

PTO Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2016

6:30 to 8pm in Manhattan Library

Attendees: Michele Marshall (Chair), Persia Houston, Adam Hunt, Nicole Wobus (Secretary), Mary Dineen, (Vice Chair) Julie Chang, David Jones, Karen Urbanowski, Sarah Blackford, Shannon Collier, Persia Houston, John Riggs, Loli Hudson, Kristin Kusmierек, Jenn Dingman, Erica Johnson (Treasurer), Alaina McQueen

Welcome & Introductions: Michele Marshall (michelemarshall@comcast.net)

Special Teacher Requests: Alaina McQueen & Adam Hunt

- Michele explained that there are two more PTO meetings remaining this year. Michele will step down as chair at the end of the year because her daughter is graduating. Other parents requested that Michele document the tasks she attends to as chair to help facilitate the transition to a new president.
- Michele reviewed the meeting agenda, highlighting that teachers would be presenting proposals for PTO funding. Michele and others on the PTO support the approach of having those requesting PTO funds present their funding requests directly to PTO.

Funding Request Presentations

- Art teacher, Alaina McQueen presented a proposal for funding to support a “Mobile Art Gallery” temporary installation at MMS. The gallery showcases works by artists who present at the Cherry Creek Arts Festival. Several local schools have participated in the Mobile Art Gallery project with great success. MMS would need 800 square feet to devote to the gallery for a two-week visit. The library is the proposed location. A grant will pay for half of the total \$1,100 cost, leaving a \$550 request for funds from the PTO. Classes would schedule times to visit the gallery. If funds are raised the gallery would be shown at the end of April.
- English teacher, Adam Hunt, proposed funding a visit by Jovan Mays, a champion slam poet with a teaching degree. Mays’ work has strong multicultural and academic relevance. He taught at 200 schools last year. MMS kids loved his visit. He helps make poetry real, pragmatic, and relevant for kids. Mays charges \$400 / day and Mr. Hunt would like to bring him in for two full days so that all students will have an opportunity to see him. Each class Mays works with receives a lesson and a writing exercise, varying from one class to the next. He has a unique teaching style and great stage presence. Mr. Hunt is aiming for an April visit. April is national poetry month. Mays would teach different content this year than last year.

Principal’s Report: John Riggs

- Last Friday there was a team leader retreat. The school is establishing a new mission and vision statement.
- Last week the first meeting was held about the upcoming bond. Items will go out to bid in January and construction will start next spring.

- The school has the support of staff to add a gym. This would involve an additional \$1.5M budget. Mr. Riggs has asked teachers to sign up to be on a committee. “SPED” money is available, and \$400,000 of innovation funds are coming. Mr. Riggs has ideas for how to spend the funds. Mr. Riggs is looking for two parents to participate on the bond committee. In recent blogs he invited parents to participate on the bond committee. They will meet every 2 weeks. Fielding Nair architects will be doing mock ups of the gym soon. The District recognized it as an oversight that a new gym was not part of the earlier bond initiative. Construction is expensive right now; so original budgets may not be sufficient.
- A track will also be built at the school as part of the bond initiative. The field bordering Tenino Dr. is owned by BVSD. The track would be in the middle of that field. Construction will start during spring break.
- Parents noted that a new gym could bring in money because the Y and others would pay to rent it. Mr. Riggs explained that much of those funds would go to custodial expenses. This year rental fees totaled approximately \$7,000
- CMASS and PARCC testing dates are set: April 4-8. A total of 4 days. Only 6th grade has to take an additional language arts test.
- There will be a study hall for kids who opt out. Mr. Riggs recommends keeping kids home for the test portion of day if they are opting out.
- On the Friday before spring break Mr. Riggs will know final enrollment numbers and FTEs for the following year.

Teachers’ Report: Dan Tomlin (DT), Mary Ellen Steele, and Sarah Blackford are the teacher representatives. DT and Mary Ellen were absent. Sarah Blackford provided the teacher’s report

- Teachers appreciated the staff dinner during teacher conferences.
- Alison Woods requested a fundraising dinner to support the Robotics Club. Kids will need \$2,500 to participate in a special Robotics event- “First Club”. She would like to be able to offer a scholarship to one child especially in need. The club would like CU students to be able to help, and wants to fund their time also. It would be like Destination Imagination, but for Robotics and would start next year. A parent has volunteered to help coach. Could have Fairview and Boulder High kids mentor. The current Robotics Club has 3-4 kids who come every time.

Treasurer’s Report: Erica Johnson (erica@onthedivide.com)

- The school spent \$900 this year for clubs.
- Donations came in from Benevity.
- Community fundraisers have raised \$1,450 for the year so far.
- Erica is setting up a place to buy grocery cards on the PTO website- will use the same platform as for making Magic Phoenix donations.
- Magic Phoenix funds represent 85% of income this year.
- There has been very limited revenue from the school store this year. It would be good if kids knew that buying from the store would fund clubs.
- A parent suggested making a portable cart that could be used at football games, etc. to sell school gear and snacks. Mr. Riggs noted that sales cannot start until ½ hour after school ends, for unapproved snacks. A

parent noted that the cart could be used at school plays, etc. It could provide another funding source for clubs. If MMS gets a new gym the school may host more events, providing more opportunities to sell items and raise funds.

- The school store already has gear in stock for next year, and Michele and Erica will go over inventory for next year. They may do one last order before the end of the year, may purchase MMS logo water bottles, and request ideas for other items.
- The PTO has \$44k YTD income.
- “Student Programs” refers to speakers.
- Currently \$20,292 cash on hand.
- Funding the garden / School Beautification Project in front of the school:
 - \$8,500 of funds still available that was raised through Whole Foods bag credit fundraiser last year. The garden work may cost more than what is available. When the money was received, it was decided that it should benefit the entire school and be used for a large project.
 - Taylor Kuczynski, Brent Graham, Kim Greene and Jenn Dingman are involved in the School Beautification Project. They want to get rid of bushes in front, make a musical art garden, and install big instruments that are playable. Could start with what the school can currently afford, and then try to raise additional funds for more artwork in future.
 - Mr. Riggs suggested another idea: to get totem poles for the other side of entryway.
 - Another parent noted that the totem pole cost is low.
- By the May meeting Erica will plan to have a final balance to report.
- Michele noted that PTO used to take 12% of Magic Phoenix and all fundraisers, including community dinners, as seed funding but stopped doing that. There was too much money not getting spent on the students of the parents who contributed. Now every year the PTO spends what it takes in.
- The old PTO planned to spend money on a digital marquis but then abandoned the plan.
- Erica explained that the PTO has \$6,000 to spend this year (still leaving the \$8,500 from Whole Foods and \$5,000 for startup efforts for next year).
- The PTO agreed to fund the Cherry Arts Mobile Art Gallery and the Slam Poet.
- The PTO already purchased items decided on during the recent meetings from the Magic Phoenix campaign since there was more money raised than requested (Chrome Cart, wobbly chairs)
- Mary encouraged spending this year’s remaining funds for a speaker or maybe a movie.
- Erica said she has \$8,500 allocated for school beautification currently, which is what is remaining of the Whole Foods donation.
- Julie noted that there will be a “Palooza” event coming up, which is the main fundraiser for the music programs. Funds will be used to repair instruments.
 - Palooza is a jazz band performance to raise money to support instrument repair. Michele and Julie are planning to come up with a

few groups – contacts in community- willing to donate 15-20 minute set. Currently have 1 jazz band lined up.

- The event would have to be mid-end of April.
- There was also a suggestion to have an old instrument music drive.

Checks written the night of the meeting:

- \$800 slam poet
- \$550 mobile art gallery
- \$194.51- Michele expenses for school store

Other Discussion

Clubs

- Nicole presented the idea of starting a singing club that would focus on pop / contemporary music and provide a singing opportunity for kids who do not choose choir as their elective. Nicole has identified an instructor interested in leading the club. Mr. Graham earlier explained that BVSD rules require a school staff person attend all club meetings. Mr. Johnson has declined a request to lead a singing club. Nicole asked the teachers at the meeting for ideas on next steps for recruiting another teacher to chaperone the club. The teachers suggested Nicole send an email request to the entire teaching staff. Loli offered to circulate the email to the teachers.
- There is currently a girls' singing club that meets during the day with Zennia (counselor). Perhaps Zennia would be willing to expand to boys.
- Loli suggested Nicole send a note to all the teachers (via Loli) to recruit a teacher to serve as a chaperone for a singing club. The teacher would just need to be physically there. They would not need to manage or organize the group at all. It has to be a school faculty person (not just teacher).
- The discussion of the singing club raised the issue of the lack of clubs at Manhattan. Parents expressed an expectation that there would be more clubs at the school, particularly arts-focused clubs given the school's focus on the arts. Staff lack of time / interest in staying after school hours to support clubs was raised as a barrier. Teachers receive nominal compensation for staffing clubs, and BVSD does not allow them to be paid by PTO or outside sources for the time they spend supporting clubs.
- A few people suggested establishing some protocols around club funding. Maybe have all the clubs for the following year submit a request for funds in advance, then have some additional seed funding available to support clubs that may form during a school year. If the PTO says it is going to support 10-15 clubs each year that could help stimulate more club activity.
- Magic Phoenix has typically not been used to support clubs, only teacher requests for class-related resources.
- Another parent noted that school engagement happens in extra curricular activities for some kids, highlighting the importance of clubs.
- A parent noted the importance of supporting arts-focused clubs that align with the school's arts-focused mission.
- Mr. Riggs noted the importance of providing opportunities for student leadership.
- One parent noted that the PTO could have grocery card funds go toward a core fund used to support clubs. It could be used as a core support fund for clubs, with additional funds to be raised through community dinners. Kids in the club of focus for a particular community event could promote the event to maximize the funds raised for their club.

- A parent noted the need to keep money in a school club pot to fund things that come up for early in the next year. Clubs don't necessarily work on the academic work cycle.
- Mr. Riggs noted that when there was a 2.25% cut from school funding a few years ago, that came from extra-curriculars (e.g., clubs). Mr. Riggs has reinstated some but not all of that funding. If the PTO pays teachers for chaperoning a club, there are extra strings attached with the district, so it would really need to come from the school. Some teachers have an expectation of getting paid for club activity. The larger activities (e.g., the musical) pay better, but still not much (\$1,000 for director).
- Mary noted that there used to be biking clubs, and interest in a skateboard club, but there are no teachers to support those activities.
- In the past, always had extra to give as needed to clubs. Clubs would set a fundraising target and would PTO would help make up the difference. For as long as Michele has been involved in PTO no club has been turned away for funding.
- Erica supports establishing a plan for in which funds are allocated based on percentages (x% to this, x% to that, etc.).

Community Fundraising Dinners

- A parent reported having trouble scheduling a dinner to raise funds for the upcoming Santa Fe trip for arts-focused kids. Many restaurants are already booked for the year. Someone noted that Panera and CPK do fundraising meals and could likely accommodate. This parent asked whether the PTO may be able to provide some funds to support the art trip that could be replaced once the art focused kids can raise funds through a community dinner event.
- Someone suggested that for next year the PTO should line up fundraising dinners for each month at the beginning of year. This year the person who had been scheduling dinners left the school.
- Michele tried to schedule an event at Glacier for March and got turned away due to low staffing.
- Chipotle and the Kitchen give back 50%. Many others give back only 20%. The most money ever raised was at Chipotle in Louisville. Manhattan could reach out to Louisville / Lafayette restaurants.
- A parent noted that it's important to consider how many kids will benefit when allocating PTO fund to specific activities. The art trip to Santa Fe is only open to art focus kids. PTO prefers to fund entire class school trips.

Ice Cream Party for 360 Leaders

- An ice cream party was scheduled for the Wednesday following the PTO meeting to recognize the efforts of the school's 360 leaders. [Leftover ice cream from an earlier ice cream social will be used.]

Snacks for Testing

- Michele requested ideas for providing snacks during the upcoming three day standardized testing period. Michele asked for donations of money or food (packaged, easy to distribute). The snacks should ideally be gluten free, high in protein, low in sugar, inexpensive, and not likely to create a mess. Ideas included granola bars, cheese sticks, and fig bars (though not gluten free). At this time, 59 students were planning to opt out of testing.

Michele planned to follow up with a few parents to confirm what snacks to specify, and then send a request to parents to bring in donations of a few specific snack items.

Next Steps:

- The PTO parents will work toward forming a group to think establishing a policy for funding clubs going forward (e.g., using grocery card funds as seed and supplementing with club-specific funding from “dine out” events).
- Recruitment for PTO leadership for next school year. Documentation of current PTO responsibilities.
- Organize snacks for standardized testing- parents interested should reach out to Michele with ideas and to volunteer.
- Nicole to send an email to Loli to pass along to teachers regarding recruiting a teacher to be a chaperone for a singing / music club.

Additional Information

Committee Representatives:

Grocery Cards: Kristy Lane klane@earthnet.net

Projects Committee: Julie Chang Julie@groudan.net

Parent/Teacher Conference Dinners: Persia Houston persiahouston@yahoo.com

District and Community Representatives:

TAG DAC & BVGT- Darcy Fan bdkefan@comcast.net

Kristin Kusmierek (kusberry@me.com)

SAC & DAC- Troy Thornberry (kusberry@me.com)

Volunteering Opportunities:

Snack Organizing for CMASS & PARCC testing (April)

Teacher Appreciation Week (May 2 – 6)

8th Grade Graduation Ceremony & Party (May 26th)

Upcoming Events:

March 8th – Choir & 6th Grade Band Concert, 6:30 pm

March 21st – 25th – Spring Break

April 5th – 8th CMASS – PARCC Testing

April 15th – No School

April 18th – No School

Next scheduled PTO meeting: April 11, 6:30 to 8pm