

Parley's Park Elementary PTA Meeting minutes

March 1, 2016

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

Also in attendance: Ember Conley, PCSD Superintendent; David Gomez, PPES Principal; Sara Hutchinson, PCEF Programs Manager; Julie Eihausen, PCSD School Board Member

Approximate member attendance: 35

The meeting commenced at 8:15am.

Shelly welcomed everybody and thanked them for their continued interest and support. She explained that we would start with the reading center discussion, since we have 3 guests here to answer questions.

District Reading Center Plan

Ember Conley introduced the reading plan. Ms. Conley covered the priority of all-day Kindergarten, the use of Professional Learning Centers (PLC's), class-size, teacher training, and the goal to be at 90% at grade level for reading by 3rd grade. She discussed how well Parley's Park is doing vs. its goals. Principals have some freedom to put in place what they need, but the number of aides will be cut and aide resources will shift to Kindergarten.

Ms. Conley and Mr. Gomez fielded a number of PTA member questions on everything from teacher morale and district culture to dual immersion class size.

At approximately 8:45, Ms. Conley excused herself due to other obligations. She announced that the March 3rd district-wide parent meeting has been postponed until sometime in April. She offered another meeting in the next few weeks with the PPES PTA on this subject.

Ms. Eihausen stated that nothing is set in stone. But she went on to say that parents need to be willing to compromise; come to the middle, and support the district plan. Ms. Eihausen also excused herself.

Mr. Gomez continued to field questions from parents including questions about exactly what the current staffing is, how the staff is used, and how it would change. Also, parents wanted to discuss how they could pitch in and fund the aides we are losing – ie to solve the “funding problem.” Parents agreed that the main unanswered question is: “Why is there resistance to having the aides when our reading program is working so well at PPES? We don't believe it is a funding problem. We don't understand why we can't have all-day Kindergarten AND the same number of aides.”

Melissa Bott, the PTA teacher representative said thank you on behalf of the teachers for the parent support.

PTA Business

David encouraged everybody to run, support or volunteer for Running With Ed. Let's be sure PPES wins the Ragnar prize!

Kellie Hatcher suggested, as a follow-up to the reading center conversation, inviting school board members to our school events in order to inform them about what's happening here and how well our school is running.

PTA Positions and Chairs. We need a lot of help next year on the PTA. Please look at Shelly's list of open chair and officer positions and consider taking over for a volunteer who is "graduating." Chair simply means that you are the point person/organizer for one of our programs; not that you need to do all of the work! Our graduating volunteers are experienced and organized so it's easy to take over running things. There are lots of people who are willing to help as long as we can get a chair. Talent Show! Spelling Bee! Foreign Language Classes! Secretary! President Elect! Yearbook! Please pitch in if you can. We would love to have you.

Sara Hutchinson PCEF. Sara visited in order to help us connect the dots between the PCEF fundraising (fall events like \$180 per Child, Beat the Call and the Red Apple Gala, plus Running With Ed in May) and the direct benefits that PPES receives. Events like RWE funds some of our most exciting school programs like dance and art, plus a handful of innovative teacher grants each year, and district-wide initiatives such as STEM and Preschool. Sara provided a handout with a list. She suggested speaking to Mr. Gomez soon if you know of high priority needs that might be met with a school grant. She was not sure if PCEF would be the right conduit for funding extra reading aides but she suggested that a project champion contact Abby McNulty, the Executive Director.

Melissa Bott gave a Running with Ed Update. So far two teacher teams have registered and three more will sign up. She has some themes in mind and will have "release" sometime soon. There will be an assembly and lots of competition between the teams, which is what makes it fun and engaging. Please think about running, sponsoring and getting kids running. The kids are a "secret weapon" and they have a BLAST! The PTA will pay entry fee for student team registration! Liz Fannon has agreed to run the exchange.

Shelly gave a review of the PTA Budget (Shelly). The budget showed a list of what the PTA is funding. We have recently committed to certain safety improvements, including flashing sign for the crosswalk and locked security doors into the classroom hallways. (District and County don't pay for the flashing signs.) We intend to leave a small surplus that might be used to fund other high priority things that arise at year-end or early next year including reading aides.

Other Chair Updates:

- Chess club starting this week!
- Zaniac programs starting after April break!
- Writing contest—coming soon. Ideas for a writing prompt/theme?
- Smith's – If you haven't, please sign up/re-link your Smith's card to Parley's Park! If you turn in your receipt in the office you will get entered into a raffle.
- Used Book Fair – April 20-22nd. We'll have cultural celebration, earth day, and this sale during this very busy week.
- Parley's has a Zuppa's night March 16. Let's get the word out. Don't cook, come eat and join the fun.

We have one general meeting left for 2015-16: Our luncheon on May 3 at Red Rock at 11:30 until 1:00pm.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40.

Respectfully submitted by Amy O'Reilly, Secretary