



PARKVIEW PTO

**General Membership Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 10, 2017**

Handouts

- Meeting Agenda
- Treasurer's Report 08/01/2017 - 07/31/2018
- PTO General Meeting Minutes, September 12, 2017
- Draft: "the Bellingham good food Promise" 6/7/17

6:30

Agenda

- Welcome
- Vote to approve last month's Minutes
- Principal Update
- Jog-a-thon Recap
- Auction Recap
- Whole Child program
- Guest Speaker - Patrick Durgan, Bellingham School District Executive Chef

Welcome to everyone tonight! This meeting features a talk with Bellingham School District Executive Chef Patrick Durgan. But first we'll quickly take care of some PTO business and listen to a few updates. The group spent a couple of minutes looking over last month's meeting minutes. One person motioned approval, and it was seconded. Passed with a unanimous "aye" vote.

6:35

Update from Principal Allen

Principal Mylo Allen shared some information about the upcoming February school bond. It is a Facilities bond, and would be used to rebuild 3 elementary schools (one of which would be Parkview), improve fields, build a new gym at Shuksan, and provide maintenance for all district schools (e.g. fix roofs and boilers).

The bond measure is brought forward not by the School District, but rather the stakeholder group Citizen's Campaign, comprised of parents, school representatives, businesses, and others. This standing group needs resources which they gather through fundraising and annual contributions from PTAs/PTOs. They have asked each of these groups to add an annual budget line item for a 1x/year \$99 contribution. If all PTAs/PTOs in the District contributed, that would raise about \$2,000/year. The Citizen's Campaign has been putting forward a bond measure every 5 years, so that would provide them about \$10,000/bond initiative for expenses such as advertising, outreach and consultants.

All the funds necessary for the February bond have already been raised, but Mr. Allen encouraged our PTO to contribute. He raised this item now to let our PTO consider whether or how to respond.

Mr. Allen said he is happy to answer questions now, or whenever they come up, about this subject and the upcoming bond.

Question: Would this bond measure fund emergency generators at schools to be prepared for power outages?

No, that is not currently part of general school requirements. Some schools are more affected by this, but our school is lucky. Power outages are quite rare here.

6:40

Jog-a-thon Recap - Laurel

Great news - we exceeded our fundraising goal and raised \$28,848.67! Since we met our goal, Mr. Allen did something crazy and took a pie in the face!

Laurel is already looking forward to next year's event, but notes that it will be her last one as Coordinator, since her child will be moving on to middle school. She is looking for an enthusiastic volunteer. She said while it is a big event, there are many volunteers throughout the planning, preparation, and on the day of the event. With all that help, it's not as hard as it might appear. It's also helpful to "shadow" the Coordinator one year to become familiar with the event. That's what she did with Amy when she first took on this position. Contact her if you have questions or want to talk more.

6:45

Auction Recap - Julie

The auction was a lot of fun and well attended. Preliminary fundraising info is that we raised \$501 from the raffle and \$4020 from auction items.

6:47

Tax-exempt Status - Susan

More good news: our 501(c)3 tax-exempt status has been approved by the IRS. Our group had to reapply for this as part of our change from a PTA to a PTO.

Our Amazon Smile account should be up soon. This is a different “front door” to regular shopping on Amazon. All the same products and pricing are available, but a small percentage of each purchase is donated to the tax-exempt organization of your choice. After you set this up in your account, you just have to remember to use the Amazon Smile page. It’s very easy, and “free money” for our organization. Susan will post on Facebook when this is activated.

Another “free money” source for us is through a Mount Baker Theatre offer. If you buy tickets to specific upcoming kids shows, and mention our school in the notes field of your payment, the theatre will give a percentage back to our PTO. Randall will post to Facebook about this.

6:48

Whole Child - Kirsten & Meredith

This program is one of, if not the most, expensive things our PTO does. They wanted to introduce/explain this program. It was rolled out to all grade levels at Parkview in 2013. The Bridges program was included starting in 2015. The PTO budgets \$1,200/grade level.

The Whole Child program provides extracurricular activities for all students at each grade level. It is intended to extend learning outside of the classroom.

Many families are familiar with Mountain School - a district-wide program that brings all 5th graders out to the North Cascades Institute for a multi-day trip to learn about regional mountain flora and fauna.

The Whole Child program is based on this model - each grade level has a field trip, with supportive classroom information to provide an in-depth learning experience. Last year our 3rd graders focused on pioneer and Native American history with a visit to the Whatcom Museum and hands-on learning. The 4th graders studied the Salish Sea and capped it off with a visit to Lime Kiln State Park. They took a bus to Anacortes, and a ferry to San Juan island to watch for whales. Again, this builds on classroom learning.

A goal is that the program doesn’t add to teacher workload. The Coordinators would like to recruit volunteer representatives, 2 or 3 for each grade level to do planning, volunteer coordination, and communicating to families. Another goal is to provide more communication about the program. Kirsten and Meredith met with new teachers to educate them about the program. They would love to see other ways of sharing information about the program, maybe kids reporting back to the PTO about their experiences, or telling their schoolmates about their experiences during Panda Pride Assemblies

The Coordinators are seeking volunteer representatives. They would like to have parents with kids in that grade at each grade level. They are still seeking:

- 1 representative for kindergarten
- 2-3 reps for 2nd grade

- 1 rep for 3rd grade
- 2-3 reps for 4th grade
- 2-3 reps for 5th grade

This can be a good volunteer opportunity for working parents that aren't available during the day.

Specific subjects aren't fixed. Art, science, or social studies are all possible.

It would be good to check with classroom teachers about whether they've been approached by parents interesting in volunteering. There may be parents unfamiliar with the Whole Child program, who might not be here tonight, but would be interested in this opportunity.

7:00

Patrick Durgan, Executive Chef and Director of Food Services of Bellingham Public Schools

Chef Durgan shared some quick background information about himself: he started this position at the beginning of 2017. He grew up in Mukilteo, and came to the culinary profession in his 20s. He loves big projects and has an 8 year old in elementary school, with a 4 year old that will be starting school soon. He was a volunteer with the Farm to School program and wasn't looking for this job, but was recruited from his former position at WWU and is happy to be here. He is committed to making school menus healthier and more sustainable, both as a staff member and as a parent. He has a great nutritionist and staff that make up his team.

Part of his mission is to place a greater emphasis on whole fruits and vegetables. Each school now has a salad bar where kids can *choose* their food, rather than be served it. By offering choices that change seasonally, kids are encouraged to make healthy choices and to challenge themselves to new tastes and foods.

Many forces make this a slow process and menu changes are being rolled out slowly. Kids have to be interested in the food, and most kids like to stay with familiar foods. Ordering ingredients is also complex - most food is ordered in March for the upcoming school year. He is making small incremental changes. For example, making a year's worth of berry sauce to substitute for the syrup that used to be served with pancakes, or serving pulled BBQ chicken instead of chicken nuggets with BBQ sauce. He is serving more "whole muscle" meats, which although not locally-sourced, are not heavily processed. This will help familiarize kids with additional upcoming menu changes.

Bellingham has a great opportunity with our local large cold storage facilities. There should be ways to work with local suppliers while crops are in season. These are the kinds of things he and his team have been keeping in mind while designing the new Central Kitchen. There may be ways to support other schools in the area as well with facilities such as these.

He handed out a draft version of “the Bellingham good food Promise”. It’s part of the way he’s communicating about decision-making about food, and how food is served. The key element is that he wants to avoid processed food, as well as additives and colors. The plan is to source more local produce and fruits first, proteins later.

Currently, there’s not enough capacity to meet these goals. His team is reliant on 3 high school kitchens, including Sehome’s which is slated to be demolished in January 2018. The District has small facilities, but this will change as the Central Kitchen comes on line.

He also stressed the importance of food from a social, and celebratory, aspect. We gather to eat, we observe what others are eating, we celebrate accomplishments with food. There are ways to make food look really nice, including the places where we eat.

His position is funded with money from the District’s Foundation, although it will eventually be funded by the District.

Question: how are students with allergies or food sensitivities accommodated?

There are alternatives on the menu currently, such as both cow’s milk and soy milk. The staff tries to accommodate known student needs.

Question: how many students eat school hot lunch?

Right now the percentage is in the 40’s. The percentage of students that qualify for free or reduced cost lunches is in the 30’s.

Question: there can be some stigmas associated with eating school lunch. Is the District doing anything to help address this?

This can be a challenge but Chef Durgan said that the lunch is a good value. It is currently \$2.75 for students. Adults can join students for lunch (adult price is \$4.00 cash or check only, parents cannot use their child’s lunch account) and he encourages this. Modeling eating school lunch is a great way to help overcome stigmas. And the District hopes its changes will help create even greater value, which will be noticed by families and students. The Harvest of the Month program is also a great way to encourage students and families to try out school lunches.

Question: the breakfast program is confusing. My child had trouble figuring it out.

Yes, it IS confusing. There are more options this year, along with some requirements, and this has led to a confusing menu. He is aware of the problem and hopes to find ways to address it.

Question: is the lunch price likely to go up with the introduction of the Central Kitchen and as these menu changes continue?

The pricing will not change this school year, or next. It may go up in the 2019-2020 school year, but if so, only by \$0.25.

Cindy reiterated that modeling behavior -- having adults joining kids in the cafeteria -- is helpful. If parents are interested in eating and volunteering in the cafeteria, she can help coordinate this. She suggested the Tuesday before each Harvest of the Month has a taste test, to encourage kids to try out the special lunch. That can be an especially good time to visit the cafeteria. But don't forget to bring cash -- parents cannot charge to their student's lunch account.

Chef Durgan mentioned a few changes, already implemented, or planned. The schools no longer offer chocolate milk. He said that they will likely continue to offer juice. He has to continue to offer things that kids will like, and this would be a tough thing to eliminate. Eventually, chocolate milk may make occasional appearances on the menu, as lunches become healthier, but that is some time off. He mentioned that the menu still has to be kid-friendly, even with healthier choices. One example would be replacing packaged frozen chicken nuggets with pieces of chicken that have been breaded with a from-scratch recipe in our Central Kitchen. While this is still kid-friendly, it involves whole foods without additives.

Question: how is the food service staff handling these changes?

There is some anxiety around the Central Kitchen, but he is trying to be inclusive and keep staff on board with these changes. Training and support is a priority.

Question: is it likely that schools would eventually have sandwich bars, like Subway? Choosing ingredients is very appealing for kids.

Chef Durgan agreed that kids love the customization, but said that with the current model of 20 minute lunch periods, there simply isn't time for this right now. This might be a good goal for the future. Letting kids be able to make healthy choices is a focus of all this work.

7:30

Reminders

- October 15 - Garden work party, 10am
- November 30 - Carnival planning meeting at Amanda's house

Adjourn