

Fir Grove Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization Meeting Minutes

October 3, 2019

Opening

The regular meeting of the Fir Grove Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization was called to order at 7:07 p.m. in Beaverton, Oregon on October 3, 2019 by Minta Johnson.

Present

Minta Johnson, Lyndsay Roller, Jenn Hundt, Sarah Hinton, Elizabeth Ranweiler, Jennifer Curry, Kari McGatha, Erin Miles, Catherine Rund, Kate Prakash, Puneet Prakash, Hadeel Aljubauri, Heather Wills, Valerie Roberts, Sarah Lowry, Brent Johnson, Pam Shirley, Tamara Ward, Hannah Nickless, Kristi Balzer, Melissa Carrick, Susan Greenberg

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed. The minutes of the last meeting (September 5, 2019) were unanimously approved as distributed.

Guest Speaker – Susan Greenberg, Fir Grove’s Beaverton School District representative

Susan is in her 7th year on the BSD school board. She has 7 schools – Fir Grove, Greenway, McKay, Montclair, Vose, Whitford, and Southridge. She also has Arco Iris even though it’s a charter school.

What does the school board do? Susan referred to the BSD website listing board responsibilities

<https://www.beaverton.k12.or.us/about-us/school-board>

- Employ and evaluate the superintendent
- Determine long-range plans (strategic plan) for the district
- Approve annual budget – board members are not part of deciding what goes into the budget
- Levy & bond – almost done with bond from 7 years ago. Some major construction and remodeling. Also the levy from ~2 years ago kept 300 teachers.
- Communicate and engage with the community
- Advocate for education with state and local leaders – thanks to Senator Mark Hass for his work on the Student Success Act!
- Approve large contracts and agreements, including with Beaverton Education Association and Oregon School Employees Association
- Advocate for kids who don’t have a voice- help students who need mental health help to get it
- Help parents navigate the system to get what their kids need

Transparency in the budget! Huge budget shortfalls last year. \$12 million shortfall, still \$18 million in the hole despite using the rainy day fund. Not intentional. Lack of population growth meant that BSD got less money from the state than anticipated. Also many families living in poverty have left the district, which means the district has lost some Title I funding.

Last year (2018-19) the district ended up using the rainy day fund to prevent losing teachers. Didn’t want to do that – it was a last resort.

The district has an interim CFO, Jim Scherzinger. He’s an accountant and has added a working budget. There will be a school board work session on October 15, 2019, from 3-9pm at Aloha Huber Park.

The Student Success Act (SSA) money will help with budget issues. Money for mental health and preK that the district has been spending will be at least somewhat offset by SSA dollars.

Principal Miles: The district has been working with Portland State University's demographers to predict enrollment. In the past the district went with middle of the road projections – going forward it will go with low projections. Individual schools (Fir Grove, for example) have seen an increase in enrollment this year – perhaps the district will get more money since there are more students.

Mental health – in the SSA the legislature emphasized the need for mental health help. NBC nightly news had a story this week on mental health in schools. BSD Superintendent Grotting is looking at perhaps bringing in outside mental health providers. Gladstone School District has wraparound mental health and social services. Ms. Greenberg feels that teachers should be able to teach and not have to provide mental health care to students in crisis while also trying to teach.

Parent question – Highland Middle School has band but not choir. What's available is up to the individual middle schools. With the middle school boundary adjustment this year there will be changes to middle schools and more consistency in what's offered at all middle schools. The school board's vote on the middle school boundaries will just be on whether the proper process was followed, not on whether the school board agrees with the boundaries. For the high school boundary changes a few years ago board members were not allowed to attend the meetings. Hopefully that will be different this time.

Parent questions about shortfall of \$12 million during the second half of 2018/19 school year, \$35 million shortfall for 2019/2020 school year

- Some cuts were due to PERS. Poor decisions in the 1980s and 90s led to a big cost to BSD when people retire now.
- Cuts were made – lost some teachers on special assignment (TOSAs), also librarians (LIITs) are splitting their time between multiple high schools now instead of being dedicated to one schools. AVID program was cut in option schools.

What can Ms Greenberg do about bullying? She can't fix things like bullying. Her role is to be a liaison between parents and BSD – to connect parents with the right people at BSD. The person to talk to is Patrick Meigs. He is in the school a lot. Ms Greenberg tells Patrick Meigs what she is hearing and will go further up in the district if needed. Parents commented about students being punched by other students and a student today has a broken wrist after another student intentionally pushed her down. Ms Greenberg will look into it and will talk to folks at the district. She thinks Patrick Meigs is doing what he needs to do. This is a problem throughout the district and there is a mental health component.

There are students with behavior issues that are too big for Fir Grove. What can we do about that? Self-contained classrooms are an option but have to go through the special ed process to get a student into one of them and that takes a long time. This is Principal Miles's 4th year at Fir Grove and since she has been at Fir Grove, 2-3 students per year have been placed at alternative sites.

What can we do to help our kids RIGHT NOW? All these other ideas will take time. SSA money won't be seen in full until next year at least. Ms Greenberg doesn't have answers for that. Beaverton High School has

Virginia Garcia health center, which includes mental health help. Ms Greenberg wonders if that is a possibility for Fir Grove.

Parent question about whether parent volunteers can get crisis training. Principal Miles notes that she has sent three staff members to restraint training. Most of the training is about how to avoid using restraint. Could we get a BEF grant to get training for more teachers?

Parents agree they don't want other parents restraining their kids. But what about de-escalation training?

Can more volunteers be in classrooms to help?

Wouldn't it be nice if there were an ombudsman to help parents access services?

Ms Greenberg asked parents to email information about incidents to her (Susan.Greenberg@beaverton.k12.or.us) and cc Principal Miles (erin.miles@beaverton.k12.or.us) and she will try to get help at the district level.

Principal Update: Erin Miles

How can parents help the principal with the behavior issues we've been discussing?

- By advocating for more staff in buildings and mental health services
- Perhaps by advocating for funding for teacher training – or is that too much to add on for teachers?
- By advocating for additional mental health resources – another counselor?
- Recess options that are inside could decrease the number of problems at recess – volunteers could staff that, would be somewhere open like the library so that volunteers would be within sight or sound of staff members

Early childhood education is another long-term way to help with these issues by getting all kids into preschool. Head Start is at Fir Grove right now – it is a federal program. District-run preK might be at Fir Grove in a year or two.

Fir Grove has an additional 4th grade teacher now – Ms Szuch! Yay! Unfortunately 5th grade classes are still large.

Community walks were great!

Twenty SMART volunteers will start reading with kids next week!

Therapy dog Wilson will be back at school starting Tuesday – Principal Miles will reach out to parents if their kids will be invited to visit with Wilson. Wilson is at the school once a week for about an hour. Fir Grove is the first school in the district with therapy dogs and may be getting a second therapy dog!

Video security for building entrance at the front office is operational.

Fall conferences will be October 23 and 24. Sign up online next week.

No school October 11, 24, 25.

Principal Miles will talk about Fir Grove at the October 28 school board meeting. Starts at 6:30pm.

Lockdown drill last week

- Schools are required to have 2 lockdown drills per year
- The one last week at Fir Grove was not announced. Going forward teachers will know about the drills ahead of time.
- BSD Director of Public Safety Rick Puente was present at the drills – will address doors that don't lock in the gym and any other issues.
- What if there's a lockdown at recess?? There's a plan – evacuation. What to do when you're outside in general. Run away from the school to an evacuation site – Beaverton Christian Church and Highland Middle School are two of the evacuation sites. Kids haven't been trained on this yet.

Shortage of classified substitutes – if you'd like to apply to be a substitute crossing guard, lunch/recess duty, working in small groups, go to the BSD website and apply to be in the classified sub pool. You can say I only want to work at Fir Grove.

President's Update: Minta Johnson

Reminder – bylaws revision – we'll vote on the recommended changes at the November 7 PTO meeting.

Eco-Schools Network is a nonprofit that supports eco themed projects in schools. A few parents attended a meeting this Monday – we are moving forward and would love to get more parents involved! Contact Minta if you're interested.

Budget Update: Minta Johnson for Kristina Hiersche

Slightly more income than expenses – unusual for a non-Fun Run month. Due to the large donation from Beaverton Christian Church.

Thank you to Catherine Rund for getting a volunteer match from her employer!

PTO funds provided fresh granola bars for classroom emergency buckets and paid for field trips.

Volunteer Update: Lyndsay Roller

Flyer lists upcoming events. Staff appreciation day is tomorrow – if some folks could bring treats in that would be really great! ~40 staff members tomorrow.

Fun Run! 17 people signed up to help the day of (October 18), need lots more.

In September we had 70 active volunteers for a total of 489 hours! But there are 528 volunteers in the system – why aren't more people volunteering? Contact Lyndsay if you're wondering how to sign up.

Classroom parties Oct 31 – we still need volunteers!

Welcome back dance Oct 10 from 6-8pm – parents, come too – this is not a drop your kids off event. Enter on the gym side. We'll be selling water and popcorn!

Fundraising Update: Jenn Hundt & Sarah Hinton

Fun Run is October 18! Pledgestar is so easy – post it on Facebook, Instagram, the bottom of your work emails, and watch the donations roll in!

There will be some additional prizes beyond what's listed in the packet – Conestoga swim passes, the top student earner will get a party for 6 people at Big Al's!

Restaurant fundraisers – MOD pizza Oct 7, Chipotle Oct 19

Update on Boy Scouts Units 685: Kari McGatha

Troop is going crabbing next month!

The trailer that was stolen is not 685's.

The pack has 14 new scouts – 10 are from Fir Grove, 3 from Vose, 1 from Chehalem. 4-5 more kids have shown interest. Currently there are 72 active scouts, 55.6% male. 31/72 are Fir Grove students. Also have 2 new den leaders.

Webelos Woods next weekend. Also have a Halloween party.

Fundraisers – popcorn & wreaths, garland, swag. Contact Kari if you want to order! Big chunk of the fundraising money goes directly to scouts.

Committee Updates

Art Literacy – Minta Johnson and Kristi Balzer

Faith Ringgold is the first lesson – individual quilt project with a personal memory. Next up – Faberge eggs! There are still opportunities to help teach lessons, contact Minta or Kristi if you're interested.

Geography Club

82 kids are signed up – at least one more testing volunteer is needed. Testing is the morning of the 4th Wednesday of the month.

5th Grade Sendoff – Catherine Rund

Committee meeting this Saturday, contact Catherine or Stacey Howland if you're interested in joining the committee. Fundraisers so far – Chipotle Oct 19, Noodles & Co. Dec 3 (national day of giving)

The committee will staff the Welcome Back Dance on October 10 and will be selling water and snacks.

Agenda for Next Meeting:

- Welcome
- Approve today's agenda and minutes from previous meeting
- Vote on proposed amendments to PTO bylaws
- Principal Update: Erin Miles
- Budget Update: Kristina Hiersche
- Volunteer Update: Lyndsay Roller
- Fundraising update: Jenn Hundt and Sarah Hinton
- Scouts update: Kari McGatha
- Committee Updates: Art Lit, Geography Club, 5th grade sendoff
- Walking School Bus: Linda Feldhan, Beaverton Safe Routes to School
- Guest Speaker: Jon Franco (topic: BSD Options Schools)
- New Business
- Questions
- Meeting Adjourned

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m. by Minta Johnson.