

ACCESS Academy PTA

Minutes of General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 7 p.m. in the library, Rose City Park School, 2334 NE 57th Avenue, Portland, Oregon

Attendance: 12 people signed the attendance list, of whom 10 (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. Attendees gave self-introductions through 7:13 pm.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the General Membership Meeting of 15 November 2017 were reviewed and approved.

Membership for 2017–18

Secretary Lisa Karplus reported that membership records are now up to date; there are currently 105 members. (Two parents at the meeting subsequently renewed their membership.)

President Jennifer Ellis reminded the attendees that only PTA members can be voting members of committees, such as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Scholarships are available for those who want to join but cannot pay dues.

Financial Matters

Treasurer Sally Maltman presented her “Treasurer’s Report, 07/01/2017 – 12/12/2017.”

The following are highlights that were discussed:

- Section B — Fundraisers
 - The net fundraising amount shown for Dine Out is \$200, but two more checks are coming, one for \$900 and another for \$400. The net income will be \$1,500 once these arrive.
 - The current income shown for the Give! Campaign is about \$7,600 compared to an expected amount of almost \$9,500.
 - President Jennifer Ellis said that she would make a Facebook post, reminding people of the year-end opportunity to donate.
 - In response to a parent’s question, Sally explained that the Give! Campaign was designed to give parents a single way to contribute and spare the community the need to support multiple labor-intensive fundraising campaigns.
 - Brian Conley and Sally will see whether one can set up a button on a webpage for monthly donations via PayPal.
 - The current net income shown for scrip is about \$1,200 compared to a budgeted amount of \$2,000. This is going well.

- Net income from T-shirts sales is over \$700 greater than the expected amount of \$400.
- Section D — Expenses
 - Nothing has been spent yet of the \$1,000 budgeted for field trips.
 - Sally recently sent a communication to the staff to remind them of the funds.
 - Two teachers have responded: Miss Kelly for a trip to take 8th graders to the Oregon Food Bank; and 5th graders are going to the Portland Art Museum for the Laika exhibit, related to artists in residence.
 - Ms. Lang, the librarian, expects to organize a trip related to the Oregon Reader's Choice Awards (ORCA).
 - The PTA expects to support all of these.
 - Ms. Lang has been spending funds for the library.
 - Mr. Kreuzz has spent some funds for playground equipment.
 - There has been some spending on social and community events (middle-school dance; harvest festival; ice-cream social).
- Section E — Teacher Classroom Expenses
About \$2,400 has been spent of about \$9,700 budgeted.
- Section F — Earmarks and One-Time Expenses
The spending for PTA grants is moving forward. Some of the items with larger costs (e.g., camera, microscope) have not yet been purchased.

Jen gave an update on distribution of Helping Hands funds. She reminded families that, last year, there were donations and a matching grant that brought in about \$3,000 to support families in need. About \$2,000 remains available.

The Principal recently sent out a reminder, and school counselor Devin Harkness has identified about five families who have requested assistance over the winter break. The PTA is considering providing assistance of \$50 per family plus \$50 per child (i.e., a minimum of \$100 total per family).

Vice President Catherine Beckett clarified that the PTA wants to use the Helping Hands funds for families but wants to retain some to provide assistance over the break next summer.

In response to a question from a parent, Jen said that the PTA expects to provide assistance in the form of Fred Meyer gift cards and would no longer be making deliveries of food.

Principal's Announcements and Updates

The District Superintendent has announced plans to relocate ACCESS Academy to the Holladay site (current location of the Pioneer Special School Program) at 2600 SE 71st Avenue.

The Principal had no more specific news on relocation. (A community meeting for the Pioneer program is scheduled for tonight.) The District has been working on a plan for the

transition, and the Principal will share details when they become available. The District has asked the Principal to assemble a “core team” to coordinate the transition.

In response to parent concerns that the District’s past plans have been fluid, the Principal reiterated that she has been told that ACCESS Academy will be moved to the Holladay site and the grades K–5 of Pioneer will go to Applegate. (It had been thought that Pioneer high-school students would go to Marshall, but that is no longer clear.) There is no indication of any change to this plan; the Principal will share any news if she learns otherwise.

Vice President Catherine Beckett said that she had read that the Superintendent had a site in mind that could include the Pioneer middle-school and high-school students, if it is determined that the school needs to stay together. President Jennifer Ellis said that the Superintendent may make an announcement to that effect at the Pioneer community meeting tonight (so that that community is the first to learn of it). A PPS Board meeting scheduled for next Tuesday will likely ratify the changes for ACCESS and Pioneer.

A parent asked whether the Principal and staff were taking normal steps to implement the move. The Principal responded that there are steps that the District must take before any work can be done at the school. Nevertheless, some teachers are starting to “purge” because they have substantial curricular material in their classrooms. In general, more work is required by elementary teachers to “take down” a classroom and then set it up in a new building or room. The Principal expects that a lot of time this spring will be spent on packing, etc. She thinks that things will start moving very fast after winter break.

Catherine suggested that teachers will likely need the most help in the few days in the spring immediately after kids are gone for the year. The Principal observed that grading and report cards have to be done at that time also.

In response to a question about the library, the Principal explained that all the books (except perhaps about 20 OBOB books) belong to ACCESS (and not to Beverly Cleary). These books will go with the school; moving them will require a lot of work.

A parent wondered whether the uncertainty about the school’s relocation has caused additional stress to the students and whether the School Climate Specialist were able to address that stress. (Rebecca Budner, a teacher on special assignment — TOSA — is the Specialist.) The Principal clarified that the Specialist is 0.5 FTE and is at the school all day on Thursdays and in the afternoon on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays.

The Principal is working with the Specialist on school climate. Operation at the school has changed somewhat from last year, including new rules at middle-school dances and at recess (to promote student safety). These changes have been challenging for some students, and some have objected to the changes. The Climate Specialist is listening to the students and helping them to understand why the changes were made.

On her days at the school, the Specialist does “cafeteria duty.” The Principal has cafeteria duty and covers recess once a week. The Specialist did professional development with the

school staff. There is a working school climate plan that includes expectations on classrooms and behavior, etc. The Specialist is also working on issues of discipline and justice and on restorative practices. She is scheduled to come to the Principal's Coffee in February.

The parent expressed concerns that students are having a hard time with the transition. The difficulties are not necessarily with the safety-related rules changes but instead involve interpersonal interactions. The Principal did not think that ACCESS was experiencing issues not being seen at other schools.

The Principal acknowledged that some parents have been experiencing anxiety related to the school's relocation and that some of this is being transmitted to the students. She and the staff are looking at implementing some socio-emotional curriculum, because what Mr. Harkness can do in one lesson per week is not enough. They are looking at a Second Steps curriculum.

Secretary Lisa Karplus reported that, on the parents' Facebook page, some parents have reported their children feeling isolated at lunch time; she wondered what steps parents can take. An 8th grader at the meeting suggested ideas of things to bring people together at lunch time. (Some 8th graders may simply be reluctant to socialize.) The student said that the "Beyond Differences" group has organized a "know your classmates / mix it up" lunch. She acknowledged that its initial implementation might have been better. Lisa reflected that some children appreciate having a quiet space to socialize and that the lunchroom can be quite loud.

The Principal reported working with a student who wanted to start a new "Young Marxists" club. She reviewed the process (administrative directive) with him, telling him that he needed a supervised room, teacher support, etc. He took all this very seriously and then followed through on the organization himself. Another student wanted to organize a Vegan Club (despite not being a vegan himself). The Principal was not aware of any progress on that club after her initial meeting with the student, but she supports students being active in club activities

Special Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

Committee chair Lina Reiss was not present and had asked President Jennifer Ellis to deliver a report on the DEI Committee's second meeting, which took place last week.

The Committee considered the idea of visiting PTA meetings at other schools to provide outreach for ACCESS. This may be a way to work around District limitations on "recruiting." One possibility could be to send an ACCESS representative to existing events at other schools. A parent who is an attorney has agreed to study the issue and get back to the Committee to the specific legal limitations on outreach.

With regard to more inclusive events, dine-out coordinator Heidi Owen is looking at possibilities that could be more inclusive. Papa Murphy's does fundraisers and accepts Oregon Trail cards for payment. This would allow everyone to participate. While a specific

date has not yet been chosen, the schedule of other dine-outs has been rearranged so that March is available for Papa Murphy's. (This is because Papa Murphy's requires schools to advertise (???) outside the stores, and it will be too cold in January and February.) In particular, a dine-out planned for Salvador Molly's has been moved from March to January. In response to a question from a parent, Heidi confirmed that Papa Murphy's is "take and bake" and would not provide a venue to socialize. She observed, however, that the Pizzicato on Fremont Street (the location of previous dine-outs) also had no place to eat. She pointed out that parents can take pizzas to a common place to bake and have a community event.

Heidi talked also about a possible community event at Grand Central Bowl with a donation to be suggested. The school would be able to use the bowling lanes without charge and get free shoe rental. She is looking for a Saturday morning in February (specific times to be determined) and is also looking at options for food, which is quite expensive at Grand Central.

The DEI Committee will probably meet again in January, and it can refine plans for a community event. Heidi reflected that her previous school held an event at Grand Central and that it was popular, even though the school had many families with low socioeconomic status.

Brian Conley wondered about recent discussions of fundraisers — some in the community object to having them at all. He believed that the real problem is that the system requires parents to fundraise for public schools. He wondered whether the DEI Committee has looked at that. Heidi proposed things to add to the mix of dine-outs that could be more community-friendly and more accessible, but the Committee hasn't gone further than that. Heidi's own take is that dine-outs aren't social events but fundraisers — but that a bowling party would be a social event.

Jen reflected that PTA's Executive Committee and the ACCESS Foundation are looking at the larger issue of supporting community events (e.g., PTA support for the spring skate party). Heidi recalled that, at her previous school, the PTA produced an informational flyer explaining how PTA funds were spent. Brian wondered whether the PTA should make a statement about why it does fundraising.

Another parent suggested that an informational flyer could explain how funds raised by the PTA are used at ACCESS. The flyer could make clear that funds are used for real school needs and not just "some parent's pet project." The Foundation could make a similar effort.

There was some discussion about which of the following is the most concerning problem: (1) getting people to donate; (2) having social events that are fundraisers (and for pay); or (3) that ACCESS is doing fundraising at all. Brian observed that some education might help for people most concerned about #3.

Treasurer Sally Maltman suggested that the fact that the PTA has had surpluses in recent years undercuts the perceived legitimacy of fundraising efforts.

Announcements

Vice President Catherine Beckett said that lost-and-found items would be bagged up on Friday, December 15 around 10am. Items with names will go to the school office, and the rest will go to the PPS/PTA Portland Council Clothing Center (the "clothes closet"), located at Marshall High School. President Jennifer Ellis will post this information to the school's Facebook page. Parents who will be at the school on Friday at 10am are invited to help out.

Yearbook coordinator Brian Conley reported that things are much farther along this year, as efforts began 4 weeks before the end of the semester (rather than 6 weeks before the end of the school year, as last year). Because many decisions about the yearbook are made by the 8th-grade leadership class, those 8th graders who take that class in the second half of the year might not have the opportunity to contribute as much to the yearbook's overall direction as they had last year. Brian is trying to get this term's 8th-grade leadership class to leave some of the meaningful work for those taking the class next term. There may be a school-wide contest for cover design. He will try to prepare an announcement for end of semester and for early in January. Jen pointed out that the last Atomic Flyer for December has already gone to press so any such announcement will have to wait till next year.

In response to a parent's question, the Principal said that not all 8th graders will have an opportunity to take the leadership class, but all 8th graders (not only those in the leadership classes) will have opportunities to give feedback on and participate in the yearbook. Brian is encouraging students who want to participate to connect with him. The Principal said that Miss Kelly is supporting that as well. Brian said that he may try to ensure that all 8th graders can vote on the yearbook cover.

The meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Minutes compiled by Gil Neiger, Secretary

