



Ross Elementary School  
PTA Executive Board Meeting Minutes  
August 29, 2019, 9:10 a.m.

**In attendance:**

Kate Gardner, President | Alison Brody, Vice President | Owen Ozier, Treasurer | Jenny McAllister, Secretary | Amit Thakkar, Lower Grade Representative

**Welcome**

President Gardner called the meeting to order and welcomed the board at 9:10am.

**President's Update, Kate Gardner**

**a. Calendar Discussion:**

- Executive Board Meeting Calendar: going forward, the PTA Executive Board will meet on Monday mornings beginning at either 8:30am or 8:45am. The next PTA meetings will be held on October 7, October 28, November 28, December 2 and January 9.
- PTA Meetings: the first general body PTA meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 11. The JCC has offered to provide after-care at the JCC. Because the Back-to-School Picnic will take place the same night, the JCC will not provide pizza.
- Back-to-School Nights: Back-to-School night will be on September 4 for upper grades and September 5 for PK-4, K and 1<sup>st</sup>. The JCC will provide aftercare and pizza on both nights.
- Spooktacular is scheduled for October 30.
- Fall Movie Night and the second PTA general body meeting are scheduled for November 6.
- Back-to-School Picnic: Kate sent a Sign Up Genius invitation, reserved the DJ, and ordered pizza, tables and chairs.
- Annual Spring Fundraising Auction: Kate spoke with the Human Rights Campaign about availability and they said Saturday night dates are pretty open in the spring. We may consider a date in January or February because those are quiet months for school events, and the summer camp items may be more popular at that time. Procurement of auction items may also be easier because vendors may be less likely to have already given to other causes. Kate will check with the Human Rights Campaign about their availability for January and February dates.

- b. School Supply Update:** About 180 school supply packages have been purchased so far. To continue encouraging families to purchase these, the PTA or room parents may want to send an email describing all the great things purchased with this money, including new carpet in the classrooms, Latin and Greek workbooks for the upper grades, field trips, pencils, and computers. In addition, we may want to create a presentation with pictures of these items.



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- c. **Fall PTA Membership Campaign:** This campaign will kick off next week. We'll plan to push the campaign through room parents and stress that parents can join the PTA on the website.
- d. **PTA Priorities for this year:** (1) parent education, and (2) increasing our community service, possibly including a more formal partnership with a community service organization. Ideas for community service activities include having the fourth and fifth grade students lead a different food drive each month and/or organizing regular after-school granola-making for Martha's table.

### Principal's Update, Holly Searl

- a. **Answering Recent Questions from parents:**
  - The pledge of allegiance is a DCPS policy. Kids are welcome to recite the pledge or not, but anyone who chooses not to recite the pledge must stand quietly while others recite the pledge.
  - Before-care: Ross does not have room to provide care before school. Some of the private providers may offer such care, but most families make arrangements with neighbors, friends, or nannies.
  - Field Use: to reserve the field after school, interested parties must go through the DC Realty process. Principal Searl can provide the necessary form. The athletic organization or person seeking to reserve the field would assume any liability (i.e. parent-coaches for soccer or baseball organizations).
- b. **Thanking DCPS for new Playground/Field:** the PTA should write an email to Sally Parker and copy her boss thanking DCPS for our new field and playground. President Gardner will write the letter and Principal Searl will forward it on. Principal Searl will ask the same of the LSAT.
- c. **Kennedy Center Partnership:** This year Ross will again have the opportunity to be a Kennedy Center partner school (one of 23 partner schools in the city). As a Kennedy Center partner school, we receive a budget of \$20-\$30k in exchange for a \$750 participation fee. This budget pays for artist-in-residence, field trips, and teacher education. We've also applied for some of our kids to have the chance to spend most of a day at the Reach, which opens in September. Mo Williams will be the artist-in-residence for the next two years and the kids will be able to see performances based on his books this year. Principal Searl gave Treasurer Ozier the Kennedy Center invoice and he and President Gardner will ensure it is paid.



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- d. **Spanish translation:** Ross has many more beginning English learners this year, including kids and families whose primary languages are Russian, Japanese, French, and Spanish. We need to investigate ways to have Ross' basic documents and communications translated, including the calendar and dress code. Vice President Brody offered to work on translating some of the core documents. We may consider using google translate for the weekly bulletin. The English Language Learners ("ELL") coordinator will also be setting up monthly meetings with Senior Stewart to discuss upcoming events, etc.
  
- e. **Monthly Cultural Recognitions:** Last year Ross staff took responsibility for monthly cultural recognitions, but this year the school would like to get more involvement from the community and parents. Principal Searl will reach out to Patricia Villamil about taking the lead for Hispanic heritage month in September/October. Principal Searl would like the PTA to help get parent and family volunteers for the other months of the year.
  
- f. **Middle School Information:** the Board discussed effective ways to disseminate information about middle school options while avoiding spending too much time and energy on topics unrelated to Ross on the LSAT this year. The Board considered the option of creating a separate middle school committee, but decided a more effective route would be to ask the PTA upper school reps to serve as points of contact for middle school information. The PTA will also ask upper grade room parents to include Francis Stevens' open house dates in their class emails. President Gardner will respond to a parent from Ward 1 who asked to speak at an upcoming PTA meeting about the Save Shaw Middle School effort. President Gardner will offer to set up coffee with the parent and share the PTA's letter from last year expressing the Ross community's preference to remain in the Francis Stevens feeder pattern.

### **Treasurer Update, Owen Ozier**

Treasurer Ozier would like the PTA to think about ways the PTA can help minimize inequities in PTAs in other schools in the city. The Board discussed the contribution the PTA currently makes to the School-to-School Initiative and the needs of families and children currently at Ross.

*The meeting was adjourned at 10:30am; the next PTA EB Meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 7th, 8:45 a.m.*

MEETING MINUTES RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY JENNY MCALLISTER, SECRETARY