

ACCESS Academy PTA

Minutes of General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, March 21, 2018, at 7 p.m. in the Library, Rose City Park School, 2334 NE 57th Avenue, Portland, Oregon

Attendance: 9 people signed the attendance list, all of whom 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 17 January 2018 were reviewed and approved without change.

Financial Matters

Treasurer Sally Maltman reviewed a financial report with updates through 3/21/2018. The following highlights were discussed:

- **Fundraising.** The PTA has raised about \$17,000 compared to budgeted expectation of \$20,000. Most fundraising is complete. Funds are still expected from a few dine-outs, scrip orders, and the yearbook. Fundraising will likely be on target; it may be a little short, but not by enough to be a concern.
- **Teacher Classroom Expenses.** Heading into last few months of the school year, the teachers are a little behind in their spending. The PTA needs to be active in encouraging teachers to spend their funds. A parent suggested that teachers could consider OMSI's "School of Rocks" traveling program.
- **Helping Hands.** Four or five families have responded to an offer of assistance for over spring break. More families may still respond. School counselor Devin Harkness has reached out to families who might need support to attend the auction and skate party; at least one family responded.
- **Building Needs.** This budget line has \$500, which has not been spent. Some of these funds are typically used for tuning the school's piano, but that has not been done this year. There have been no other requests for funds, presumably because the school will be leaving the building after this year. Sally reported that President Jennifer Ellis felt that the PTA could use these monies to move PTA materials to the new building (e.g., to pay for the purchase of moving boxes) and wondered if the membership felt that this would be a good use of funds. There was some discussion and general agreement. No vote was taken.
- **Library funds.** The librarian has not spent most of the funds allocated by the PTA (\$200 of \$1,000 allocated for the library). It may make sense to postpone purchases of new books until after the move to a new building. The meeting discussed the question of whether to roll over to next year's budget any unspent funds allocated for the library. All agreed that this made sense.

Principal's Announcements and Updates

The Principal was present. She had sent a request for topics for the next "principal's coffee," scheduled for April 6.

There was some discussion of the implementation of reading for grades 1-5 and in particular a plan called "Equity Based Balanced Literacy" (a reading curriculum with history, social issues, etc.). Some parents want to find out whether the plan has been approved at district level. The Principal was going to see whether ACCESS could go ahead prior to district approval.

Some parents said that they would be interesting in hearing whether the Principal plans to announce teacher assignments for 2018-19 before end of this school year. Ideally, parents would want to know by last "principal's coffee" on June 8.

Special Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

The following topics related to the committee were discussed:

Courageous Conversation Program

The Courageous Conversation program was held in the first week of February. The program was well attended, especially on the first night.

Inclusive Events

The committee is investigating to see whether someone from PPS staff (on DEI) could organize a movie night.

The recent bowling event well. There were 80-100 people, and the bowling lanes were full. The event raised about \$400 after expenses. The event may be organized again next year in the fall with a costume theme. A parent wondered whether that might conflict with the Harvest Festival. President Jennifer Ellis suggested that the Harvest Festival could be in mid-November and the bowling event in mid-October. There was some discussion of how to schedule the bowling event so as not to conflict with other schools' events at the same venue. Heidi Owen, who organized the bowling event, agreed to look into it.

Visiting Other PTAs

The DEI committee has reached out to other Title I schools but has not yet heard back from any.

Guidelines for 8th-Grade Trips

Last year's 8th-grade trip was to Catalina, and this year's class initially planned to do the same thing. The DEI tried to set up guidelines for 8th-grade families to support equity and inclusion issues with 8th-grade trip. These guidelines have been approved by DEI committee but are awaiting review and approval by general membership. These guidelines could be discussed at the April general meeting of the PTA and perhaps voted on in May.

Trips such as the 8th-grade trip can be organized in one of two ways:

- As a travel-study program. School time cannot be used for organizing the trip, but students can put up posters about it in the school.
- As a field trip. School time can be used for organizing the trip. Faculty must participate and be compensated.

The DEI committee recommends that future trips be organized as official field trips, in part because the rules include accommodation guidelines for IEPs, etc. It would be necessary for students to raise additional funds to pay for faculty participation as well as for travel by parents who need to participate to support twice-exceptional students, etc.

President Jennifer Ellis agreed to work with the committee to clarify some ambiguous language around “field studies.”

ACCESS Location Update

The PPS Board met the previous day (March 20). There were updates on various aspects of schools that are moving. Andrew Johnson (Program Director, Talented and Gifted) gave an update and mentioned open houses for admissions.

A parent asked about the cost of Pioneer of moving to Applegate and Rice. No budget was shown at the meeting; a spreadsheet is being prepared, but it was not ready for presentation to Board. The next board meeting is April 10, the budget information might be ready then. Another parent said that a preliminary spreadsheet was in the minutes of December Board meeting that was held at Jefferson High School.

ACCESS Foundation and Auction

Foundation President Kristi Byfield reminded the members that the auction is in exactly one month (April 21). She encouraged people to buy their tickets, as the Foundation needs to provide estimates by March 23. The theme is “enchanted forest.” The T-shirt design will be made public soon. Those buying tickets can sponsor teachers to attend the dinner or students to attend the skate party. The auction (and, especially, coverage for the skate party) could still use volunteers from other schools. (It’s possible to swap volunteering with other schools informally.)

Summer Events

The PTA would like to get some summer events organized before the end of the school year. President Jennifer Ellis and Treasurer Sally Maltman are working with the Principal to organize the traditional all-quadrants picnic at Normandale Park shortly before school starts. Phoebe Shen has offered to organize a meet-up in the SE quadrant. Anyone who could host a meet-up in other quadrant is encouraged to identify a park, a date, and a time and to contact Jen.

New Business

Kristi Byfield is still working on a plan for school supplies for next year. The preference remains for an approach in which the school buys in bulk and parents contribute supporting funds. The Principal is investigating this possibility.

Announcements

None

Repairing and Building Community

There was informal discussion of restoring the school social community after all the events of this year. Many parents had been especially affected by the caustic nature of some interactions on social media and wondered about tools and guidelines for how to communicate online without as much risk of hard feelings. Ideas that were discussed included the following: an official PTA website; a blog to which a few people could post; an official PTA webpage on Facebook (allowing no comments).

One parent talked about trying to organize face-to-face events by way of Facebook but lamented that no one else seems to try. The PTA could fund social events, but there would need to be volunteers organize them. Various parents talked about experiences that they had had with creating informal gatherings of parents and families (some at other schools).

One parent suggest that we could use “party boards” at the auction to organize social events. Another parent said that the social-activities committee could be asked to brainstorm possible activities to promote community in the future.

Treasurer Sally Maltman said that the Executive Committee is currently on a draft budget for the next school year. She asked whether we should budget additional funds for social events. A parent suggested a “community building” budget line. There was discussion about a structure in which parents can develop plans for an event and then submitted a “grant application” to the PTA for funding.

A parent recalled that, at a different school, room parents were each given a budget of \$100 for events for that class. Another parent said that having formalized room parents at beginning of year would be great. President Jennifer Ellis observed that, unless someone else steps up, making this happen would add another task to the PTA leadership.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Minutes compiled by Gil Neiger, Secretary

