

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2012

Minutes taken by PTA Secretary Holly Boime.

Members present: Claire Smith, Jennifer Povich, Karla Zirbes, Gina Ortola, Trish Parks, Natasha Nielsen-Porter, Linda Macpherson, Debbie Armendariz, Constance San Juan, Amy Liber, Laura Mason, Holly Boime, Sheri Campbell, Alma Velazquez, Anne Myrthue, Gail Calcagno, Cindy Dulcich, Pia Nicastro, Diane Cameron, Francesca Quagliata, Denise Dekker, Laura Minato, Alessandra Rueegger, Kristen Moar, Pete Rand, and Rachel Belcher.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by PTA Treasurer, Constance San Juan, in the absence of an elected PTA President.

Constance called for nominations for PTA President. Amy Liber was nominated and elected President unanimously.

Constance then called for nominations for PTA Vice-President. Trish Parks nominated herself and was elected unanimously.

A proposal to change Atkinson PTA mission statement was presented (please see attached proposed changes) to reflect the value of more equity. Sheri Campbell didn't like the wording "low cost" and would like these removed from the proposed change. Denise Dekker responded by stating that it reflects the needs of the population that we (the PTA) are serving. Amy Liber suggested that a better term could be "affordable." Diane Cameron liked "affordable" better than "low cost." Kirsten Moor suggested "accessible." Trish Parks proposed some other changes (please see attached).

The proposed changes including the word changes from "low cost" to "affordable" and Trish Parks changes were voted on.

1st motion: Trish Parks

2nd motion: Kirsten Moore

Received majority: yes

Volunteer Coordinator: Amy Liber

- Thank you to Denise Dekker and Jennifer Povich for organizing the open house.
- Grandparents' day is Friday. Help is needed to set up chairs.
- October 23rd is Pizzacato Atkinson eats out. You can also use script to purchase pizzas, etc. from Pizzacato.
- There was some discussion as to when to have the afterschool Halloween parade. A coordinator and volunteers are able to do it on Halloween day-so that's when the parade will be. Constance was against having it on that day because kids doing afterschool language and others may miss out on the parade. She'd rather have the parade on the previous Friday.

- A coordinator is needed for the afterschool Scholastic Book Fair. Danielle (last name?) who was the coordinator last year can't do it this year.
- The Day of the Dead display is being discussed and planned by the Atkinson Amigos group.
- The PTA Volunteer Coordinator is needed to replace Amy Liber who was just elected PTA President.

PTA Budget: Treasurer Constance San Juan

- Chinook book sale raised \$745 and Atkinson PTA only gets to keep half.
- Scripp is doing well. In the first week sold \$6,000 worth, 2nd week sold \$5,000, 3rd week sold \$2,000 and 4th week sold \$2,000 worth of scrip. We netted \$1,800.
- You can just buy Fred Meyer and New Seasons gift cards; you don't need to use the order form.
- There's also a Columbia gift card that allows you to get a pass to the Columbia employee store.
- Alessandra Rueegger also suggested using a fundraising program where you get a percentage of sales on Amazon.com. Karla Zirbes said she could help to set that up.

Diane Cameron did research regarding funding for the whiteboards. She contacted the school district and is waiting to hear back. The Principal said that she put in a request a couple years ago that's still a valid request. The Principal said that there are priority projects for schools. The level 1 safety-oriented project requests must be done first. Then the level 2 impact on classroom requested projects can be done. The whiteboard purchase and installation could fall under the impact on classroom projects. It may be known by January whether or not there is enough money left over at the school district level to address the level 2, impact on classroom projects. The membership agreed to wait until January to see if our requested can be filled by the school district so the PTA doesn't have to pay for the whiteboards.

The Principal reported that repainting the exterior of the school building would cost over \$100,000. The expense is due in part because the playground blacktop would have to be removed to properly remove any existing lead paint. The part of the paint that is peeling off –by the upper playground (main playground) has contact with standing water. So therefore, the school district is saying that the project is too big to do. Pia Nicastro would still like to repaint the school and invites anyone to join her in researching this.

4/5 grades Overnight Field Trips

- There was a lot of discussion with varying points of view regarding the field trips.
- Karla Zirbes, on behalf of the majority of the PTA board members, proposed a change to the 4/5 grades overnight field trip funding (please see attached Plan B proposal). Karla provided some history on the background for the need to change the funding. The overnight field trips have been happening for about 13 years. They are tied to the curriculum. Teachers have done the fundraising for these trips. The Principal is concerned about the teachers spending their time

fundraising. Constance and Karla have met with the teachers to figure it out. The PTA agreed to be the bank for the overnight field trips. Last year the PTA tried to raise money through the Direct Donation Drive (DDD). A letter was also written asking the parents of 4/5 graders to contribute additional money to the field trips if they can. Last year the fundraising effort was \$5,000 short for everyone to have field trips. This year we want to just have a read-a-thon and no tamale or fusion glass sale. One of the 4th grade teachers, Ms. Nunn, doesn't want to go on an overnight field trip.

- The Plan B proposal covers a 2 day, 1 night Multnomah Educational Service District (MESD) field trip. It's less expensive than other overnight trips and includes expenses for chaperones, food, and transportation-not included in the OMSI trips. This statement was questioned by PTA members in the audience stating that food and transportation were covered as part of the OMSI trip. Then someone else replied that not all gas expenses were covered. There was discussion about what's covered on each trip.
- Karla said the MESD trips allow the same level of experience and saves \$4,600. The plan assumes 60% of families will cover the expense of the trip. The MESD trips are more affordable and equitable. There has been built-in inequities with the overnight field trips in the past; students take different trips, some longer than others, and some more expensive than others.
- Constance was willing to offer a counter argument--for keeping the field trips.
- Alma Velazquez, 5th grade Spanish immersion teacher, offered her opinion of the overnight field trips. She really values the OMSI overnight field trips. She has taken her students on the OMSI field trip to Hancock Field Station. This field trip provides quality instruction; all instructors have a bachelor's or master's degree and have training in teaching methods as well. And if there are concerns about not earning enough money for the trip, OMSI trips can be canceled 60 days prior to the date of the trip. And she stated that it's an issue of equity that students get to participate in a high quality program. She then read two letters written by parents who are very supportive of the OMSI trips. And then another parent, whose child went on the OMSI trip, stated that it was a "wonderful experience."
- Constance stated that the "loaded" cost per student in plan B would be \$103.
- Denise Dekker put people on "the stack" in an effort to have an orderly meeting giving everyone an opportunity to speak. Members raised their hand to speak and Denise put them on the list, the stack, by a first-come first-served process.
- Sheri Campbell stated her support for the overnight field trips as they are currently. She is a past PTA President and has heard these discussions before and has seen parents pull together to raise money for these field trips. Sheri said, "Put it on the parents," meaning to let them take on the burden of the extra fundraising.

She thinks the OMSI trips are much higher quality trips than the MESD trips. In fact her other daughter is training to be a counselor for a MESD camp but Sheri still prefers the OMSI trip.

- Someone stated that it's clear that the OMSI trips are a higher quality trip.
- Linda Macpherson viewed the overnight field trips as a "capstone" experience of 5th grade. And she suggested that the overnight trip only be for 5th graders. And she thinks having overnight trips for both 4th and 5th grades seems extravagant.
- Constance said it's important to consider the equity of the experience.
- Diana Cameron suggested that the overnight field trips are a "staff question." She suggested that maybe this is an issue for the teachers to decide.
- There was some discussion about whether or not fundraising for the overnight field trips will be allowed at school. For example would an off campus car wash fundraiser be allowed? Trish Parks questioned why fundraising wouldn't be allowed for teachers. She said she's a teacher in the Tigard school district and if she wants something for her classroom she just asks parents for the money and she gets it and buys what she needs. Trish Parks thinks it's about teacher choice.
- Karla stated that it's about equity and the budget. Karla stated that the overnight field trip offerings vary too much and are inequitable to the students. And some parents feel undue pressure to contribute money towards these field trips.
- Rachael Belcher said that one class may not get to go on the overnight field trip because the teacher doesn't want to go. She said that we need to think of all the kids. And she stated that this year's 5th grade parents can fund these field trips.
- Laura Minato suggested that an equal amount of money be given to each teacher and then he/she can decide what to do with it.
- Denise Dekker said that the "MESD trips are affordable...and we need to tighten the belt."
- Diana Cameron said that she agrees with the woman in the black sweater, Laura Minato.
- Robin Feidelson stated, "We shouldn't be telling our teachers how to teach." Parent representatives from each of the classes should form a group to fundraise.
- Laura Mason suggested that a flat amount PTA contribution for each classroom won't work because class size varies. Therefore, maybe it should be based on per kid allowance.

- Cindy Dulcich, 5th grade teacher, was in support of allowing the teachers to decide about the overnight field trips. Cindy provided some history about the overnight field trips. She said that she started them and then other teachers started doing it in their classrooms. Cindy said that doing the overnight field trips was a “gift of love.” In years past she had to make arrangements for her own children to get to soccer practice, etc. in her absence. Cindy really likes the OMSI field trips. But Rian Ford, who is the new 4/5 grade neighborhood teacher, is more comfortable doing a one night MESD trip because that’s what he did with his teaching mentor. Cindy thinks it’s okay for Rian Ford to prefer a different field trip for his class. Also Cindy understands that it’s hard economic times but really values these overnight field trips and wants to work towards making them happen. She thanked everyone for their interest and care regarding this issue.
- Kirsten Moar stated that it, fundraising, was confusing last year. There was discussion about the DDD and the letter that was sent out to parents of 4/5th graders about the need for additional money to fund the overnight trips.
- Rachael Belcher stated that the proposals can’t work because there’s no money going to students in Ms. Nunn’s class.
- The Principal said that students need to have “equal opportunities.” Regarding the overnight field trips she has some “non-negotiables. We can’t make teachers feel less committed if they don’t want to do an optional overnight field trip. We can’t have only classes that raise the money that get to go on the trips. And teachers can’t take responsibility for fundraising.

The 2012-2013 PTA budget with proposed changes is voted on.

1st motion: Denise Dekker
 2nd motion: Francesca Quagliata
 Received majority vote: yes

4/5 overnight version Plan B (please see attached) is voted on.

1st motion: Karla Zirbes
 2nd motion: Gina Ortola
 Received majority vote: no
 For: 6
 Against: more than 6

The majority of the members present voted down Plan B. The default plan or current plan (please see attached) then will be used.

The PTA membership voted to adopt September PTA meeting minutes.

1st motion: Francesca Quagliata
 2nd motion: Renee Carter
 Received majority vote: yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.