



Ross Elementary School
PTA General Body Meeting Minutes
September 11th, 2019, 5:30 p.m.

Welcome, Kate Gardner, PTA President

President Gardner called the meeting to order. She welcomed new families and introduced the PTA Executive Board and the Room Parents in attendance. She also expressed the PTA's excitement about Ross' new playground.

President Gardner reminded the PTA that the PTA's main functions are fundraising, building community and acting as a resource for the school community. She encouraged everyone to join the PTA through the Fall Membership Drive. President Gardner reminded everyone that PTA funds pay for many things including professional development for teachers and staff; all office and classroom supplies; aides for the classrooms; a full-time Spanish teacher; field trips and enrichment experiences; community and cultural experiences; Apple TVs; ipads; MacBooks; need-based scholarships for afterschool programs; and mosquito spray in the garden.

President Gardner announced that the PTA would be organizing community events such as Walk to School Day; Spooktacular; community service activities and Family Bingo Night.

President Gardner announced that the PTA would be organizing fundraisers, such as the Auction, Tree Sale and Bake Sale, and Mothers and Father's Day Book Drive. President Gardner explained that the auction is the PTA's biggest fundraiser, and encouraged parents to volunteer to help with marketing, procurement, and decoration. President Gardner explained that the Mothers' and Fathers' Day Book Sale is the biggest fundraiser for Ross' library. President Gardner announced that book plates were placed into 144 books that were ordered over the summer and almost all of these have been checked out by our kids already.

President Gardner announced that Ross has been selected for a Kennedy Center Partnership, which will include special field trips and programs for the students.

President Gardner reminded everyone that we need parents' help with chaperoning field trips and requested that everyone complete a DCPS volunteer clearance.

Treasurer's Report: Owen Ozier, PTA Treasurer

Treasurer Ozier presented pictures and graphs to explain how the PTA raises and spends money. He explained that the PTA's annual budget is \$150,000. He



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explained that the PTA spends a small amount of money to exist, such as on banking fees. The largest category of PTA spending is on the school, including computers, and supplies for teachers. The final category of PTA spending is on the community, including money for school picnics and events, and a donation to the school-to-school initiative.

For the last few years the PTA saved money to replace Ross' field. When DCPS decided to provide a budget for the field replacement, the PTA directed the money it had saved into building improvements, including painting, dynamic classroom seating, new classroom rugs, and a loft in the PK4 classroom.

Treasurer Ozier also explained that most of the PTA's money comes from donations from parents.

Principal's Update: Principal Searl

Principal Searl reported that although it was not easy to get the new field and playground in place, everyone is thrilled that it is beautiful and was completed on time. The PTA will write a letter of appreciation to DCPS/DGS.

Principal Searl reported that design, particularly universal design, will be a priority this year. All are very pleased with the new painting and carpet, and the new flexible and dynamic working spaces for children, including cushions, dynamic seating and laptop desks. In addition, Ms. Ashby and Mr. Lancaster did a beautiful deep clean of the school over the summer.

Another big priority this year is supporting Ross's English Language Learners ("ELL"). All of the research shows that good teaching that focuses on ELL will benefit everyone. Ross hired a new ELL teacher this year.

A third big priority for the year is co-teaching. PTA paid for staff to do strength-finder coaching, which focused on how teachers could build on each other's strengths to serve kids best. In addition, Principal Searl prioritizes investing in human capital, and was able to hire a full-time social worker, full-time librarian, and a full-time ELL teacher this year.

Principal Searl reported that enrollment is looking good. PK4 has 20 students. K1 has 67 students across all three classes, including 24 new students. The fifth grade



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class has 17 students this year and Principal Searl is very proud that Ross retained so many 5th graders this year. Ross also sent 15 kids to Francis Stevens Middle School this year.

Principal Searl reminded parents that there are two important parent bodies at Ross: (1) the PTA, which is directed by national guidelines and is set up as a 501(c)(3) organization; and (2) the Local School Advisory Team (“LSAT”). Every DCPS school has an LSAT, which is an elected body of parents, staff, and one community member who lives within the school boundary. The LSAT advises the principal on budgeting and policy matters. LSAT meetings are always open and agendas and minutes are posted on the school website.

Announcements and Upcoming PTA events

- Back to School Night at the Fillmore Arts Center: September 24, 2019. Visit the school and do fun art projects with your kids.

Adjournment: 6:30 p.m.; the next PTA General Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 6th at 5:30 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY JENNY MCALLISTER,
SECRETARY