



# PARKVIEW PTO

**General Membership Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, September 11, 2018**

## **Handouts**

- Meeting Agenda
- "Welcome to Parkview Elementary" handout
- Funding Request Form
- Treasurer's Report 08/01/2018 - 07/31/2019
- Draft PTO General Meeting Minutes, May 8, 2018

## **Agenda**

- Welcome
- Q & A with Dr. Baker
- PTO Overview
- Funding Requests
- Yearbook Volunteer Opportunity
- Jogathon Update
- PTO Business (Vote to Approve Last Meeting's Minutes)
- Update from the Principal
- Volunteer Signups

Welcome everyone! Please sign in (forms on tables) and take a look over last meeting's minutes.

At our monthly meetings we typically quickly take care of PTO business and then have a guest speaker on a topic of interest. Tonight we have Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent of the Bellingham Public School District. He enjoys coming to meetings like ours and having informal question and answer sessions with school families.

**6:30**

## **Dr. Baker — “School District 101”**

Dr. Baker is happy to be here tonight. At the start of every school year he goes to each school in the District to participate in PTO/PTA meetings, staff meetings, etc. He knows we don't have a lot of time tonight, but he would like to answer questions and provide a “School District 101”.

As a quick introduction, he is also a school parent and has three kids in the Bellingham Public Schools — a son who is a junior in high school, a daughter who is a sophomore, and a daughter in 4th grade.

This is an exciting time. Our school construction bond passed earlier this year and that means that Parkview will be rebuilt sometime over the next few years. We've had a great start to the school year in Bellingham. This has been the smoothest school start of his nine years in this position.

State-wide it has been challenging — the state legislature has been tasked with fixing public education and they recently made some decisions that have fixed some problems but raised some new problems across the state. The state government will have to make some tough decisions to deal with remaining issues.

Dr. Baker asked how many people in the room are new to Parkview. A show of hands indicated that about 20% were new.

The Bellingham Promise is an important part of our philosophy. It is a big-picture commitment to work hard for all kids and help them succeed. Our community places a high value on education and supporting all kids.

Question: (The parent thanked Dr. Baker for being here. She noted that she hadn't expected this issue to become so important to her, but it is vital for our kids' health and their ability to learn.)

*What can the school do to help ensure our students stay active? There is a state law for physical education minimum requirements, but our kids don't get the amount of time required by state law. WA State regulations (WAC 392-410-135) recommend 100 minutes a week of PE, but K-grade 2 receive 40 minutes per week, while grades 3-5 receive 80 minutes per week. When holidays are factored in, many students get even less time than this.*

Answer: Fitness is definitely important. The Bellingham Promise lays out 17 outcomes we want for our kids, including helping them to be healthy and fit. Part of our challenge comes from how we define physical activity. All kids have some time with a PE specialist, and we have scheduled our days for kids to have both an AM and a PM recess. Many classroom teachers integrate physical activity into the day, through movement exercises between other activities. Many schools have after school activities that feature sports or other active pursuits.

Our larger problem is a lack of time and a lack of resources as well. We don't want to sacrifice class size or scholastic education, so we're balancing time and costs and trying to do the best job we can. There are inequities in our District, but we are working hard to find ways to decrease these and provide opportunities for our kids to be active, even though some of that time is not directly with a PE specialist.

We added a Director of Wellness to our staff, Jessica Sankey. Her role includes helping to integrate fitness and establishment of lifetime habits of activity for our kids.

With this topic, as with probably everything we'll discuss tonight, he must give a very short response. These topics are all complex, and can't be adequately addressed within just a couple of minutes. But he's willing to talk more, if families want to follow up.

Question: *With the upcoming rebuild of Parkview, is it likely that we will revisit the idea of providing more minutes per week with PE specialists?*

Answer: No, this is unlikely. Unfortunately, with the state's work to fix education funding in Washington state, it could soon become more difficult to keep the gains we have made.

Question: *What do you mean by the "state needs to fix things"?*

Answer: Around six years ago the state government was sued by a family because it wasn't funding schools as per the state's constitution (this case is known as the McCleary decision). As this problem developed, state funding went down for K-12 education, and local education funding levies went up. This led to inequities across the state with some schools better funded than others, depending upon local financial support and willingness to raise local taxes to fund education.

The courts agreed with the families that sued. The courts ruled against the state and fined the legislature \$100,000/day for almost two years because they hadn't come up with a budget to adequately address school funding. A few months ago, the legislature came up with its solution and now we hear that basic education is fully funded. But what the legislature has put forth does not meet our local goals and requirements, as well as others' across the state.

For example, we have 11,000 kids at 22 schools. The state has determined that state funding will cover 1.7 nurses for our entire school population. We are not satisfied with that, and we have funded 8. That still is not ideal, but it is better. PE is another example. State funding is insufficient to pay for what we already have.

As part of the state's education funding fix, they have increased the amount of state funding distributed to schools, but have also decreased the amount of local funding schools may raise. Our local funding levies have provided us with \$33 million as part of our \$170 million annual budget this year. But next year we will only be allowed to use \$22 million from local funding.

Some school districts are different than others, but the state's solution is bringing a new set of inequities that we will have to deal with over the next few years. He's not blaming the legislators — they have worked hard, but this is very complicated, and there are a new set of problems now. There have been more school districts on strike this year than in any other during his career. Three are still on strike now.

With our priorities of having counselors, librarians, PE specialists, etc. decreased funding will be a problem.

Question: *When is the rebuilt Parkview scheduled to open?*

Answer: Our community passed a bond earlier this year that will fund the rebuilding of three elementary schools: Alderwood, Sunnyland and Parkview. The plan is to rebuild Parkview and Alderwood first and have them open by the fall of 2022. The Ed Spec team is the committee of parents, administrators and others coming up with a design for the school and they are meeting regularly now.

It's tricky to rebuild a school while students are still on site, but we have done it with Happy Valley and Sehome, and plan to do it here as well.

Parkview Principal Mylo Allen chimed in that he thinks the opening will be sooner: fall of 2020. There should be an initial design plan ready to show the community in October. Parent and community feedback will be requested, and is valuable — the process is similar to Parkview's gym and cafeteria construction and community input led to design changes from the original proposed design.

Question: *The population is growing on the north end of the city. There is a rumor that the schools might shift kids further south to accommodate this growth.*

Answer: Yes, there is growth on the north side. And we do have a process for school boundary adjustments. There is a standing attendance area committee of about 40 people who keep an eye on this.

There have been adjustments at Squilicum High School. Right now, both Shuksan and Whatcom Middle Schools are a little high while Kulshan and Fairhaven are a little low. The challenge is how to balance diversity, poverty, and other factors while balancing the school population. But we have always done, and will always need to do, boundary adjustments over time. We work hard to make all schools great and to even out inequities.

When we need to move kids, we work to accommodate families. For example, a senior in high school might wish to finish out her final year at her school, while an incoming freshman might be easier to move to a "new" school.

Question: *What is the District doing about gun safety measures (protecting our kids from school shootings)?*

Answer: Safety and security are at the forefront for us. We have taken an unusual step of hiring a Director of School Safety and Emergency Management, Jonah Stinson. (Note: He was the featured speaker at Parkview PTO's May 2018 meeting, and a link to the notes from his discussion can be found at <http://www.parkviewpto.org/documents-and-forms/>.)

Our schools have been undergoing some physical improvements such as video cameras, quick links to police, locking doors/buzz-in systems. We do not have plans for metal detectors right now. Interestingly, the research shows that while physical things can be good, "softer" things are more important. We have implemented a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum and have full-time counselors at every school. We are working to assess when a student is hurting or needs help and to provide it. This is also a core part of the Bellingham Promise.

Question: *What do the enrollment numbers look like? Will Parkview get larger over the next few years?*

Answer: Our current model for rebuilds is 3 classes at each grade level in addition to space for specialists. At the elementary level this design means that schools have 400-450 students.

Many schools in the US have 4-5 classes at each grade level. This provides a certain "economy of scale" to be able to have resources like counselors and PE teachers, but it also makes for much larger schools.

Dr. Baker wishes he could stay longer but that's all the time we have right now.

**7:08**

### **PTO Overview**

Cindy Scott, co-president of the PTO with Leslie Atabelo, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She explained that our meetings are usually the 2nd Tuesday of each month. We generally have a bit of quick PTO business and then feature a guest speaker of interest. We flipped our format tonight to make it possible to have Dr. Baker here, so now we'll move on to PTO business.

She is happy to see so many familiar and new faces. The handout "Welcome to Parkview Elementary" explains the mission of the PTO and many of the things we do. We rely on volunteers and teacher collaboration. There are many ways to get involved, both big (like coordinating an event) or small (like serving popcorn at a Family Fun Movie night). All participation is valuable and appreciated!

We work in five main areas, each of which has a board Vice President who coordinates the volunteers and efforts.

**Enrichment** - VP of Enrichment, Jen Seltz

Jen has a 6th grader and a 3rd grader.

- After School Enrichment (ASE) - this year we are offering 3 8-week sessions in topics ranging from photography to Chinese to volleyball. Lindsay and Angela are coordinating ASE.
- Science Fair - This will be held in January and is open to all students. Renee is coordinating.
- Science on Wheels - Each year our PTO brings in a traveling hands-on science exhibit from the Seattle Science Center.
- School Garden - This is located out by the playground. Hannah coordinates this.
- Art Walk - Downtown businesses display student artwork in this annual event. Lisa is coordinating this.
- Whole Child - This program involves curricular enrichment that is different for each grade level.

These are the main things on the Enrichment list at this point. Jen stressed that there is room to get involved with these activities, or to add new ideas. Please talk with her or another PTO board member if you have ideas.

**Communication** - VP of Communication, Gina Austin

Gina has a 5th grader, a 2nd grader, and a 4 year old and a 2 year old. She will be active at Parkview for a long time!

She seeks to inform and share information in a variety of ways.

- Quarterly newsletter - First issue coming out in October and features contributions from teachers, staff and parents
- Yearbook
- Volunteer Appreciation
- Staff Awards
- Flyers in Panda Pockets
- Web Site
- Facebook group

**Support and Outreach** - VP of Support and Outreach, Kendra Meyer

She has a 2nd grader.

She coordinates efforts to provide a bit of extra help where it is needed.

- Winter Wishes - Like the Giving Tree, this program helps provide holiday gifts for Parkview families that could use a bit of extra support.
- Staff Appreciation
- Food Box Delivery - our PTO partners with the Food Bank to deliver food boxes to Parkview families with transportation challenges.
- Parkview Gives Back - Supply drive to gather supplies for a specific cause. Last year's drive benefitted the Family Resource Center that serves all Bellingham Public Schools families by gathering and delivering needed supplies such as diapers, shampoo, and laundry detergent.

**Social** - empty spot right now

The VP of Social coordinates activities including:

- 5th Grade Celebration
- End of the Year BBQ - Katie
- Carnival - the Haines

**Fundraising** - VP of Fundraising, Justine Waymire  
She has a 2nd grader.

We have a lots of different ways we raise money to support our activities.

- Jog-a-thon - This is ramping up right now and kids will be running on 10/5.
- Auction - This will be in the spring, and we still need a lead coordinator and lots of volunteers.
- Scrip - This is gift cards that cost you nothing extra to buy, but give back a percentage of the purchase price to the PTO. Look for information in Panda Pockets. Margo is the lead on this.
- Panda Wear - We have a bunch of neat t-shirts, hats and hoodies for sale. Olesia is the lead on this.
- Box Tops - Some products at the grocery store have a little coupon on the top that can be redeemed for money for our school. Keep these and look for information coming home sometime over the course of the year about when and where to turn them in.
- Family Fun Nights - Some local businesses have "dine out" nights where they will donate back a portion of their profits from that night.

We need lots of volunteers for all our events and activities. If something on this quick list sounds interesting, please sign up! Dates are set for the big events, and are posted on our online calendar.

**7:24**

## **Funding Request Forms**

Susan, PTO Treasurer, has a 4th grader and a 2nd grader. She pointed out the Treasurer Reports and Funding Request Forms on each table.

The Funding Request Forms are an avenue for new ideas for our school and our kids. If you have an idea for a speaker, assembly, etc. please fill out a form and we may be able to fund it.

PTO funds have been used for things like bookshelves in the library, new playground equipment, new point-and-shoot cameras, and to send some of our students from the Bridges program to an Animals as Natural Therapy program.

Question: *What is the Bridges program?*

Answer: Mylo answered that our schools have several specialized programs.

- One for kids highly impacted with autism
- Life Skills - developmentally delayed or fragile kids
- EBD (Emotionally/Behaviorally Disabled) - also called BRIDGES

The Bridges program is located at Parkview and also Lowell Elementary. We have 18 students in the program at Parkview and students range from spending all their time in their main regular classroom to spending all their time in a specialized classroom. There is extra support tailored to each student's needs.

**7:28**

## **Yearbook Volunteer Request**

Tiffany shared that she has been putting together Parkview's yearbook for the last 9 years. Sometimes she questions whether elementary students really need a yearbook, but they love it! This is her daughter's last year at the school, so she is hoping that an interested volunteer or several would work with her on the yearbook this year. It's a big job, but very fun. A team of people might want to work on it together. If anyone is interested, please let her know.

**7:29**

## **Jog-a-Thon**

Laurel is one of the co-coordinators and she has a 5th grader.

This year's event is October 5 and information is coming home soon. The paperwork is a little different this year in an attempt to simplify things. Only flat donations will be accepted, no per-lap pledges. An online donation option will be available to make it easier for out of town family and friends to donate to our kids.



We need lots of volunteers and lots of people at the event to help cheer on our kids. It's a fun event and a highlight of the school year.

**7:33**

**Approval of Minutes**

Each table had a couple copies of the minutes from our last meeting in May 2018. One person motioned to approve the document, and it was seconded. Passed with a unanimous "aye" vote.

**7:34**

**School Safety**

Kat and Lindsay announced that they are concerned about the safety of kids walking and biking through the nearby Illinois and Cornwall intersection. They are hoping to form a committee on safety and are gathering names on a sign up list. Please add your name if you are interested.

**7:35**

**Update from the Principal**

Mylo thanked everyone for coming tonight. He noted that he's been to quite a few PTO/PTA meetings in our district and ours consistently has one of the best turnouts. We have up to 40 people per meeting throughout the year, which is very unusual. This group is highly engaged, as is our Parkview community.

He said Dr. Baker has to be conservative, but Mylo believes that we will break ground for the Parkview rebuild this spring, and a new building will be open for students in the fall of 2020. There will be construction this summer and next school year. Work will be completed next summer in time for the new school year.

He will be at each PTO meeting throughout the year and one of the upcoming meetings will feature discussion of the school rebuild.

Michelle Hess, new Assistant Principal, introduced herself. She will be helping during the next couple of years at both Parkview and Alderwood Elementary. Rebuild planning and construction consumes a great deal of time of each school's principal, so she will be helping out at both schools during this period. She will primarily be at Parkview Mondays, Fridays and every other Thursday.

**7:38**

**Volunteer Sign ups**

We've run over time, so will adjourn. If you are interested in signing up on the volunteer sheets, but need to leave immediately, please get in touch with us at [contact@parkviewpto.org](mailto:contact@parkviewpto.org).

Thank you for coming!

## **Adjourn**

### **Reminders**

- September 25 - School Photos
- October 5 - Jogathon
- October 9 - PTO Meeting