

ACCESS PTA Board/Special Meeting Agenda

7pm, April 19, 2016

Principal announcements and updates- Mr. Wood 7pm-7:20pm

Budget and staffing updates for next school year: the budget and staffing will be the same, with the possible exception of Ms. Xie whose visa expires after this year, so we may get a new Mandarin teacher for next year. If we do, we will likely need to provide social support for the new teacher as it would likely be their first time in the U.S. Mr. Wood hopes to provide technology classes to all middle school students next year. Currently Ms. Lang (the librarian/ media specialist) and Mr. Johnson (math and technology teacher) share teaching responsibility for this, but next year Ms. Lang may be asked to teach more tech to the lower grades so that Mr. Johnson can teach the middle school. Mr. Wood has made a formal request for more special ed. staff for next year, and that request is pending with the district.

Admission updates: Mr. Wood is corresponding with schools as they get TAG scores back, which includes only 18 of the PPS schools so far. Currently 75 kids have applied, and there is a secondary deadline of May 13 which may change as TAG scores aren't out yet for the majority of PPS schools. Families will be notified in June, which is a tight deadline because of the delay in getting TAG scores back.

Testing: we are in the middle of the state testing season and are on track time-wise. We don't get results back immediately as we did with the OAKS test.

This Thursday Mr. Wood will sit down with the PPS alternative program review staff, headed by Sarah Singer to talk about the review process.

The online calendar is more up to date this year, which hopefully is helpful. The 4th graders have their Lewis and Clark trip later this week. Many students have received recognition for their accomplishments recently. Also Mr. Garcia is one of 6 science teachers nationally to be recognized by the National Science Foundation this year.

Move updates: The staff had their staff meeting at Humboldt this month, and will have ongoing conversations about the probable upcoming move to Humboldt in 2017.

Treasurer's report: Abbie Rankin 7:20pm.

There is \$1,500 more in the Great Lakes account than shows on the report currently due to the deposit happening on 4/1/6 (so it will show on the May financial report).

There is a full \$1,000 in the equity fund, none of which has been spent yet and is still available to families who need this. There is also music and science lab money available. More teacher requests for reimbursement are expected before the end of the year.

The 8th grade fund has over \$1,000 currently from the first Camp Atom fundraiser, with another Camp Atom fundraiser planned for May 6th. This should hopefully cover the Mazama Lodge (\$1,600), the bus, and also pay for ride bracelets for the Oaks Park trip.

The librarian has requested funding for next year's OBOB books now, so that they would be available when next year's students arrive. She requested \$1,100, and Abbie recommended that we make \$1,250 available to her to cover any unforeseen costs such as needing to order from a different vendor. A motion made, seconded, and passed to do that.

The Dine Out fundraisers have been going well. Next week is Pizzacato, with gift card purchasing available as part of the fundraiser.

Parents can submit proposals for next year's budget, which should be in at least a few days before the next PTA meeting.

It was asked if recess equipment is needed, and Mr. Wood said that if there are funds available at the end of the year that would be helpful, and he will make a formal request at the next meeting.

Boundary Review and ACCESS proposal: 7:25pm Mr. Wood and Mr. Garcia.

The superintendent has made a recommendation that we move to Humboldt in 2017, but the board hasn't actually voted on it, so it's not set in stone yet. The board will likely vote on it in May, although it could be later. That said, there really don't seem to be any other options, so Humboldt is very likely. A project manager has already been assigned to the move (even though it hasn't been voted on yet). Mr. Wood has been in the building 3 times: by himself, with Mr. Garcia, and with the whole staff. Mr. Wood included notes with a general description: It was built in 1957 and is one level. There are 17 classrooms in the building, 2 of which are small, and 4 classrooms in portables. This building does offer the opportunity for a small amount of growth, possibly adding a strand or separating 1st and 2nd grades into two different classes. It might or might not be possible to do both at Humboldt. We currently have 16 classrooms at RCP, but should really be 17 as one teacher has to borrow classrooms. Humboldt has 21 classrooms, but 2 are undersized and 1 portable is currently leased to the PPS SPED Community Transition program.

Mr. Garcia then spoke about the classrooms he saw. There is not currently a middle school level science space, but there is the ability to create that if we can get funding. Room 35 next to the multipurpose room could be combined with a small room next to it and the basic skills area could be combined with 31A and these could make 2 science rooms. 38 and 36 could be the computer lab/maker area. That would limit us to 2 science labs, which would limit the ability for middle school growth. The 2 tiny classrooms he would consider combining to create labs are not ones that have been included in the official classroom count. There are a number of businesses that offer educational grants, such as Toshiba, DuPont, and Honda, and Mr. Garcia feels that we have a good argument to make if we write grant requests to build a science lab. A parent questioned whether asking the district for renovations would count as a capitol request, and Mr. Wood said that it's unclear. Ockley Green will need renovations as well as East Sylvan, so that may be a gauge for us as to what the district would be willing to do to update Humboldt. Legally what we need shouldn't require a bond, but it depends on what the district is willing to do. It was asked by a parent "how can the district give us a building that isn't appropriate for our program?" Another parent noted that the previous bond does still have money available for updates that haven't yet been planned (including updating RCP for re-opening as a neighborhood schools). There is district money available for updating elementary schools that are turned into k-8 schools to add science labs. It was suggested that we ask our community to see if a parent would volunteer to do grant writing. A parent asked what a corporation such as Toshiba would get from giving a school money, and Mr. Garcia responded that big companies have to give away some money, so other than recognition the companies don't expect much. We did get a \$1,000 grant from

Chevron in the past for science equipment. Another parent asked about the issue of wanting to expand the middle school program, and whether it would be possible to add a 3rd science lab at Humboldt, and Mr. Garcia stated that he felt we would need to add another portable if we were going to have a 3rd section of middle school classes. Mr. Wood reminded us that currently we have less-than-ideal labs now, so moving to Humboldt isn't necessarily a huge step down, but it does need renovation for the science labs to be up to par. With a track record of us having a strong science program and an award-winning science teacher we have a good argument for needing funds to build adequate science facilities.

Pamela Kislak (ACCESS parent and DBRAC committee member) explained that the budget for the district transitions should be approved by the end of the year, and that part of the budget is to have an implementation team that will take a year to plan all the changes that will happen including how to make buildings ready for kids to move in in 2017. The district hopes to plan better this time than they did with the K-8 transition.

A parent asked about the timing of grants, and whether it would be helpful to have a grant before asking the district for money in which case they might be more willing to fully fund us. There are variable deadlines, and Mr. Garcia will get us information about the deadlines.

It was asked if we could even move in to Humboldt as it is in terms of science labs, and Mr. Garcia said that we could, but that the labs would be like those at RCP only with 2 fewer sinks.

A parent asked if we could consider using PTA funds to hire a grant writer, as professional grant writers tend to be more successful. It was noted that OMSI has written grants to help some schools, and it's possible that we could find a partnership with a non-profit group that would help us with grant writing. Franklin HS is also working with a group that is helping them with grant writing to fund their "maker movement" project. Mr. Garcia has written grants that have been both successful and close to successful, and there are other parents who have also experience.

More building details were discussed: Humboldt has a large nice covered play area, and a beautiful garden (currently used by the neighborhood but owned by the district). There is no large room or space for performances and gatherings. It is possible that we could use space at Jefferson or in nearby community buildings. There is one large room that is both the gym and doubles as the cafeteria, but it doesn't have any performance stage or space. A parent asked if it is big enough that a stage could be built, and Mr. Garcia felt that it would not be. There is a big field across Commercial street west of Haight that is owned by PPS and a grassy space south of Humboldt that is 3 lot-sized and is also owned by PPS. Unfortunately only 2 rooms at Humboldt actually open up to the outside.

There are no rooms at Humboldt that adjoin with a common door like there are at RCP, and no rooms with a foyer or separate space. It does have a number of smaller group meeting spaces which could be used for SPED services, the counselor, etc. It is fenced all around. Traffic with the school buses will be interesting because of the small streets. We may need crossing guards on Alberta. There is not adequate parking for staff in the lot, but there is street parking. There are houses built right up to the school fence. There are 4 sets of boys and girls bathrooms, all of which are smaller than our current bathrooms. A parent asked about the play structure, and how schools usually fund improvements for those. Parents commented that usually the schools have to fundraise money, but Fernwood did get their playground funded by the district. The play structure at Humboldt is small. There isn't a good room for choir, although the first year we can use a classroom for that. If we increase the number of students we would have a problem with the lack of a music room.

A parent asked about possible expansion of the lower school (adding additional students at all elementary levels), and Mr. Wood stated that it would not be possible at this building. He feels that there would be a lot of good reasons to unblend 1st and 2nd grade (including instructional and developmental), but doing that would make it more difficult to staff an additional section of middle school. There are also possible equity issues around adding younger students before the age at which TAG testing of all students occurs in PPS. Heather Kent stated that because the DBRAC committee has decided that a robust middle school needs 3 strands we have a good case for asking for the addition of a 3rd strand. Mr. Wood stated that there is a strong pedagogical argument for unblending the 1st and 2nd grade. A parent asked if eliminating the 1st and 2nd grade would give room for enlarging the middle school, and other parents felt that would then be inequitable for the 1st and 2nd graders who need ACCESS. If the grades were separated then the classes would grow to full size classes of each. If the CTP program (currently in one of the portables) moved we could possibly add an extra middle school strand and also unblend 1st and 2nd grades. With unblended 1st and 2nd grades we would still add a full new 3rd grade each year, although not 1 1/2 classes of 3rd grades. A parent asked why the CTP program can't be housed in Jefferson, as it has a lot of space and is nearby, and CTP students are high school age. The upcoming ed options review may decide whether we should have a 1-2 blend or 2 separate classes, and it may not be up to us or related to building size.

Mr. Garcia asked how much of a role the TAG director plays and TAGAC plays in these decisions, and this question was not answered due to time constraints.

Heather Kent asked if the PTA members present felt that we should tell the district that Humboldt is acceptable to us, or if we wanted to advocate for an alternative. There aren't other open buildings aside from Smith, which is very small. A parent stated that we could accept Humboldt and ask for renovations that would make it work for now, but also make the case to the district that this is a compromise for now, but that we are asking for more room for growth for the future. Pamela noted that the district moves slowly, and that we can have both long term and short term plans given both what is really needed and also what the current constraints are.

A parent asked how the teachers liked the building and Mr. Garcia stated that most liked it, with the science labs being the biggest deficit.

A parent asked about high school and how it relates to this, especially as Humboldt is across the street from Jefferson. Mr. Wood answered that a specific high school to which ACCESS would matriculate isn't part of the discussion now, although he thinks that the middle college program is a strong one. This discussion was then held for another meeting.

A parent suggested that we have a team to work on drafting both short and long term plans. It was moved that we have both short and long terms plans, which was seconded. Jonathan Dubay is on the site council and he noted that the site council is already working on this issue. He asked if this committee would take the pulse of the community and make a recommendation about our needs at Humboldt and also longer term recommendations. Another parent recommended that there be 2 separate committees, one for short term planning and the upcoming move, and one for long term planning, and the motion was amended to include 2 committees, one for short term advocacy and the second for long term advocacy. It was asked what the time line is for this. Pamela stated that DBRAC is meeting next Tuesday, which will be followed by a period for public comment for approximately 2 weeks, and then DBRAC will reconvene and make a recommendation to the superintendent by the beginning of June. The time line for advocacy would then be in the first 2 weeks in May.

A vote was taken regarding forming the 2 committees, with 2 opposed, 3 abstaining, and the rest voting in favor, so the motion carried.

Amy, school counselor at Skyline and ACCESS parent stated that she has watched the DBRAC process at Skyline and that we should come at things from a needs perspective and not a wants perspective, and that there are kids who need this program and aren't in it, so therefore requesting expansion of the program is a need and not a want.

Nomination of new officers for next year: 8:45. A motion was made to approve Schoelle Sawyer McFarland, Christina Thacker, and NJ Martelly as members of a nominating committee which was seconded and approved. They will bring a slate of candidates to the next meeting.

Announcements:

Staff and teacher appreciation week is the first week in May. Scrip deadline is April 29th to contribute to SCRIP gift certificates for teachers.

Walk and Bike month is also in May, with kickoff date of May 4th.