

## **SES PTSA Board Meeting Minutes, September 13, 2006**

**Members:** (those in bold were present)

**Doug Wells (president); Kristen Calhoun (president-elect); Nancy Church; (treasurer); Beth Azar (secretary); Claire Irvan (membership coordinator); Melinda Patterson (fundraising); Lisa Bauso (fundraising); Neeley Wells (volunteer coordinator); Katie Smith (volunteer coordinator); Jennifer Freda-Cowie (teacher support); Courtney Lobo (teacher support); Caryn Corwin (parent education); Cindy Ewers (parent education); Robin May (teacher representative); Rebecca Wagner (teacher representative); Anna Goldrich (member-at-large); Mario Galindo (member-at-large); Meg Stalnaker (member-at-large);** Beth Waltz (member-at-large)

Also attending: **Sarah Taylor; Angela Jarvis-Holland**

The meeting officially began at 6:30pm

### **1. Welcome and introductions**

### **2. Angela Jarvis-Holland proposes a parent/student resource center**

Angela came to describe an idea she and several other parents have for a parent/student resource center. The idea was to create a space where parents can have a place to work on volunteer projects for the school in general and individual teachers in particular. This center would serve several goals:

- Provide an organized, accessible space to help with all kinds of volunteer projects from assembling packets, to pulling together materials for fundraisers, etc.
- Provide a space to work on projects requested by teachers, for example, Rebecca has asked parents to help work on a student-produced newsletter.
- Provide a space and the tools that would allow parents to help support literacy for all students. That would include software and support from ESL and special ed. that could enrich the work teachers do. (Angela mentioned that a parent who attended a three-day conference on assistive technology wants to help with this).
- Provide a space to create a publishing center that allows children to be creators of quality product in a variety of mediums.
- Provide ESL resources that are available in Spanish and high interest limited vocabulary books for emerging readers.

Angela has already talked with Karen in the library and gotten permission to build this resource center in the library, where it can be accessed on Mondays and Fridays when the library is currently closed. There's a large cupboard in the library where resource center materials can be stored and locked up when not in use. Angela already has access to two laptops and two digital cameras. She requested that PTSA provide money for a laminator and a go-to person on PTSA who can help coordinate the creation of this center. Otherwise, she thinks the center could get started right away and grow as volunteers, materials, and technology is acquired over time.

There was strong support for the idea from PTSA board members. Doug commented that at this point monetary support was less of an issue than finding a PTSA point person for this. Courtney and Jennifer commented that it seemed obvious that it falls under teacher support. They agreed to be the initial PTSA contacts for the project.

There was also discussion that Angela take the idea to site council where she can get more ideas and gain more interest from teachers. Jennifer commented that the link with teachers is critical to make sure the project reaches the broadest group.

Robin agreed that this is something most teachers will appreciate and utilize. She emphasized the need for it to be reliable and consistent if it is to be useful to teachers.

Angela emphasized that she is only interested in pursuing this project if the universal design element is included.

### **3. Local Option Campaign**

Doug had a request from the Portland PTA that Sunnyside PTSA contribute \$1,000 to support the local option campaign. The ballot measure (26-84) would raise \$33 million each year for five years by raising income taxes in Multnomah County. If the measure fails, it would mean huge cuts for the district, including Sunnyside.

Sunnyside PTSA hasn't delved much into campaigns, but many PTAs do, spending large amounts of money to support various campaigns. PTAs are encouraged to support issues, but can't support specific candidates. There's a form to fill out if the PTSA decides to financially support a cause.

There was some discussion about how we justify supporting the measure to parents who may not support it. Doug made the point that there are many issues the PTSA supports that a minority of parents don't support—it's the prerogative of the PTSA board to represent what we believe is a majority of parents.

Nancy made the point that the money for this would come from the general fund, which is undesignated. She also commented that this is money that will have to be spent before the budget is approved in November.

Neeley, who talked with someone on the campaign, noted that, if the measure passes, Sunnyside would get a good gain for the money spent.

Kristen then brought up some other measures that the school can take a stand on.

- The local PTA has asked that the PTSA support the Multnomah County library levy (measure 26-81).
- There are two tax limitation measures (numbers 41 and 48) that will do real harm to the schools if they pass.

**Kristen motioned for a vote to support the library levy and the schools levy and to actively not support the two tax limitation measures. It was seconded and the board voted unanimously yes on all counts.**

**It was then motioned for a vote to donate \$1,000 to the schools measure campaign. The board voted unanimously to donate the money and Nancy will cut a check for that.**

#### **4. Updates**

*Volunteers:* Neeley commented that the resource center Angela is working on will be a big part boon to their work.. Katy commented that, based on the volunteer forms sent home this week, about one third of parents say they will do some kind of volunteer work. Sarah said she's heard from some teachers that they don't feel supported. There was discussion about how to help teachers utilize parents better, which moved the discussion into an update of "teacher support."

*Teacher support:* Courtney said that she and Jennifer have met and have drafted a letter to give to teachers to find out what their needs and wants are. The plan is to get teachers thinking about how the teacher support coordinators can help them work with parents and get the help they need. Jennifer added that they plan to meet with Sarah on Friday and want to interact with teachers to create a dialogue to begin to develop this aspect of PTSA. Everyone agreed that this work is important and that some training can take place this year and that these kinds of mechanisms can be created this year so that next year will run more smoothly.

Sarah noted that her original idea for "teacher support" was for someone to take on the role of teacher and secretary appreciation work—random acts of kindness types of things for people who feel chronically underappreciated. There was discussion of finding someone else to fill that role.

*Teachers:* Robin commented that the teachers are feeling a lot of pressure, that they all have a lot of kids, in particular the middle school teachers. Monica's class has 32 students, 20 of whom are boys. Robin commented that Monica likely will need some extra support this year.

Sarah talked about the big influx of neighborhood students this year that has caused a big increase in class sizes. When EMS merged with Sunnyside, there were only 75 neighborhood students in the entire school, there have been 50 new neighborhood students enroll in the past moth.

Robin commented that there is less coverage for teachers at lunch and recess in particular—the ratio of students to teachers are higher. That's a place where parents can really help out.

Meg noted that if parents are going to start helping more outside, there should be a stronger emphasis on badges so that students know to only approach adults with badges.

*Fee form:* Nancy commented that they've begun collecting fee forms and cashing checks. So she's gotten 150-200 forms and the numbers look pretty good. Money will continue to come in over the next couple of weeks. About 100 parents have joined PTA. Sarah would like to get the numbers clear enough to then communicate to parents what we still need to fundraise for. She also suggested that in a month or so PTSA send the form back out to families that didn't respond the first time.

*Fundraising:* Melinda reported on several fundraising events:

- Belmont St. Fair. Altogether, the fundraisers raised \$308. Most of that came from the car wash. The rummage sale, in contrast, was labor intensive and didn't net enough to make it worth the effort.
- Harvest Faire. Melinda and Lisa Storm met to begin planning for Harvest Faire. One big need is someone to coordinate food services. Sarah commented that she's doing a class with the middle schoolers on festivals and she thinks she can get them to do some things for the Faire.
- Magazine sale. It's always a big earner and it kicked off this week.
- Auction. Melinda has booked a venue at PSU. It will be a week earlier than last year.

Sarah commented that it would be great if a parent in each team (K-2; 3-5; middle school) would host a house party and charge guests as a fundraiser as well as a way for parents to meet. The more parents know each other, the more they want to be at school and volunteer, she commented. There was some discussion of trying to get this done this year, but it may need to wait until next year.

There was some discussion of grant writing. Katie said that several parents put grant writing down on their volunteer forms. Beth will pass along some information she has on grants to Melinda.

*PTA budget process:* Doug said that the hope for the future is to have the budget done and approved in the summer for the following year. That won't happen this year, but it's a goal for next year.

### **Miscellaneous/wrap up**

Nancy passed around a reimbursement request form for anyone who spends money on school activities and wants to be reimbursed. The form will be available in the office.

Neeley noted that picture day is coming up. In the past the PTSA has bought pictures for those who can't pay for it. It usually costs \$200-\$250. **Melinda moved that we vote to pay for this again this year, Kristen seconded, the vote passed unanimously.**

Meg noted that Oct. 7 is curriculum night. She thought it would be a good idea to identify the volunteer "holes" at school and to set up volunteer tables or boards to encourage

parents who haven't already signed up to do so. Meg will organize this. Caryn and Cindy are also planning to do some kind of parent education that night.

Sarah asked how soon the volunteer forms will be worked out. Katie said the next week or so.

**The meeting adjourned about 8:30**