

Sept 11, 2018
Amy Kober, Secretary

6:10pm start

Abby welcomed everyone. She explained that officers haven't yet had a chance to meet this year, so we will discuss budget and usual PTA business at the October meeting.

Minutes from May were approved and filed; no changes.

Abby talked about communications and encouraged people to visit the school website, www.crestonschoolpta.org for info (PTA meeting dates and minutes, copies of newsletters) and contact information. She said the Google group and Facebook page are also good resources. She noted that you can become a sponsor of PTA and have your business info on the school web site and Facebook page; we can advertise for you. Creston PTA wants to support community members via our means of communications. If you have community event that's of interest, let us know

Abby flagged some highlights for the coming year:

- Different from last year – we won't have any food partnership nights again. It was a struggle to get businesses to want to partner with us. We had a partnership with Rudy's but it was difficult to coordinate with the restaurant.
- The auction and Run for the Eagles are our main fundraisers.
- Other activities: carnival in April, STEM night in March; art and literacy night in January; multicultural night in December
- We'll also have movie nights

PTA meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every month. Parent coffees will be held every month.

Elena Miranda and Ben Maurer talked about the SUN program (SUN stands for "Schools Uniting Neighborhoods")

- Fall extended day classes start Sept 24 – registration packets available in front office
- 13 different classes available in fall, winter and spring terms
- Connected to social services organization called Impact Northwest (focuses on needs of families) – we can connect families to resources they might need
- Registrations due Thursday at Back to School Night

Elena thanked PTA for sponsoring work in the garden that happened this summer. Looking for continued help. Great building beds with kids. Sunflowers blooming, kids are very proud!

Abby noted Creston's food waste program and the need for parent volunteers -- in order to maintain the program and our 'Green School' certification we need volunteers at lunches to help kids figure out what goes in what bin (compost, trash, etc). If you're available during the day, we need volunteers esp for K, 1 and 2 grades. Lunch hour is roughly 11:20 to 12:30. You can sign up for time slots, do once a month, whatever your schedule allows. 'Green School' was a certification process that parents worked hard to get; want to make sure we maintain it.

Abby also talked about pick up / drop off safety in front of the school. The Traffic and Safety Committee worked with PBOT and staff, PTA to create a traffic plan for outside of school.

On the street directly in front of school – both sides of street are 5 minute driver-at-wheel. This is important so that we have a safe place for drop-off. When you can't safely drop your child it creates a hazard – can't have kids running across streets through traffic. We're lucky we haven't had a child hit; need to increase awareness of traffic and safety. If people don't comply with the "5 minute, driver-at-wheel" rule, PBOT may come issue tickets.

We will try to have volunteer parents to monitor cars – will have sign up sheet. Will try to have more visible signs in different languages, too.

Principal Angelica Cruz introduced herself and talked about her goals for the year. She shared that she grew up in Oregon, was an educator in Arizona for 15 years, and recently moved back to be closer to family. She founded and led a STEM school in AZ for the last five years and is excited to bring those ideas to Creston. She said she has four children of her own and really values parent engagement (and of course understands that it's a struggle sometimes). She thanked everyone for being here and for their commitment.

She encouraged parents to fill out the community survey (can find link in Monday emails) – please give feedback. She wants to hear about Creston's strengths and also opportunities for growth. So far she has gotten about 45 responses to the survey.

Discussion about the Spanish program

- Creston has Spanish in middle school now, and we have a chunk of day as pilot enrichment opportunity. Not available to all kids b/c it's a pilot but there's time in 2nd and 3rd grade schedules this year.
- Elena noted it won't impact any after-school language offerings.

Discussion about teachers blogging / standards for parent/home communication

- Angelica said she would like to get teachers to the point where everyone is sending out a weekly message. But teachers have their hands full with new PPS curriculum right now. We'll strive to do it but not there yet.

Discussion about vision for the school – Where do you see Creston going?

- Angelica talked about how she is working with staff on visioning – started this summer, continuing through the fall. Looking at mission and vision of the school. Needs to have full staff and parent input. There will be more discussion. The community survey to parents is part of that – what do parents want?
- Still haven't gotten confirmation from the district regarding switch from K-8 to K-5, so hard to make a vision around grade levels. In terms of bigger picture, thinking about questions like “do we want to be a STEAM school” or are we a service-oriented school, or a neighborhood school focused on inclusion and compassion? What's the focus of our school? What makes Creston unique from other schools in Portland?

Discussion about reading

- No longer have funding for early-intervention reading specialist
- Our teachers are working hard to meet expectations and standards with limited resources
- Abby noted that we'll do our best to have the summer book program in 2019
- Abby said parents and grandparents can always come in to volunteer (esp in K-5 classrooms, help with reading groups)

Discussion about TAG (Talented and Gifted) program

- Parents can request child to be screened at any time
- If your child excels at math – can do “walk to math” program. Info hasn't been that available in previous years –important opportunity for parents to know about (for example, if child is in 1st grade and tests in, she can do 2nd grade math)

Laureen Held shared:

- As counselor, she's working with grades 4-8; other counselor working with K-3 students
- Oct 4, she'll be meeting with parents of 8th grade students to talk about high school. It's on the school calendar.
- Rock garden – 8th grade math class involved in design. Every student will paint a 'kindness rock' for the garden. At recess kids can walk perimeter of the garden. An all-school project.

Ben noted that he would love to see a PTA garden committee get together with Laureen and SUN to have outdoor/garden projects coordinated, that we have blessing of whole community. Wants to create a cross-group committee to create vision for outside space.

We don't have a PTA garden chair right now – open to volunteers!

Discussion about Play Works, playground and school climate:

- Play Works: Will have organized games at recess – designed to be inclusive (it's for K-5), and can also use middle school kids as coaches so they can take leadership
- Abby noted that the bike rack is totally full. Looking at what it would take to install a second rack.
- Also looking at programs that can improve the whole school climate (artist in residence; get someone in to talk about cyber bullying, assembly programs; etc)

7:20pm meeting adjourned