



Robyn Faraone <rfaraone@pps.net>

Public Comment for PPS Parent Advisory Committee: Distribution of Donations for Staffing

1 message

Beth Cavanaugh

Wed, Mar 19, 2025 at 3:51 PM

To: Robyn Faraone <rfaraone@pps.net>

Hi,

I wanted to submit my comments in advance of tonight's PAC meeting, thank you.

Public Comment:

I want to express thanks to the volunteers and PPS staff who have been coming together to help build an equitable fundraising model to support additional FTE within Portland Public Schools. I have been so impressed with the thoughtful proposals, robust conversation and curiosity about potential outcomes that serve our communities best.

As I watch these meetings, I see the desire to make an informed decision that does the most possible good AND sets the Champions PPS Schools fund up for success in the future. Both of these desires seem to be in conflict with the intensely short timeline to make decisions.

I understand the compressed timeline as the board considers budget decisions for next year, and that there may be no way around making a recommendation on how to spend the existing \$1 million within the proposed tight timeline. However, I wonder if there is an opportunity for the committee to continue meeting through the spring to address longer term decisions about future distribution and goals for fundraising in the 25/26 school year. It feels really important to build in time so that there is clear messaging, goals, and opportunities to get involved that are widely communicated to build trust and excitement about the new model by the time school starts next fall.

Communication and shared understanding are so important. I heard a member share that her principal brought up an expectation of FTE being distributed from this committee. I wonder whether that principal has explained where this FTE would come from--parent donations. If principals don't understand the district-wide model so that they can encourage their communities to contribute and PTAs to support the Champions of PPS Schools fund, then there won't be any dollars to distribute once this \$1 mil remainder from the previous system is gone.

But because there was no information to share within school communities this year, it is no surprise that there has not been an influx of donations to the new fund yet. Unless the plan is to divide funds up between PPS schools to provide discretionary grants to principals, it feels very difficult to determine a model, or even priorities, about how future funds might be spent. The committee might make a very different decision on how to distribute \$1 million as compared to \$4 million. I would like to hear how the committee will be supported to make fundraising goals and distribution recommendations in these early transition days while we have very limited knowledge of what kind of financial support there will be down the road.

I know that the committee is currently deciding how to spend the existing \$1 million for the 25/26 school year, but I have some remaining questions about the timing and process for next steps:

- What happens to any additional money that is raised this year (during the 24/25 school year)? Is that added to the amount distributed in 25/26?
- Are there plans to hold district-wide fundraising events before the end of this school year?
- When will a decision be made about the next fundraising goal, once the committee decides how to distribute the existing \$1 million? For example, we're going to raise money for high impact tutors, or for a .5 EA in every elementary school, or set up options for donors to support the goal they care about most, or whatever it turns out to be?
 - Can this happen prior to the fall of 25/26 so that it can be communicated to school communities and we can work on fundraising towards this goal throughout the 25/26 school year?
 - Will those funds (raised in 25/26) then be applied to the stated goal in the 26/27 school year?
- What happens if the funds raised don't match the goals set (maybe it's less than expected, maybe it's more!) How does the committee re-evaluate distribution based on actual dollars when it's different than the plan they laid out the previous fall?
 - This applies when the goals are tied to a specific action, like providing EAs for all schools. If you don't raise enough, who gets them and who doesn't? If you raise more than enough, what do you do with the leftover? It's a less relevant question if the money is just distributed to every school using a formula.
- How and when will school PTAs, parent organizations, and volunteers be mobilized? We need collaborative sessions that pull school PTAs and other parent organizations together to discuss how they can work together to increase the pot of funds available for FTE and clarify what parent fundraising can and cannot do within the Champions for PPS Schools fund. Is this the role of the upcoming fundraising/advocacy committee?

This committee is doing important work that I have spent a long time thinking about, and I am excited to see the steps you are taking to ask challenging questions and move it in the right direction. I hope that it is possible to take the time you need to really lay a strong foundation.

Sincerely,
Beth Cavanaugh
Cleveland parent