

ACCESS Academy PTA

Minutes of General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 18, 2017, at 7 p.m. in the library, Rose City Park School, 2334 NE 57th Avenue, Portland, Oregon

Attendance: 11 people signed the attendance list, of whom 8 (including the President) were members for 2017–18. 6 voting members constitute a quorum for a General Membership Meeting.

Meeting called to order by President Jennifer Ellis at 7:02 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

- The minutes of the General Membership Meeting of 23 May 2017 were reviewed and were approved with an addendum (see below).
 - The draft minutes reported that the District had been paying for grades 1–3 to use “Wordly Wise” to support language arts. Principal Anh Nguyen-Johnson said that she believes that the District never paid for “Wordly Wise” but that, instead, the school secretary’s notes show the funding came from the school’s consolidated budget. (The discussion in May focused on the fact that the PTA had **not** been paying for “Wordly Wise” and did not distinguish carefully the actual source of funds.) It was agreed to add an addendum to the minutes to clarify this point.
 - The Principal reported that it is hard to sustain the cost of “Wordly Wise.” She is being careful about spending this year because the school’s consolidated budget is a little lower due to overspending last year. Nevertheless, she agreed to continue funding “Wordly Wise” this year as a transition year. (It was later stated that Karl Logan — Senior Director of the Grant and Jefferson Clusters — is sharing the cost, paying \$10 per book.)
 - In the future, the Principal will look at what resources the District is providing and whether TAG Department can evaluate the materials and confirm that it has sufficient rigor. President Jennifer Ellis said that it may be worth discussing the issue with that PTA before any decision is made.
 - A parent asked for clarification of the difference between paying for resources from the school’s consolidated budget versus the District. The Principal explained that references to “the District” here mean that the funding source is the PPS TAG Department or Karl Logan’s office, while the consolidated school budget refers to the funds allocated to the Principal (based on enrollment) to operate the school. The Principal said that, if the District agrees that materials provided lack sufficient rigor, it is perhaps the District’s responsibility to fund any supplements that are needed. Another parent identified Ana Simantel as a Portland Public Schools teacher who could help assess these materials.
- The minutes of the General Membership Meeting of 27 September 2017 were reviewed and were approved without objection.

Standing Rules

Secretary Gil Neiger explained a proposed change to the Standing Rules.

In the current standing rules (approved at the General Membership Meeting of 27 September 2017), the section entitled "Budget Change Authority" consists of the following sentence: "For any budget item, the Executive Committee is authorized to spend a limited amount in excess of budget. The excess may be up to 10% of the budgeted amount or \$100, whichever is more."

It was proposed to add to this section another paragraph reading as follows: "In addition, the Executive Committee is authorized to reallocate funds within the budget by up to \$200 per fiscal year without a vote from the General Membership."

Because notice of this change had not been given at a previous meeting or in the call to this meeting, it could be approved only by a two-thirds vote.

A motion to make this change was made and seconded. It was then approved without objection.

Treasurer's Report (1 July to 17 October 2017)

Treasurer Sally Maltman distributed spreadsheets documenting financial activity since the beginning of the fiscal year (1 July 2017).

She reported that the PTA's Give! Campaign has already raised more than \$6,800.

She said that teachers are starting to spend the funds allocated to them by the PTA.

Vice President Catherine Beckett asked about the apples and pears fundraiser. Sally said that she did not yet have specific information regarding funds raised. Catherine was wondering because it seemed that only one family from outside ACCESS bought fruit this year (rather than the usual 8–9). President Jennifer Ellis said that sale organizer Seana Lane thought that things were doing well, especially given all the other events going on. The Principal also said that sales were a little bit less than usual, but that they were not a concern.

Year-End Financial Report and Audit (Fiscal Year 2016–17)

Treasurer Sally Maltman distributed and reviewed the annual financial report for the 2016–17 fiscal year. The following paragraphs are highlights of the discussion.

Section B (Fundraisers / Other Income) reports that almost \$22,000 was raised (as compared to the budgeted amount of \$19,000). The biggest fundraisers were the Give! Campaign, employer matching contributions, the dine outs, and apple sales.

Section D (Expenses) reports total expenses of about \$8,700 (as compared to the budgeted amount of \$12,350, reflecting underspending). The main savings came from spending on OBOB (Oregon Battle of the Books), lack of any spending on science lab needs, and social activities (the middle-school dances tend to earn more than they spend).

Section E (Teacher Classroom Expenses) shows spending of about \$8,000 (as compared to the budgeted amount of about \$10,000). This was a better (faster) spending rate than in past years. Ms. Sun (the Mandarin teacher) did not spend her allocation because she receives sufficient external funding; next year's budget will account for this fact. It was not clear why Mr. Johnson did not spend. The Principal said that she is telling teachers to spend the funds that they receive from the PTA before spending from the school's consolidated budget.

Section F (Earmarks) reflects the fact that last year's 8th-grade trip raised about \$2,000 for this year's trip. It reports additional spending of \$2,200 on last year's trip to Catalina; this is due to a carryover from a previous year that was not documented.

There is a need to spend more of the Helping Hands funds.

The PTA checking account had a balance of about \$26,000 on 1 July 2016; a year later, it was \$32,200.

Overall, about half of the budgeted funds raised goes to classroom expenses (Section E); this funding gives teachers autonomy for many different things. The funds supported many good things that benefited the teachers, the school, and the students.

Secretary Lisa Karplus suggested that the report be approved with the addition of a footnote to indicate that net actual for the Catalina trip (relative to the PTA budget) was \$0 due to the funds raised in a prior year (see above).

Lisa made a motion to approve the annual report for fiscal year 2016 dated 10/17/2017 annotated to indicate that net actual for Catalina trip was \$0 due to funds carried over from a previous year that were not reflected in the budget. Tanya Schaefer seconded the motion. The motion was approved without objection.

Sally then distributed and reviewed the Budget Audit dated September 18, 2017, submitted by auditors Diane Avenoso and Lisa Bugbee. The following paragraphs are highlights of the discussion.

Tanya observed that it seems that there were more issues identified than in previous years. She asked whether Sally feels that she has the resources and procedures to avoid these issues in the future. Sally said that she did a lot of this work to prepare for this audit. She pointed out that the issues raised by the audit were not major holes in the budget but rather a number of minor irregularities (e.g., a check signed by only one person; a missing invoice; etc.). A parent asked about the report of missing checks. Sally clarified that the report came from checks not being recorded in their proper order.

Sally will lead a discussion of how the PTA is handling its money and the opportunities to improve in the future. Lisa clarified that some of these changes will have other benefits (e.g., to avoid a burden on parent volunteers in cases of things like school dances).

Sally brought up a point that she had discussed with the auditors that does not appear in the report. There was a discrepancy of \$319 related to scrip for which there was no accounting. She and the scrip coordinator worked hard to identify the source of the discrepancy, but they were not able to do so. Sally consulted with the Oregon PTA Treasurer, who provided guidance for such situations: (1) try to identify the source of the discrepancy (this was done); (2) document the issue in the audit (this was not done); and (3) write off the discrepancy and move forward.

After this discrepancy was identified, changes were made to the scrip program for this year — in particular, to stop using the scrip provider whose practices challenged the PTA's accounting procedures. The PTA has also introduced new practices to provide better support for the scrip coordinator.

A parent asked whether the PTA was still investigating any of the issues flagged in the audit. Sally said that the issues were all closed. The remaining documented issues are things that may not have been done properly but cannot be fixed at this point.

Lisa made a motion to approve the Budget Audit 2016-17 dated 9/18/2017 with added commentary made by Sally that a discrepancy relative to scrip be documented in these minutes. Kristi Byfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved without objection.

Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2017–18

Treasurer Sally Maltman distributed and reviewed the proposed budget for the 2017–18 fiscal year. This budget is a minor revision of a draft that was previewed in May 2017. The following paragraphs are highlights of the discussion.

In Section A (Membership), a new line item is added, "PTA Membership Scholarships," an expense of \$95. This would cover, for up to 10 people, the \$9.50 that the PTA must forward to the Oregon PTA for each member.

In Section B (Fundraisers / Other Income), the amount budgeted from the Give! Campaign has been raised. The \$50 expense on that line is for PayPal fees.

Also in Section B, Great Lakes Scrip is being eliminated. The budget item remains to account for activity over the summer. There is no Chinook-Book volunteer this year; Chinook Books are being provided through the Scrip program this year.

This year, the yearbook is being classified as a fundraiser because it has been earning money. (President Jennifer Ellis indicated that, in the past, the yearbook has made money in part because people need to be charged before the actual cost is known.) Sally clarified that families without means can get yearbooks without having to pay, and the PTA gives copies of the yearbook to the school library, to all teachers, and to the 8th-grade students.

Brian Conley, the parent who coordinates production of the yearbook, says that the printer (Postal Annex) has been very helpful in discounting and that yearbook costs might be higher in the future. It would be good if we could let Postal Annex how many copies we will want sooner than in the past. (A parent suggested that the Atomic Flyer identify and thank vendors who have been helping the school with things — such as these yearbook printing discounts.)

The Principal asked whether there is always a parent who coordinates the yearbook. The answer was yes, and that Dr. Garcia has helped in the past; Ms. Kelly may provide support this year. The Principal asked whether we used a template from Postal Annex. Brian said no. He suggested that the production efforts will start sooner this year.

Section D (Expenses) includes a \$700 line item for 8th-grade end-of-year events. This includes bracelets for a trip to Oaks Park. There were some questions about transportation for that trip. The Principal will look into that. The PTA budget assumes that the PTA will not have to pay for that transportation.

There is a new \$500 line item in Section D for advocacy. These funds were moved from building needs, which were reduced from \$1,000 to \$500. (It is expected that \$150 from the building-needs line item will go to piano tuning.) Many working on the ACCESS Campaign were spending money out of pocket, and the new line item would give away to provide some reimbursements. President Jennifer Ellis clarified that \$500 would not suffice to cover what is being spent — but that some people are getting in-kind tax receipts rather than reimbursements.

Also new in Section D will be a “Miscellaneous” line item at \$0. This will make it easier for the Executive Committee to account for unanticipated spending and, along with the new budget-change authority, will allow the PTA to be more nimble.

Sally clarified that the PTA Student Aid Equity Fund is an ACCESS fund for our own students; it does not go outside ACCESS.

In Section E (Teacher Classroom Expenses), funds for the Mandarin teacher were removed (she gets extensive external funding).

Section F (Earmarks and One-Time Expenses) includes a \$3,500 line item for grants. The item for 8th-grade trip (for which the PTA serves as a bank), the budgeted expense is offset by a carryover from last year. (There are plans to donate \$100 to the 8th-grade trip to thank the students for the childcare they provided at recent meetings.)

Secretary Lisa Karplus made a motion to approve the budget for the 2017 Financial Year. Kristi Byfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved without objection.

Principal’s Announcements and Updates

The Principal reported that she learned of the District’s plan to dissolve ACCESS only a short time before it was announced on Tuesday, 10 October. She said that there were no

“drop-in visits” to the school by PPS administrators on the 18th and that things were calmer for the teachers and students.

Deborah asked whether the school was planning to participate in the “Great Shakeout” at 10:19am on Thursday, 19 October. The Principal explained that the event conflicts with a meeting of District leadership; she and many secretaries will not be in schools at that time. PPS participation has been rescheduled for the following week (e.g., 10:24am on Tuesday, 24 October). Deborah will be able to confirm the date later on.

Vice President Catherine Beckett reported that parents of some middle-school students are concerned that those students do not receive enough benefit from funds raised by Run for the Arts (RFTA). The Principal said that she needs to follow up and help educate staff about these funds; she’s been somewhat delayed by all the current events. She has encouraged teachers to focus on visual arts as well as performing arts; teachers feel that that has been done. Teachers need to balance their efforts here with all the other things that they need to be doing. Catherine said that Mr. Harkness is investigating the possibility of getting in improvisational performer for the middle school, but he is not certain how to get RFTA funding for that. The Principal said that she has talked with him and told him to proceed with plans and identify likely cost and other details (e.g., dates, times, how many students will be served) and then plan for the event to cost an additional 10% of the performer is not from the Young Audiences network. Catherine will follow up with Mr. Harkness to get him those details.

New Special Committee: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The PTA has formed a new special committee on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Members wishing to participate should contact President Jennifer Ellis.

Review and Approval of Grant Requests

Treasure Sally Maltman distributed and reviewed a Summary of Grant Proposals Received by the PTA in October 2017. She noted that \$3,500 is being made available for grants and that the proposals submitted came to \$3,494.30.

There was a request for \$700 to purchase a camera for use in producing the yearbook. President Jennifer Ellis clarified that the camera may cost somewhat less and that the camera would remain property of PTA. Brian Conley, the parent who coordinates production of the yearbook, said that he has talked with Ms. Kelly about teaching a photography class. He wondered whether money from Run for the Arts (RFTA) could be used to purchase camera equipment. He was not sure whether this would be an acceptable use for RFTA money, and he wondered whether the PTA should spend money for camera equipment.

Brian invited input from middle-school parents with recommendations of cameras appropriate for use by middle-school students. Jennifer recommended looking for a package with a camera bag, service plans, a tripod, etc.

There was a request for \$122 to purchase amateur radios and walkie-talkies. These would also remain property of the PTA.

A parent noted that the 3rd grade is the only grade for which there were no grant requests.

Sally wondered what would be done if a recipient of a grant found that costs were higher than expected and that additional funds were required.

Secretary Lisa Karplus made a motion to approve payments for grant proposals that were submitted to ACCESS PTA: eleven (11) grants described in the list that was distributed, where tangible items will be labeled as "Property of ACCESS PTA." Catherine Beckett seconded the motion. The motion was approved without objection.

Announcements

Run for the Arts (RFTA). David reported that, due to weather, RFTA has been rescheduled to Wednesday, 25 October. There have not been enough volunteers. Vice President Catherine Beckett asked whether the rescheduling will also postpone the deadline to pledge. David said that it will not, but that one can contribute funds after that deadline. David said that some people have asked why, given all the other events occurring this fall, the event was not postponed until the spring. Foundation President Kristi Byfield explained that a spring date would be challenging due to other events scheduled around that time (e.g., the Foundation Auction). As an aside, Catherine pointed out that some of the prizes promised to participants last year (e.g., tickets to Portland Center Stage) had already expired when they were awarded. David agreed to work to prevent recurrence of such problems.

Middle-school dance. David reminded the community that the dance is scheduled for Friday, 27 October. Ten parent chaperones are needed for each shift. These are in addition to other parent volunteers with duties fixed to specific locations (e.g., ticket takers, providers of childcare). To ensure that the dance can occur as scheduled, chaperones must volunteer by Monday, 23 October.

Emergency preparedness. Deborah thanked those parents who helped refill the orange emergency buckets with emergency materials provided by the District. They filled buckets for the Beverly Cleary School with District materials as well as filling buckets for ACCESS with District materials and other materials that ACCESS obtains. Deborah reported that the location for our container was pulled due to concerns about how the gate to the schoolyard opens; but the gate does open in both directions. The Principal asked whether the container will be retained when the school moves. Deborah said yes. The Principal asked whether the orange buckets should be stored in the container. Deborah said no; the material in the buckets should be kept in the school so that they are available in event of a lockdown. The Principal said that teachers have reported the buckets are very heavy and difficult to carry to the container during drills. Deborah said that teachers should not be carrying the buckets during drills; rather, they should be carried by students.

Harvest Festival. President Jennifer Ellis reported that the Harvest Festival has been postponed to Sunday, 29 October.

Apples and pears fundraiser. Jennifer reported that the fruit have arrived.

Halloween Haunted House. Jennifer reported that this year's "haunted house" would be in the auditorium on Tuesday, 31 October and that Sara requests that contributions of material be made by Monday, 23 October.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Minutes compiled by Gil Neiger, Secretary



APPROVED
11/15/2017.