

# ACCESS Academy PTA

## Minutes of General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, January 24, 201~~6~~<sup>7</sup>, at 7 p.m. in the library, Rose City Park School,  
2334 NE 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Portland, Oregon

**Attendance:** 13 people signed the attendance list; of these, 11 were members for 2016–17. 6 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 11/15/16 General Membership Meeting, which were available for review, were accepted.

### Guest Presentation

At the beginning of the meeting (from 7:02pm to 7:38pm), there was a presentation regarding Grant High School by Carol Campbell, that school's principal. Notes on this presentation appear in an addendum.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Colin Cunningham reported that the PTA checking account ended 2016 with a balance of about \$38,000 (an increase from the previous month).

The PTA has disbursed about 15% of the funds allocated to individual teachers. To encourage teachers to use the PTA-allocated funds, Colin said that parents could suggest that teachers ask for the PTA funds when teachers "pass the hat" to get parents contributions for classroom-related expenditures.

One parent said that a teacher had asked her to complete a PTA reimbursement form on behalf of the teacher, but the parent wasn't sure how to do that. Jen said there is a PTA manila folder with "money forms" that teachers (or parents) can fill out. The teacher has also asked whether it were possible to submit an invoice and have the PTA write a check directly to a vendor. Colin said that this was possible, although Jen advised that there could be a 1–2 week turnaround to get reimbursed.

The current membership of ACCESS PTA is more the double that of last year. The PTA has raised about 90% of the \$9,000 goal of the annual GIVE Campaign. (Jen observed also that the Intel Foundation is doubly matching some contributions from parents who are Intel employees.)

Colin said that only half of the funds allocated from Chromebooks have been spent — he needs another invoice before he can produce a check for the other half. Principal David Wood said that he would ask Trish Hendry, the school's secretary, to send an invoice to Colin.

A parent commented that tuning of the school's piano will consume a significant portion of the funds budgeted for music. Jen said that there is already an invoice for that.

A parent asked whether there were still PTA funds for field trips. Colin said that the funds budgeted for field trips were mostly still available. Jen reminded parents that teachers need to contact the PTA before using field-trip money, as it the funding is to be shared across the school.

### **President's Report**

President Jennifer Ellis reported that the Executive Committee met over the previous weekend and had agreed to a few financial points.

With regard to the Helping Hands fund, the Executive Committee decided that Helping Hands donations will go into the PTA bank account (rather than being held by a PTA officer as cash) and will be disbursed from there as scrip.

Jen also reported that the Executive Committee voted to allocate funds from the staff-appreciation budget line to purchase gift cards to thank the custodians for the work that they did during the recent snow emergencies (e.g., clearing walks).

A parent suggested that parents could write thank-you notes to the custodians on colored file cards at a future Principal's Coffee.

Jen also reported that the custodians have said they could use new snow shovels. In addition, Trish indicated that a new icemaker is needed. The PTA will spend about \$200 for all these from the "building needs" budget line item.

### **Principal's Report**

#### **Staffing and Budget**

Principal David Wood began his report with an update on staffing.

First of all, there was a reminder that the daytime custodian had been injured in a fall back in the autumn. He is still out, and there is an ongoing OSHA investigation. That custodian has been back to visit but will not be able to return to work during this academic year. The evening custodian is not serving as an interim daytime custodian, and there is a new evening custodian named Ashraf.

There is a new cafeteria worker ("lunch lady") named Kim, formerly at Forest Park Elementary School. She is in the building every day from 8am to 2pm. She is getting to know the kids' names and may start asking people to get their lunch bills current.

The school's "classified staff" (all staff but faculty and custodians) includes para-educators, cafeteria workers, etc. Because their contracts provide coverage for only 5 missed days, they are all currently out 4 days' pay as a result of the 9 days of snow-

related closures. One day's earnings will be taken out of their pay for each of the next 4 months. The financial impact on some of their families may be significant.

PPS postponed the release of next year's budget from January 18 to February 1. Mr. Wood expects the school to be staffed for a full complement of 364 students (up from unlike this year's budget, which was for 353).

Considerable uncertainty remains among principals as to the realities of next year's budgets; there are lots of other pressures. Mr. Wood will be asking for input, but he is reluctant to ask for any suggestions of program changes suggestions before February 1. A survey will go out to parents on that date in the Atomic Flyer. There will be a Site Council meeting (not yet scheduled) to collect input for next year.

#### ACCESS Entry Process and TAG Services

Mr. Wood reported that a draft of a revised admissions policy is currently being evaluated by the superintendent.

Some guiding documents have been written for parents and teachers in neighborhood schools. These focus on identifying potential ACCESS students who may be seen as underachievers (for example) in their neighborhood school.

The admissions process will begin by identifying eligible students locally (within ACCESS), and the identified students will then go into a lottery. Mr. Wood will no longer have the discretion to identify which students come to ACCESS, as the proposal is for this to be determined instead by the lottery.

After students' eligibility is determined, Mr. Wood will determine the number of slots open per grade. These will be based on the following class sizes: 24 students in the combined 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade; in each of grades 3–8, there will be 26 students in each of 2 sections. (For the 2017–18 academic year, the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade sections will have 29 students each.)

After the number of slots is determined, eligible students will be assigned random per-class lottery numbers, weighted for gender, based on enrollment (currently 53% male / 47% female). Then, students getting free or reduced-cost lunch will be admitted (in lottery order) to fill up to 44% of each class. Next, qualified siblings of current students will be admitted; and then other applicants (based on other factors).

A parent asked whether this could result in more siblings being admitted than under the current process. Mr. Wood answered that that might be the case.

The above proposal is currently before the superintendent, who can choose to approve it without further input from the Board.

A parent asked whether the subject of neighborhood schools' individual TAG plans for other students (those not attending ACCESS) will be covered at a Board meeting

tomorrow. Mr. Wood explained that the superintendent has asked the Teaching & Learning Committee to make a proposal by 1 March for all TAG students — including ACCESS as well as students who are eligible but not admitted to ACCESS.

Mr. Wood and Andrew Johnson hope to have a plan in place by 1 March. While this plan will include waitlisted students, the scope of the plan (and the task to Messrs. Wood and Johnson) is larger. It is expected that the proposal will make visible and clear that ACCESS is a program of TAG, providing a service for TAG students.

PPS has admitted to not complying state requirements for supporting TAG students. A parent reported that, in response, PPS staff are developing a proposal (for 1 March) for how to deliver TAG services districtwide. They may propose a SUMMA-like option for middle school students with TAG centers distributed around the district. It was explained that issues such as this would be discussed the next day in TAGAC. While it has been suggested that a SUMMA-like option could replace ACCESS, this is unlikely to be pursued.

A parent asked about the possible impact on the ACCESS budget of Title I changes being contemplated by the Trump administration. Mr. Wood responded that ACCESS is not a Title I school. The parent reflected that any changes could affect related Title I schools in PPS.

With regard to admissions, Mr. Wood clarified that a student's application would be weighted solely by the family's situation (i.e., whether the student is eligible for free lunch) and would not be based on the income or poverty rate at the student's neighborhood school.

#### Bus and Other Transportation Issues

Mr. Wood reflected that there have been numerous challenges regarding bus-based transportation; these issues have generally not involved the drivers.

PTA President Jen Ellis did meet with the transportation office. The resolution is that school staff (Mr. Wood, Trish Hendry) will be first to hear about problems with transportation. The transportation office will use GPS-based technology (when it is ready) know where the buses are.

A parent reported on efforts to identify a "bus parent" for each bus. These parents would meet the buses when they arrive and have some rapport with the bus driver. There are currently parents for buses 317, 318, and 320, but not for buses 315, 316, and 319. A parent volunteered to cover bus 315.

Another parent asked how those who live close to school can help other families in emergencies, when buses are missed, etc. Mr. Wood will encourage families to list among their emergency contacts other families who live on the east side of the river. Families should inform the school if they have "buddies" who can pick up their children.

A parent referred to emergency forms that families have completed. These identify other parents who can pick up their children but only in the case of emergencies. Parents should use Synergy to identify others who can perform general pickups

Another parent asked about bus drivers who left children off early or who skipped picking up children when buses arrived at morning stops ahead of schedule. Jen suggested that these cases involved on specific bus driver and the transportation office has spoken to that driver multiple times. It was emphasized to the driver the children should not be dropped off unless there are parents present.

A parent asked whether the same background clearance is required to pick up children as for volunteering. Mr. Wood said no, because parents may designate anyone else to pick up their children (with no special background clearance required).

Jen suggests that parents for each bus might make plans for "hiking routes" for cases in which buses are not operating and people have to walk. Knowing these routes in advance could help ensure that people can locate each other in emergencies.

#### Other Announcements

There will be no school on 3 February.

The last student day of the academic year is expected to be Wednesday, 14 June. Late starts are eliminated for the remainder of the academic year. The situation of planning days is not yet clear. There is a Board meeting tonight — the situation should be clearer after that.

#### Nominating Committee

The Standing Rules specify that a Nominating Committee is elected in January. The task of the committee is to identify candidates for PTA offices for the following year.

At this point, Catherine Beckett (Vice President), Jen Ellis (President), Lisa Karplus (Secretary), and Gil Neiger (Secretary) have agreed to serve again next year (2017–18). A new Treasurer will need to be elected. In addition, it is desired to elect a second Vice President who would become President the following year (2018–19); for 2017–18, this person would have few responsibilities other than to "shadow" the President.

Deborah has offered to serve on the Nominating Committee. There were no other volunteers. A motion to postpone election of a Nominating Committee until February was approved without opposition.

#### Other Business and Announcements

One parent said that he was impressed by the level of information coming from the PTA and from TAGAC. He thought that it would be helpful if there were a calendar of committee meetings and other events in the area that people should attend to support ACCESS. This might help people divide their energy better. The calendar could

include a facility for ACCESS community members to sign up to cover the various events.

Auditions for the Talent Show completed last week; about 100 students auditioned. The dates of the show are 14 March and 17 March. It looks like it will be very good. A new sound system has been purchased (the old one was broken). A general organization of the program should be complete by the end of the week. There will probably be about five acts more than last year.

There was a question of whether the PTA is allowed to shift excess funds to the Foundation. Kristi said that she would find out whether this can be done. Someone suggested asking the Oregon PTA.

Deborah reported that the emergency buckets now have Cheerios for children with allergies (buckets for other children have energy bars). There are Mylar blankets and rain ponchos, so we should be set until we get approval for the large storage container. We cannot move forward on the container until we know which building the school will use next year. Mr. Wood said that the school will remain at Rose City Park next year. Deborah noted she continues to wait for the official announcement.

Teachers want to be sure that there is one emergency kit assigned to each and every student. Deborah is soliciting volunteers to help create kits (with names, etc.) for children who do not have them. Jen suggested could be done at the Principal's Coffee scheduled for 10 February.

Colin said that he would like the opportunity to come speak to the staff to remind them about, and encourage them to use, funds allocated to them. Mr. Wood suggested that he will schedule time at the 7 February staff meeting to discuss use of PTA funds. It would be great if Colin could come, but it is not necessary.

Kristi reported that there is an urgent need for parents to help lead class art projects (for grades 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8) for the auction. Such parents would need only to "spearhead" the project — for example, by identifying artists who could come in and develop a project. Mr. Wood reflected that there remains plenty of "Run for the Arts" money that could be used for this purpose.

**Next General Membership Meeting is 2/21/17 at 7 p.m. at Rose City Park School.**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.**

**Minutes compiled by Gilbert Neiger, Secretary**



## **ACCESS Academy PTA Notes from General Membership Meeting**

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Prior to the regular scheduled general membership meeting, ACCESS PTA hosted guest speaker Carol Campbell, Grant High School Principal who spoke about Grant High School's impending move, for two years, to Marshall High School while Grant's campus is modernized, and about the program Grant offers.

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

Ms. Campbell noted that this meeting represents is her fourth visit (once per year) to an ACCESS PTA meeting.

Ms. Campbell reports that reconstruction at Franklin High School is proceeding on time. Franklin will vacate the swing site, Marshall High School, as scheduled.

Ms. Campbell reported that, in anticipation of its own modernization, Grant is "ready to move" to its new home at Marshall High School for two years. Grant will close on June 20 and move to Marshall over the summer. Some changes will be made there to accommodate Grant's needs (e.g., a darkroom for photography will be added). Grant at Marshall will open in August, with Grant's phone numbers remaining the same. For information, see *PPS Grant Modernization flyer – Oct. 2016*, copies of which Ms. Campbell distributed:

<http://www.pps.net/cms/lib8/OR01913224/Centricity/Domain/62/Grant-Mod%20FALL2016-flyer-web%2010-20-16.pdf>

#### **Transportation.**

The best way to get to Marshall will be via the MAX Green line or along Powell Boulevard, depending upon the direction from which you come. See *Grant High Family Advisory 2016-17* (including map & transit info): <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9ypD-9qUIZWbHcySy1nQV82aUU/view?usp=sharing>

Grant had not been expecting any bus support from PPS but Ms. Campbell reported that "that is changing." Because PPS agrees that a one-hour commute to Marshall is unreasonable, it is looking to provide school bus service from the more northwesterly part of the Grant catchment area (near Boise-Elliot, Sabin, King) to Marshall. (Those who live farther east can go to the Hollywood Transit Center and take the MAX Green line from there.) The problem is providing school buses is not so much financial, as the state reimburses PPS for some 80% of the cost; rather, the challenge is finding enough bus drivers. PPS hopes to find enough drivers to support families in outlying areas.

PPS surveyed families about transportation challenges they face because of this move to Marshall and it is responding.

In addition TriMet has been involved; Ms. Campbell is meeting with TriMet to coordinate allocating bus space for students, as needed, once school begins. The move to Marshall could (potentially) add 1,500 riders to the commute hours, so TriMet may need to add to or adjust routes if Grant/Marshall's demand for public bus service causes problems.

#### Program.

Ms. Campbell encourages ACCESS students to attend Marshall's 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Information Night. To this meeting she brought numerous sets of documents of interest to prospective Grant students and their families, and is leaving extras here for Mr. Wood. These documents include the following:

- Grant High School Course Guide 1017-2018
- Grant High School Course Guide 1017-2018 – Freshman Edition (with insert & Course Request form)
- Grant High School Info Sheet: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9ypD-9qUIZWQIJIOUIVS3U1NzA/view?usp=sharing>
- Grant High School 2016-2017 Clubs & Activities brochure: <http://www.pps.net/domain/2616>
- Grant Magazine (assorted issues): <http://grantmagazine.com/>
- Le Francais est magnifique brochure
- Grant Generals Winter Sports 2016-2017 Media Guide.

She also displayed a poster on a wide variety of career and technical-education programs and pathways that have been added to Grant during the past three years and most of which are available for freshmen. Example: audio engineering has been added at Grant, well-known for visual and performing arts. The goal is for students to be taking courses that earn dual credit (both high school and college credit) by senior year.

Freshmen are required to take three core classes together as a block. This year there are six "communities" or groupings in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Each community takes Physics, English Language & Arts, and Modern World History together. For the 2017–18 academic year, Grant may cut back to five communities if lower student numbers warrant.



Sophomores take Film & Literature.

All Juniors take "Living in the U.S.," which include history of race in the U.S. One can also take AP History, AP government, AP English, Latin-American Lit, etc.

All Seniors take dual-credit English (e.g. African-American Lit, Feminism & Gender Studies, etc.) which classes are taught by teachers with Masters degrees and articulated with college courses/credit.

Mr. Wood confirmed that ACCESS students with sufficiently high grades in their language classes can enter high school having already completed the high school requirement of two years of a world language. ACCESS does not currently offer English classes that qualify for high-school credit, but math classes, and science courses taught by Mr. Garcia, do qualify for high-school credit. Ms. Campbell confirmed that grant offers Spanish but not Mandarin. Those entering with 2 years of Spanish would enter Spanish at Level 5-6 in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

Ms. Campbell noted that the sequence of required science classes is in the process of changing district-wide.

Up to 8 credits may be taken per year. 8 classes (credits) are required for 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grades; 6 for 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The school considers a full schedule to be one consisting of 8 classes. A minimum of 24 classes is required for graduation. Some students accelerate and finish in 3 years as part of their "plan."

Students are expected to remain on campus for all 8 periods, whether or not they have a "full" schedule. A study hall period is optional, but it is available for those students who do not forecast for all 8 classes, or don't get into their chosen or alternate classes.

Student schedules include a twice-weekly flex period, 1 hour long, for library, counseling, and meeting with teachers.

Students can propose and run their own clubs and activities, in addition to any listed in the brochure.

### Forecasting.

Mr. Wood announced that a counselor from Grant is due to meet with all 8<sup>th</sup> graders at ACCESS on Friday, January 27, to discuss forecasting for Grant (and other high schools). Forecasting sheets will be due the following Friday, February 3. Some kids may want to forecast for another school as well (e.g. their neighborhood high school). The Office of Enrollment and Transfer will estimate, in late March, approximate enrollment numbers for all high schools, based on forecasting results. PPS needs completed forecasting sheets back ASAP to guide staffing decisions.

Forecasting sheets don't cover things like "calculus in freshman year," but students can consult the larger course catalog and make a write-in request for the class. Many things

can be worked out in consultation with the counselor, such as AP English is 10<sup>th</sup> grade, two English classes at a time, etc.

#### Parent Questions.

Question: How many counselors are there? Answer: five.

Question: Is there more flexibility in forecasting than there used to be? Must freshmen take all classes with their cohort? Answer: There are credit requirements for “community classes” that all freshmen take. However, those who already have high school credit when they enter as freshmen will not be required to repeat that class; they will be placed into the level above which they have credit. Keep in mind that the freshman communities are designed to facilitate socio-emotional adjustment to life in a very large high school.

Question: ACCESS’ original charter envisioned that, at the high-school level, ACCESS students would be kept together as a cohort. Is this happening? Answer: “We’re not doing anything intentional to keep them together;” they come together by happenstance when they choose some of the same courses.

Question: Is a community of ACCESS grads being maintained at Grant? Answer: “Nothing is being done explicitly,” but some end up together because they may take the same math classes.

Question: Is Marshall an “open campus” (with students free to go off campus for lunch, for example)? Answer: Yes.

Question: Do upperclassmen get priority when choosing AP or dual credit courses which may have limited space? Answer: Yes, but freshmen can still request AP classes during forecasting, for example. Grant counselors will work with freshmen and their families to try to meet their needs for advanced classes.

Question: In mixed-grade classes, do lower classmen get adequate attention? Answer: Yes, particularly with new limits of 180 students per teacher. Most classes have fewer than 30 students.

Question: What is the plan at Grant regarding “100% utilization” (every classroom used every period; teachers, without “home” desks move from room to room during passing periods)? Answer: “It does not work.” The plan: Each teacher will have a classroom where they “live,” for teaching and their daily preparation/work period. Some will share classrooms (based on need and practicality), but no teacher will have to migrate between more than two. Teachers, in groups of 8 to 10, will also have “offices” outside of their classrooms where they will have room for a desk and storage cabinets. These office rooms and regular classrooms will be of equivalent size and shape, and designed to be interconvertible as needs change.

Question: What about Grant Pool? Will it remain open during the rebuild? Answer: “Yes, I expect [it will be open].” However, the pool, and adjacent fields, and most of

Grant's recreational facilities are owned not by Grant but by Portland Parks & Rec.  
Plan: The parking lot next to the pool will be widened and given a turnaround; the soccer field and a new ball field will be redone and repositioned.

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**Notes compiled by Gilbert Neiger, Secretary**

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