



Ross Elementary School  
PTA Executive Board Meeting Minutes  
October 4th, 2018, 5:00 p.m.

**In attendance:**

Kate Gardner, President | Holly Searl, Principal | Alison Brody, Vice President | Matt Adinolfi, Treasurer | Stefanie Schneider, Secretary | Diane Friendak, At-Large Member, Upper Grades | Amit Thakkar, At-Large Member, Lower Grades

**Welcome & Approval of Minutes, Kate Gardner**

President Gardner called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. and welcomed the Board. The Board approved the minutes of the August 30, 2018 Executive Board meeting and the September 5, 2018 PTA General Body meeting.

**Principal's Update, Principal Searl**

**a. Open Houses**

President Searl reminded the Board that the next open house is October 12, 2018 and that we need a new chair of the open house committee. The Board discussed recruiting parents of children in PK-3 and PK-4 because most open house attendees have young children and are particularly interested in the preschool program.

For the upcoming open house, Nora Rigby, Debra Olson, Kate Gardner, Dayner Baer, and Amit Thakkar have volunteered to give tours and meet with parents.

**b. Calendar Updates**

Principal Searl advised the Board that due to scheduling conflicts, the school is going to postpone the literacy nights previously scheduled for December.

President Gardner reported that Geraldine Gardner, chair of the holiday tree sale, recommends moving the sale from December 1-2 to December 8-9 and 15-16. The supplier informed her that the trees are very dry this year, so it is better to cut them closer to Christmas. President Gardner also reported that Geraldine Gardner recommends having the sale for two weekends because there were leftover trees last year.

The Board discussed the possibility of having the sale span two full weekends but concluded that it is too much to ask of the parents. Instead, the Board recommended 3 days of sale (December 8, 9, & 15) with the bake sale on the 8th. The Board discussed offering a discount to people who pre-order and the possibility of only offering delivery the first weekend. President Searl explained that due to staffing constraints, the building will only be open on December 8, the day of the bake sale. The teachers were already planning to host a STEM event that day, which



Ross Elementary School  
PTA Executive Board Meeting Minutes  
October 4th, 2018, 5:00 p.m.

can occur simultaneously. President Searl advised that the DCPS School Expo is December 8 so we cannot have an open house on that day.

The Board further discussed the need to identify parents from PK-3 and PK-4 to chair the bake sale. President Gardner advised that Laura Tischler is willing to help. The Board also discussed the benefit of having older students volunteer to sell baked goods at the sale.

Finally, the Board discussed whether to hold a gingerbread decorating event on December 8. After discussing the pros and cons, the Board elected to have a community service event instead. Ideas include sandwich making for Martha's Table, card making for veterans, and a mitten drive.

### **c. Parent Education**

Principal Searl advised that several parents have expressed interest in forming a support group for single parents. The Board agreed that the PTA will help facilitate the launch of the first meeting. After that, members of the group can organize subsequent meetings and the group will run independently of the PTA.

Principal Searl also reported that there is parent interest in parent education programs on various child development topics. The Board agreed that it makes sense to have stand-alone programs separate from the PTA meetings so that the speakers won't be rushed. Some ideas that were floated include how to talk to kids about sex education, parental involvement in friendship issues, etc. The Board proposed a parent survey to identify topics of interest as well as dates and times. Principal Searl will research speaker options and the cost for a program as early as January.

### **Financial Report, Treasurer Adinolfi**

Treasurer Adinolfi reported that the PTA has spent 50-60% of its STEM budget on items including a 3D printer. The PTA lost \$450 of merchandise (kids baseball shirts) in the flood so the PTA is over budget on merchandise. President Gardner proposed purchasing IKEA boxes to protect merchandise from future flooding. Principal Searl reported that the school received a donation of \$1,715.12 from the Safeway foundation.

### **President's Update, Kate Gardner**

#### **a. Membership Drive**

President Gardner reported that the PTA has raised \$55,703.45 to date in the membership drive, and that 82% of families have joined. Only 30 families have not



Ross Elementary School  
PTA Executive Board Meeting Minutes  
October 4th, 2018, 5:00 p.m.

join. Last year, there was 89% participation. Principal Seal said she would reach out to staff about joining.

### **b. Calendar Review and Upcoming Events**

President Gardner reported that Barbara Donaldson and Maggie Wanis have volunteered to help out with school photos on October 5, 2018. President Gardner further reported that Nora Rigby will lead Walk to School Day from the meetup site to the school, and Debra Olson will be at the school with coffee. Principal Searl stated that she had arranged for breakfast to outside. The Board decided not to have food for the adults as it created a conflict last year when children wanted it and there was not enough. There will be no police escort this year, but McGruff the Crime Dog will accompany the kids on the walk to school. President Gardner volunteered to talk to Mr. Shegda about coordinating music for the morning.

President Gardner reported that had she had been in touch with Katie Mastin and planning is well underway for Spooktacular.

Vice President Brody reported that she is working on the movie night. The Board discussed possible movies to include on a survey for parents and looked at movies recommended by Common Sense Media. The Board further discussed renting a popcorn machine and selling pizza. Upper School Representative Frenyak reported that there is \$100 left on the gift card donated by Safeway.

President Gardner confirmed that the auction is scheduled for March 30, 2019, and there will be a kick off meeting soon.

### **New Business**

#### **a. Safe Routes to School**

Principal Searl reported that that the DDOT safe routes to school coordinator, Derrick Hardy, is coming to Ross on October 5 from 7:30 to 9:00 and 3:00 to 4:30 to monitor the intersection at 17<sup>th</sup> & R. He will look at the walking path to school, signage, pavement markings, signal operation, and overall traffic operation and safety.

President Gardner reported that parent and LSAT member, Neha Misra, is coordinating the safe routes efforts. Secretary Schneider noted that there are proposals for a 17<sup>th</sup> Street Bikeway and the Ross should inform itself about it and be involved in community discussion about it. She offered to forward and email from ANC Commissioner Downs to Neha Misra with relevant information.



Ross Elementary School  
PTA Executive Board Meeting Minutes  
October 4th, 2018, 5:00 p.m.

**a. Other**

The PTA agreed to give Ross t-shirts to the crossing guards. The PTA also agreed to give Ross merchandise to Ariton to thank him for his help mounting TVs in the school.

**Announcements**

Principal Searl announced that getting enough parents cleared to be chaperones continues to be a problem, and that two field trips have been cancelled this year due to insufficient chaperones. She reported that this issue is creating anxiety for the teachers. She suggested implementing a norm that field trips will be cancelled 48 hours in advance of the field trip if there are insufficient chaperones. She explained that last minute cancellations hurt our relationships with our partners and make it hard to get money back. The Board further discussed the need to make additional, targeted pushes to encourage parents to get cleared and to walk them through the process step-by-step. The Board discussed having room parents reach out to classes.

Principal Searl proposed creating a room parent handbook for future years so that there are established protocols and norms. She has acquired samples from other school that Ross can use as a model.

Meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Next EB Meeting Date is rescheduled for Friday, November 2 at 8:45 a.m.

MEETING MINUTES RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY STEFANIE SCHNEIDER,  
SECRETARY