000 to commission a classroom modular (includes permitting, slab, etc.). A container is approximately \$1,500.

Q. Have any specific facilities been evaluated for Access?

A. Yes, there are a number of vacant facilities in the district. But, is a vacant facility what we are after? Maybe co-location is really the best option.

Q. Is next year an option for relocation? Isn't it already rather late?

A. Next year is an option, and it is late already. We will know by February whether we are looking to move for next year or whether other boundaries issues, relocation issues will make it more beneficial to pause. Even if there is a pause, the work won't stop at that point.

Judy Brennan has had the privilege of attending a number of PTA meetings of K-8 schools. She has never been to a PTA meeting with this broad of a grade range in attendance - where there are so many parents from the middle school grades.

Next PTA meeting 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 17 in the Sabin/Access library (bottom floor Sabin building).

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.