

Parley's Park Elementary PTA Meeting minutes

January 12, 2016

Board Members Present: Shelly Barratt, Suzanne Vandenberg, Angie Brown, Amy O'Reilly

Board Members not Present: none

Approximate member attendance: 15

The meeting commenced at 8:22am.

Shelly welcomed everybody and thanked them for their continued interest and support. She asked if all are receiving the newsletter and all are. All agreed that weekly timing is best and that repeating certain information for a number of weeks is OK. Members also discussed the electronic/online school directories and how useful they have been. It was pointed out that families who elect FERPA protection will not appear in the directory.

Shelly discussed Smith's Shopper Cards. We were told that we would need to relink our cards in January but it appears that is not the case. Please check your receipts to be sure that Parley's is elected as your school for Smith's points. *[We have subsequently learned that all do need to relink. Please check the PTA Press for instructions or log in to your account at Smiths and relink asap! Thank you!]*

Sara covered the Science Fair. We have 80 science fair projects signed up. The Science Fair is the 21st. We still need volunteers and judges. Don't be afraid to judge. You get breakfast and lunch! If you know anybody, suggest it to them! If you are interested, please sign up. Don't be nervous if you are not a scientist. The judging is 8-11am. It's fun! There are lots of awards for everybody who participates and lots of ways for kids to win. We also need volunteers from 12-3p during the school fair. Then 5-7pm it's nice to have some help while families are there looking at projects and packing/cleaning up. All hands on deck to staff the Science Fair and make it a good experience for the students. Thank you!

Jennifer Billow visited from the PC Education Foundation. Jen visited to encourage us to make our participation BIG in Running with Ed (RWE) this year. She opened by showing a home-video of last year's RWE which was really terrific and really got to the heart of the event: Celebrating Teachers. When schools get behind this event it's really great...great for kids, great for families, great for PCEF and great for teachers. It's not a big scary running race but a celebration of the teachers in our district.

You can support Parley's directly in RWE. You do this by choosing PPES as your affiliated school when you register as a runner/team. PPES gets a point for every runner who participates and chooses PPES for their school. You can also support Parley's by helping at our PPES exchange. There are 10 exchanges total and six are at the schools. The exchanges are VERY

fun and VERY important for the success of the event. Surveys have supported this year after year.

Ways schools can get behind RWE: 1. Have a champion. At McPolin in past years it was Melissa Bott. She is now with us at PPES! McPolin makes RWE a whole-school celebration. They had 5-6 teams led by teachers. They had students run with them. It's \$50 a person if you are a teacher or student. They chose a theme. They make it fun so even if they don't win anything they have had a great experience of celebrating their teachers. It's very do-able for kids. There are short legs.

2. Get students involved! JRES had 2 teams of 20. They each had 9 kids and 1 teacher. "Rametta and Rascals" was one. This gets lots of points because it is one point per runner. Also makes it a really fun day.

3. Sponsor teacher teams. Help teacher teams fundraise. Teachers are shy to ask for money, so help them do that.

4. Make our school's exchange great!

RWE raises \$250,000!! The district relies on PCEF for \$1m in funding each year. PPES will get about \$200,000 from PCEF this year in support of art, dance, preschool, science fair, teacher Grants and more.

Melissa Bott is excited about coming up with a theme for PPES this year. We have Apex as a springboard. We'd love to keep that momentum and get kids running. Melissa has already started by presenting to teachers, asking them to consider running. The PTA has committed to funding up to six teacher teams. She has set up a board for teachers to encourage them to participate. We know that May is a really busy time, especially at the high school. There are conflicts and events. But make it about the teachers and support them the way you can and help them to have fun. If they can do it, we can, too. PPES has a history of participation – we had six teacher teams the first year. It dropped off because it was hard for many to run 2 legs. But now the race is different and you can have more people.

We need volunteers to arrange teams and to run the exchange. Please let the PTA board know if you are interested.

Later Melissa joined us and talked about her efforts in motivating the teachers to get rolling with RWE. She put a countdown and a course map up as well. Her motto is, "If I can run, they can run!" And she is advertising that the PTA will cover the cost. At least half are committed to participating and she encouraging student participation. We'll have larger 8-10 person teams. We might not have 6 teams because of that. Kids will really enjoy running in a race with their teachers. Parents need to join in, too, just to drive and manage the kids. At some point she will need help so think about pitching in.

Princ. David Gomez gave update. David discussed security updates we are planning to fund with PTA money. First, we will install pass-accessed locking doors between the lobby and classroom hallways. Second we are pursuing crossing guards and lights for our crosswalk on Silver Springs Drive. David asked for feedback/concerns. There was none. Thanks David!

Shelly briefly explained that PTA money raised is going not only to our safety initiatives. The PTA is funding much-needed ELA resources, other curriculum tools not funded by the district (IXL eg), small teacher grants, and RWE teacher registrations. We discussed in more detail the ELA curriculum supplies grant.

Other Chair Updates:

EATS Update. Shannon, our school champion, gave an update. EATS' goal is to improve the school food program using education as foundation for change. We have been doing monthly taste tests as our most prominent program. A few other things are happening as well: After school cooking classes @ McPolin, and now at PPES (starting tomorrow!). We need more volunteers for this pilot to help it run smoothly and go well. Chef Alan is doing a stir fry tomorrow! There is a sign-up link on the e-blast that went out yesterday. The commitment is 3-5:45. We have about 50 kids from the after school program (Camp Falcon) participating. The idea is getting kids to eat well by empower them to be involved in food preparation. If you are interested, let Shannon know or sign up with the online link.

Another program coming along may be a school garden. EHMS has done it and it has been a great success. Mama Sue would love to do it, but her plate is full and we need parents to champion it. We may use St. Luke's infrastructure? May do it here? EATS needs help spreading word and finding volunteers. Shannon will help but can't spearhead these additional initiatives. An indoor tower garden is another project that we might add if we get help. One teacher did a tower "salsa garden" which combined Spanish language, Mexican culture, math and science.

Shannon also mentioned Hungry for Healthy – the initiative to remove the "sinister seven" from school lunch. Districts in Colorado have done it. We want to provide better ingredients for our staff to use in breakfast/lunch prep. There is a petition that is circulating in the e-blasts now. They plan to go to the school board meeting on the 19th. As a final note, Shannon explained that EATS is *partnering* with the school kitchen staff and the district. It is a collaborative, not adversarial, relationship.

Suzanne noted that the time the kids eat is short and unstructured. Kids don't take the time to eat the good food. How can we improve upon that? Eating habits relate to the time and style of the meal, too. Maybe reverse the recess and lunch order or not letting kids go to recess without eating their lunch. If we could blow off steam first, then eat, it would work better. Ms. Bott explained that schools have tried it but it fails because it trashes the schools with snow sludge. What does work is sitting with kids while they eat, which she does once a

week. That slows them down and they eat better stuff. The PTA could get volunteers to do this. Engaging with the kids while they eat definitely helps.

Student Council. Jill Petty explained that the PPES Student Council is doing a box top challenge. We need large Costco-sized plastic containers for each classroom. We are running this challenge Jan 25 – winter break.

Also, Mary Closser is spearheading an idling campaign with Stuco. The Stuco will help but we are not exactly sure how it will work.

The class of 2016 5th grade gift is in discussion as well...Jill is advocating a sun shade or two for the playground but they are very expensive. They would be like the ones we have in some of the parks here and they would need to come down in the winter.

Stuco will do a service project in March: Hearts Knit Together. This is assembling baskets for refugees/domestic violence victims. Stuco will be collecting stuffed animals, books, clothing for this project.

Foreign Language. Britta Mobley has been the chair for many years but her youngest child is leaving PPES so we need a new chair. Everything is very organized and well-established.

Spelling Bee. Amy O'Reilly has been the chair for many years but her youngest child is leaving PPES so we need a new chair. Everything is very organized and well-established.

Board. We need some new board chairs for next year! We will need a Secretary, Treasurer and President Elect. It's really fun to work together with other moms to make our school better.

MIA/PTA Art. There are a few projects for which the art chairs need some help. There is a link in the PTA Press. Shannon Corcoran and Autumn Rutherford are the chairs.

Teacher Appreciation. Coming up during conferences. Please pitch in!

Writing Contest. Coming up in March.

Art Night. Coming up in the spring!

We have one meeting left on March 1, then our luncheon on May 3.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32.

Respectfully submitted by Amy O'Reilly, Secretary