

# Abernethy Community Meeting

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*Date: 11/17/2016*

## **Agenda:**

- 1) **Call to Order** - 9:01am, Jim Kohler
- 2) **Approval of Minutes** – Beth Cavanaugh made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the last community meeting. Lisa Delaney seconded. **VOTE:** The motion passed with unanimous approval.
- 3) **Public Comment** – *Community members are welcomed to sign up to speak for up to 2 minutes each regarding issues, questions, concerns, or feedback. [Sign up here](#) or immediately prior to the meeting start time in the auditorium. Public Comment period will last up to 15 minutes.*
  - a) Chef Barbara noted a silverware shortage for spoons and forks. Please donate some if you can. Numbers of kids participating in the lunch program are increasing, so we need to make sure we have enough and hope to stop using plastic. The PTA is looking into magnetic tops for garbage cans to minimize the number that get accidentally thrown away.
- 4) **Officer & Committee Reports**
  - a) Tour de Ladd Results
    - i) We raised over \$36,000. That's more than 10% over last year, and over what was expected. 500 kids participated; thank you to all those who helped with the event. The thank you video that was produced is on YouTube, and the Abernethy homeroom Facebook page.
  - b) Annual Appeal
    - i) The Annual Appeal team needs a volunteer to head this campaign up next year. They would like one to start ASAP so the new person (or team) can shadow the current team this year to learn the ropes.
    - ii) So far we've raised \$72,000-75,000; this is below where we were last year at this time, and the rate of envelopes being returned is also below where we were last year. This year the competition for envelope return was changed to grade by grade rather than by class due to teacher feedback (the class competition felt to them like it caused undue stress for some kids). Usually K and 1<sup>st</sup> are the grades with the most participation, but K is significantly down from where it was last year.

**Q:** Is there a target for appeal?  
**A:** There is no target. Last year we raised \$95k, and we have a per student dollar target for the whole year (since we know how much our current programs cost), so our fundraising goals are consolidated. Generally we shoot for the same dollar amount that was raised last year plus some to cover increases in cost and population.  
**Q:** This fundraiser seems so close to TDL- could we be impacted by that or the choppy schedule this Nov? Is there some change to timing we could do?  
**A:** The PTA Board will look at this more when developing the calendar for next year, but it's hard to create additional space just given the school calendar and the number of events we have (even though we have drastically reduced the number of events in the past 2 years).  
**Q:** The message is confusing- is it \$555/per student that's needed for just this fundraiser or

combined for all the fundraisers through the year?

**A:** We try to make the message clear that our current programs/teachers funded by the PTA cost \$555/per student per year on average. So it's up to families how they donate that amount through the year. Some choose to do it all at the annual appeal, and others do a portion with the appeal and a portion at other times (obviously donating is not required, though without that amount per student we would have reduced programs and/or staffing). Not every family can contribute that much and some can contribute more, but the closer we can get to that per student goal or exceed it, the more secure our programs are.

**A:** Some members feel that TDL and the appeal are very different events. TDL being more external (extended family) outreach and the appeal being direct parent contributions.

**Q:** Is the appeal too long? Should we compress it?

**A:** Mixed reactions – could probably be compressed, but once donations are made, the rest of the period doesn't matter to others.

(Corporate matching is also an emphasis of this fundraiser.)

## 5) Unfinished Business - N/A

## 6) New Business

### a) School Update from Principal Heather Hull

#### i) New part time teacher (.5 FTE); hiring update and allocation of time

(1) Hired K-2 support- Wendy Orloff, who is a grandparent of kids who go here in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade. She was in the Peace Corp, and has taught at multiple grade levels as an ESL teacher and Speech/Language pathologist. Most recently worked in Beaverton. She is scheduled for 5 days/week 11:15-3:15, spending 1.5 hours each day in total with 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. That grade is getting extra support since they have highest per class numbers. Some classes chose to use her for math and some chose writing support; the teachers are deciding. She is supporting K and 1 literacy during her time as well. There was more need than Julie Miller can do alone, so Wendy is extra K-1 support there. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade has 30 mins per day per class in the afternoon with her.

(2) One 5<sup>th</sup> grade class is running their own election, but the national election conversation has been limited in the general population. Heather will send an email today with resources on helpful resources on election conversations. Teaching Tolerance has done a lot of work on biased language so that resource is highly recommended.

(3) We'll address any issues as they come up- the staff stays politically neutral, but we help kids navigate differences of opinion, factual information, etc.

### b) Update from school Counselor, Jenny Morgan: How teachers are speaking about the election and ideas for ways to speak with your kids about this and related current events

i) Jenny is full time counselor, Keely Sundberg is P/T and leading small groups and 1<sup>st</sup> grade instruction; Jenny does the rest.

ii) K-1 is weekly lessons, grades 2-5 is on a 3 week rotation: 2 weeks on, 1 week off.

iii) K-1 uses Second Step lessons: focus on empathy, problem solving and emotion management. It's engaging curriculum. There is a lot of talk about respect and kindness. November is a school focus on caring.

iv) Grades 2-5 uses Strong Start, Strong Kids: focus on empathy, problem solving, emotion management, stress management and goal setting. This curriculum brings in the Right Brain Initiative. Grades 3-5 also uses bullying prevention curriculum, this will start around January. The focus is on recognizing what bullying is- i.e. disrespectful things aren't always bullying. Importance of bystanders. Choices as a bystander: speak up vs. reporting vs. tattling.

- v) Grades 2-5 also have a mindfulness unit. This is alternating years, so if a child doesn't get it one year, they'll get it another. The curriculum rotations keep them engaged, but there are always constants of respect and other consistent messages.
- vi) Family and gender diversity, bias language- did this lesson last year.
- vii) There is no blanket curriculum about election, but teachers are hearing what the kids are talking about and they work it into class work. Sometimes current events come up, sometimes it's a general conversation. If you find that your child is upset about current issues, please talk to their teacher.
- viii) Counselors are working with the kids to create remedy books. This could be something to come back to and direct them if they are stressed, sad, etc.
- ix) In the list of resources Heather is emailing to the community, Jenny finds the Huffington Post article the most helpful.

**Q:** Could we throw in more diversity awareness to curriculum?

**Q:** Could we connect this curriculum more to current events?

**Q:** We need direct leadership statement about this school being a safe place. It's fine to be politically neutral, but please make a strong statement. We need a community values statement – saw and loved the Superintendent's statement, but want it in our own words.

- x) There are race conversations nearly every day at school. There is an issue with these conversations at home, and these often don't happen, so we're trying to figure out how to help these conversations happen at home too.
- xi) There is some fear from teachers about parent reaction to these types of conversations.

**Q:** Could we incorporate more service trips/projects into school activities? Mandatory 20-30 mins service at school? Could this be more external exposure?

**A:** Student council is doing some activities.

## 7) Announcements

- a) Annual Appeal is ending – remember to return cards if you haven't done so.
- b) Tuesday, Dec 13th in library, is the next Abernethy Conversations About Race meeting.

## 8) Program/Speaker – N/A

9) **Open Forum** – *If you would like to give a presentation to the community, contact [abernethyptasecretary@gmail.com](mailto:abernethyptasecretary@gmail.com) to be added to the Open Forum agenda. Open Forum also allows meeting attendees to ask questions or follow up on items discussed during the course of the meeting.*

- a) Beth Cavanaugh, Abernethy parent and DBRAC member will give an update from the District-Wide Boundary Review Committee (DBRAC)
  - i) SE isn't hearing much right now, because focus is on Ockley Green cluster – this was to open as a middle school without redistricting.
  - ii) Priority for DBRAC is not to make one-off decisions without evaluating the impact on the rest of the district.
  - iii) When new year starts we'll be focused on the east side as a whole.
  - iv) Sharing Ockley Green strategy because it would be impactful if it was made district-wide strategy. Options include – 1) using roadways and business to define lines for OG 2) eliminating co-located programs to create stand-alone immersion schools. (Atkinson is an example- there are many of these on the east side) 3) individual assignment plan: getting rid

- of boundaries, combo factors, proximity, enrollment, socio-economic balance, etc.
- v) Soft neighborhood model is a community member proposal- this is on the PPS website- link to DBRAC. Be aware this is being looked at by the district. Transportation issue are not currently being analyzed- just trying to gauge community response on each of these options first.
  - vi) OG would like to be decided by December- DBRAC makes recommendation by then, then Superintendent can make a plan, then go to board in Feb.
- b) Staffing projections:
- i) End of Jan/beg Feb, staffing decisions have to be made- PPS changed the normal timeline this year. Staffing lean for that deadline until we know more info on PTA funds and numbers.
  - ii) PE must be full time next year, but there is not extra funding for this, so this will complicate the staffing decisions. The community survey will be early now.
  - iii) There are rules for spending funds – counseling funds for counselors only, K funds for K, etc. The district may change how foundation dollars can be used- this would be very impactful if that change is made.  
**Q:** Could there be a crash fundraiser if we seem to be running toward losing a teacher with all these changes?  
**A:** We have a conflict because the National PTA says the PTA shouldn't fund what the district should provide. Yet the district seems to count on us to fund things, so they don't give them to us. It should be only auxiliary things like garden that the PTA is responsible for. (however, we do currently fund more) But we will stay on top of the issue and keep everyone informed.

## 10) Adjournment

- a) Patrick Vinograd made a **MOTION** to adjourn. Beth Cavanaugh seconds.  
**VOTE:** Motion is unanimously passed.

Highlights denote items requiring follow up at the next meeting.

**NOTE: These minutes are provided for review and distribution but have not yet been approved by the general membership.**

Leah Woods  
Abernethy PTA Secretary