
Thurgood Marshall PTA Board General Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

November 15th, 2012 6:30 - 8:00pm

In attendance - Julie Breidenbach, Nan Robertson, Sharmila Williams, Wendy Eckert, Tina Shepard, Mark Ainsworth, Katy Ransom, Daphne Dejanikus, Henry Dejanikus, Annette Sherr, Dana Armstrong, Martin Saxer, Matthew Tebbs, Owen Richards, Dejan Miovic, Margaret Montsaroff, Julia Janak, Ann McCurdy, Scott Egan, Audrey Querns (Lovre), Dana Cogswell, Tasha Irvine, Tram Doan, Torsten Griem, Natalie Zheug

Meeting commenced at 6:30 with an introduction of a School's First guest speaker by Sharmila Williams.

Schools First Introduction -

Two critical Seattle Public Schools levies will be on the February 12th ballot, the Operations Levy and the Capital Levy. Schools First advocates voting yes on both levies to ensure adequate funding is available to all schools for continued quality day-to-day education and building maintenance and improvement.

Fundraising Update - Daphne Dejanikus (for Casey Sommers)

Funds raised thus far is \$37,400. End-of-calendar-year fundraising letters will be mailed to families after Thanksgiving break. Casey has found some wonderfully generous families who are willing to match up to \$15,000 of donations collected through the holidays. Our fundraising goal for the year is \$125,000.

Treasurer's Report – Mark Ainsworth

We still have two bank accounts currently due to a change of banks at the beginning of the school year. Formerly, we banked at US Bank and at the end of summer the Board moved accounts to Wells Fargo due to poor customer service at US Bank. We are waiting for one last transfer to go through and then we will close out our old account at US Bank. As of 10/31/12 we have \$181, 839.78 in our accounts. This led to a brief discussion on "reserves" and how much the PTA should carry-over from year to year. As we spend down the budget this year, we hope that interested parents/guardians will join our Budget Committee in the Spring to help determine how we spend our funds and decide on a policy of how much to carry-over year to year. As our fundraising efforts have been successful over the last couple of years, we find ourselves in an enviable position of being able to utilize resources, previously not available.

Opportunity Grant Update - Sharmila Williams and Nan Robertson

We have spent \$2500 of our Opportunity Grant Budget thus far. Among the Opportunity Grants that have been approved to date - a set of Atlas books for the three Fifth grade APP classrooms, with Fifth grade ALO teacher Ms. Robinson currently deciding on something of equivalent value for her class. First grade teacher Ms. Kohls has requested funds for an Artist-in-Residence for her class this year. Mr. Miller has requested a set of compasses for future Fourth grade science use. One Opportunity Grant request currently on hold - Thurgood Marshall Counselor Meghan Kaloper's request for a current issue of Second Step - because she has also applied for funding from Rotary, we are waiting to see what they approve before we commit to the approximate \$700 necessary for a new edition.

Volunteers Report - Wendy Eckert

Wendy is still hoping to recruit a volunteer or two to help with Tutu's Pantry on a regular basis. A Thurgood Marshall work party is scheduled for Saturday, November 17th. The building will be open for conferences and any interested parents are asked to come by between 9am and 12pm on Saturday to assist with various small jobs. An art walk to display TM students' art work will take place during the upcoming Pancake Breakfast on December 1st. If someone has time on the 29th or 30th to come and hang art, help would be most appreciated. For any and all volunteer questions/concerns, please contact Wendy Eckert at wseckert@yahoo.com.

Communications Report – Tina Shepard

At this point, the weekly Pup Press is the most effective way to get current Thurgood Marshall information each week. Tina is in the process of creating a TM website, as she has determined after several trainings at the John Stanford Center that the main SPS site is not very user-friendly and a centralized TM site would be more efficient and easy to use. Tina will continue to update us on the progress of the school site. School-wide emails are possible now - once TM families are registered on the Source, they will start to receive school-wide informational e-mails. Register through the Source at Seattleschools.org. Any questions/comments/concerns should be directed to Tina at tinashpard@msn.com.

Principal's Report - Julie Breidenbach

Julie Breidenbach shared a very telling experience that she recently had - she was at the flagpole at dismissal when she saw a Fifth grade student with whom she was once well-acquainted but sees much less often now. She asked him what had made the difference - and he said the new math was so much easier to understand and he was therefore much less frustrated! Math curriculum is far superior this year. Students are generally much happier - it IS tougher curriculum, but so much easier to understand. Julie will be hiring a new teacher for Donna Dugan's PEACE Academy class. She is also hiring a new PE teacher for several classes. New this year, the district has gone to a trimester system. Because we have conferences before the first trimester is over, we will have conferences without report cards. Report cards will go home in December.

Open Discussion – All

A few minutes remained and Nan opened up the floor to any questions about homework, curriculum or other issues on parent/guardian minds. One parent asked about the "Reading Logs" and what the purpose was for them, as it is challenging to get students to write in them each night. Julie explained that it helps teachers guide the students in what they read and how they read. If a child is stuck on a particular genre, the teacher can suggest different types of books to the child so that they can expand their literary exposure. Or, during "reading conference" times, which might occur every few weeks in the classroom, teachers can ask the student about a particular book to better assess their "reading level", which again, guides the teacher in giving the student appropriate books to consider.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm by Nan Robertson.
