



PARKVIEW PTO

**General Membership Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 9, 2018**

Handouts

- Meeting Agenda
- Bellingham Good Food Promise
- Treasurer's Report 08/01/2018 - 07/31/2019
- Draft PTO General Meeting Minutes, September 11, 2018

Agenda

- Welcome
- Update from Mylo
- Jogathon Update
- PTO Business
- Ellie Twitty, Parkview Garden Coordinator
- Patrick Durgan, Schools Executive Chef

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 Ellie Twitty, Parkview Garden Coordinator and Patrick Durgan, Executive Chef of the Bellingham Public Schools.

6:34

Update from Mylo

Mylo reports that there is a lot happening right now.

We are adopting our new **Social Emotional Learning** (SEL) curriculum. This is a learning year for staff for the **1:1 technology** implementation. This year is professional development and preparation for next year's roll-out. Next year grades 3-5 will have laptops or tablets anchored to their classrooms, so that each student will have access to a device. Mylo thinks one big positive from this will be reducing anxiety associated with testing — allowing students to take tests in their classrooms (rather than go to the library computer lab) should help make testing less stressful. All students are now receiving **foreign language instruction**. Every class has a Spanish lesson once a week. We are preparing for the **rebuild of our school**. Design work and meetings are happening now and the process is moving forward quickly.

We are now fully in the swing of the school year with routines and scholastic content. We have 345 students and have had a great start to this school year.

6:36

Quick Introductions

We quickly went around the room with introductions. Each person shared his/her name and child's grade level. That wasn't recorded for these minutes, however, Mylo shared that he has a 4th grader and a 2nd grader.

6:40

Jog-a-thon Update

Justine shared that we had a great jog-a-thon last week. It was a big success in many ways: the kids ran lots of laps with great enthusiasm, and we had lots of volunteers. Every child got a T-shirt and a medal. Yesterday there was an awards assembly that honored the top lap running classrooms from K-2 and 3-5, as well as the top lap running kids from K-2 and 3-5. Prizes donated by the community were awarded using a raffle system. The event has raised a bit over \$18,000, but we are short of our fundraising goal.

We are looking for volunteers for next year, so please let Justine know if you are interested. Also, there were some changes to the event this year and if you have any feedback about that, she would love to hear your thoughts.

Family Night Out

On November 14, we are combining 2 fun outings that are also fundraisers. From 3-8pm, Village Books in Fairhaven will be donating 20% of our purchases back to our school library. You have to fill out a simple form for your purchase to count. Our librarian, Ralph Hayden, will be reading a story at 6pm. That same day, the Filling Station restaurant will donate 10% of their lunch and dinner proceeds (excluding alcohol) to us. Anyone can participate, you don't have to be a Parkview family, so share the word with friends and family. (And there's no form to fill out.)

Approval of Minutes

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

Winter Wishes

Kendra spoke about our program to provide a little help for school families that could use a little extra support during the winter holiday season. The Winter Wishes program is coordinated with the Lettered Streets Covenant Church and the Bellingham Food Bank. A form that goes out to families about the program and asks whether families wish for help with food boxes for Thanksgiving and/or help to provide holiday gifts to kids. Last year, our PTO helped distribute 30 food boxes to school families for Thanksgiving and 86 or 87 kid gifts for the holidays. There will be information coming home soon about the program.

School counselor Aileen Gardiner is the person who compiles the list of families that could use holiday support. If your church or community organization would like to be involved in providing support, let her know. Last year a quilting club donated their hand-made blankets to the program. In November, there will be a needs list posted via Facebook and Signup Genius.

Carnival

We are looking to put together a committee of volunteers to work on the Parkview Carnival. It's a fun event that usually happens in January. It's a big draw and includes nearly all school families. It is a lot of work, and we are hoping to get our committee together by the end of October. At that point we will see if we have enough volunteers to be able to make it happen. Please let Cindy know, or send a message to contact@parkviewpto.org if you'd like to be involved.

6:52

Ellie Twitty, Garden Coordinator, Americorps

Ellie is the food garden coordinator for Parkview, as well as Alderwood. She understands that there will be an upcoming school rebuild, so this year will not focus on any major new construction. This is her first PTO/PTA meeting ever. She is originally from Michigan, and graduated from college last May. She spent time working on an urban farm in Detroit and most recently spent the summer backpacking in SE Asia and doing garden work.

Her first garden lessons have focused on plant adaptations, worms and getting to know the students. She is teaching 3 garden classes in the fall (for each classroom). She will teach 5 cooking classes in the winter, and then return to the garden in the spring with 5 more garden classes.

She would be interested in performing butterfly experiments in the spring, as a way to study life stages.

A question arose about whether the garden is likely to remain in the same location during and after school construction. Mylo said that initial conversations suggest that the garden will stay put, along with the wood chip area. But this is not a guarantee. If we had to move it for our new school, we would. We have experience moving the garden, as this was done a couple of years ago during the cafeteria construction. Our school families have made clear that the garden is important for our school. Hopefully it will stay where it is, and perhaps even expand.

Ellie is now starting to put the garden beds to rest for the winter, and is working on her cooking classes and planning for spring. She will have a team of Americorps people to help with the cooking classes. She said volunteers are not needed, but are welcomed.

Cindy raffled off a Panda Wear shirt. Congratulations to Angela, the winner!

6:59

Patrick, Durgan, Executive Chef, Bellingham Public Schools

Patrick handed out copies of the Good Food Promise brochure. It is a guiding document for his department and an extension of the Bellingham Promise. It has been a long time in the making, and it outlines the district's goal of having equitable opportunities for all kids to have good healthy food at school for breakfast and lunch.

He has been in his position for 2 years, and the position was new. His goal is to be able to make "scratch cooked" meals for school cafeterias and snacks. The new central kitchen is integral to this plan, and it is slated to open in 3 weeks at the end of October. He is very excited about this.

Harvest of the Month is a program that brings a local food to the schools and allows kids to try it. Broccoli, beets, blueberries and more have been featured, but it can be a vegetable, fruit or grain. Harvest of the Month has been held on the last Wednesday of the month at each school. This year, that is changing. To better utilize volunteers, it will be held on different days at different schools.

Patrick shared information about the Garden to Cafeteria grant. It is funded through Slow Food USA and the Whole Kids Foundation. Bellingham is working on a pilot project to create a model of how to get garden food into our cafeterias. There are food safety challenges, as well as other obstacles to overcome, but it is an exciting project. The Garden to Cafeteria Toolkit is a free resource about how to work with school administrators to bring homegrown food into schools. We have great partners in our community, including the health department, The Whatcom Community Foundation, and others that are helping with this.

The Good Food Promise has an implementation committee that works to translate our goals to the classroom. This involves cultural changes. How many cupcakes has your child had at school birthdays? Celebrations are important but we are hoping to move toward fewer

cupcakes (healthier for kids, and better for teachers!). Store bought foods are often provided for celebrations, because ingredient lists make it easier to deal with food allergy and food safety issues, but they are often not the healthiest option. One parent mentioned a birthday celebration food her child still raves about: fruit kebabs!

Lunches are a good deal at \$2.75/meal. That includes the salad bar. The costs to the school are \$1.25/meal. If demand for meals increases, the cost per meal will decrease. Patrick is working to bring local products into the mix, and this will be simpler with the new Central Kitchen. The schools have \$30,000 of federal funding to use to buy ingredients from local farms.

There was discussion of whether a 20 minute lunch period is sufficient for kids. The change last year to move recess before lunch has helped. Kids are hungry when they enter the cafeteria, and they aren't anxious to leave to go to recess the way they were before that change. Patrick thinks that eliminating chocolate milk has also had a positive effect. Kids start at the salad bar and select for themselves (instead of being served) what they want. There is less food waste. Some kids may not finish eating in 20 minutes, but most do.

All 14 elementary schools are on this schedule with a 20 minute recess followed by a 20 minute lunch. At Parkview, it doesn't take the students long to get to the cafeteria and begin lunch. There have been experiments with other schedules over the years, but it always comes back to this schedule. Cindy shared that she has been doing a "cafeteria 2018" tour. She has surveyed the scene at elementary school cafeterias and says that 20 minutes works for the vast majority of kids. Lowell Elementary has a system that works well. There's a calm, welcoming environment in the cafeteria, and soft music is used to let kids know when it's time to clean up at the end of lunch. The principal has commented that she doesn't want additional time. She has worked to make expectations clear ahead of time with proactive discussion at assemblies. Mylo commented that the SEL curriculum may also be helpful for improving the function of the cafeteria environment.

There are 4 lunch periods now, and 6 lunch periods is the model for the future. That would put the first lunch period at 10:45. Patrick said that the recess prior to lunch really works — by the time they enter the cafeteria, the kids are hungry. Parkview has a healthy snack from the cafeteria, but more education for families about what this means could be helpful. Not all schools get this.

It's important to think about our culture and how we approach food. We want to be thoughtful and positive. Rather than telling a child: "finish what's on your plate" we're moving to asking "is your belly full?" We want to encourage a lifetime of healthy eating, in food choices, environment, and quantity. Lunch time ideally also provides some curriculum time in terms of learning about healthy food and how to make good food choices. There has sometimes been a stigma associated with school lunch — that it's for kids that aren't able to bring a home lunch. Patrick wants to move well past this perception by serving well-priced good tasty food.

Someone asked what happens to leftover healthy snack. Hopefully teachers have the capacity to save it, otherwise hopefully it can be composted.

Patrick is working to develop new meals that can be prepared in the Central Kitchen. Right now he is “locked in” and has no ability to deal with raw ingredients. Our meals all meet federal standards of nutrition, but they are not scratch cooked. He is looking forward to serving more whole foods cooked from scratch. He gave the example of bone-in chicken, like a drumstick, rather than a processed chicken nugget. A shredded BBQ chicken burger is another example of a less-processed meal he plans to serve. As he is able to buy more local products, quality should improve. He noted a bowl of desiccated carrot stubs leftover from healthy snack as he came in. He is looking forward to providing fresher, tastier veggies. A farmer from Sumas River Farms will do a presentation on broccoli later this month, and will be a partner moving forward.

One parent noted that the lunch menus are helpful for planning and having post-lunch discussions with her child about what he liked. Another parent asked if there is any way to hand out samples of lunch, to show kids who normally bring home lunch what school lunch tastes like. Patrick said at this point the best way would be to buy a bunch of meals and have volunteers hand out samples during lunch time.

Parents are allowed to come to the cafeteria and join kids for lunch. An adult lunch costs \$4.00. (Cash and checks are accepted, but parents are not allowed to use a student’s lunch account.) Research shows that more adults buying school lunch helps set the tone. Patrick greatly encourages this.

Patrick again mentioned the salad bar. It’s been an enormous change during his time in the job: every school offers a salad bar with a range of choices and kids choose what they want, rather than being served.

One parent asked whether kids can bring home lunch but also buy a salad from the salad bar. This is not possible yet — federal regulations stipulate many requirements that school lunches must meet, so the salad bar is paired with a main course with protein, etc. Hopefully we can get to that point in the future, but it is tricky right now.

7:30

Adjourn

Reminders

- November 13 - PTO meeting featuring a speaker on the SEL curriculum
- November 14 - PTO Village Books and Dine Out night

