



**General Membership Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, November 14, 2017**

**Handouts**

- Meeting Agenda
- Treasurer's Report 08/01/2017 - 07/31/2018
- Draft PTO General Meeting Minutes, October 10, 2017
- Bellingham School District Bond Facts
- Mindfulness at Parkview

**6:30**

**Agenda**

- Welcome
- Whole Child (3rd grade) Update - Marca Babcock
- Vote to approve last month's Minutes/Treasurer's Report
- Winter Wishes program
- Washington Reading Corps
- Science Fair Update
- After School Enrichment Update
- Mylo Allen — Principal's Update
- Aileen Gardiner — Mindfulness

Welcome everyone! This meeting features a Whole Child update and a talk by our school counselor Aileen Gardiner about mindfulness. First Ms. Babcock will update us on the Whole Child program for 3rd grade. Then we'll take care of some PTO business before moving on to Ms. Gardiner's talk.

One other quick mention is to keep your eyes open for a holiday scrip order form coming home soon in Panda Pockets.

**6:35**

### **Whole Child Update (3rd grade) from Marca Babcock**

Ms. Babcock wanted to share with us how the 3rd grade is using its Whole Child funds. The 3rd grade approaches the Whole Child program differently than other grade levels. They take 3 big field trips over the course of the year:

Farm to Table — Lynden Fairgrounds

Native American exhibit — Whatcom Museum

Electricity — SPARK Museum of Electricity

The 3rd grade just took their first field trip recently to learn more about farming and farm to table. This meshes with what the students learn in our school garden and our periodic cooking classes. The admission was free, but Whole Child funds covered transportation costs.

There were stations set up at the Lynden Fairgrounds where students learned about farming equipment, harvesting, nutrition (food groups), animal health and more. Each student was able to sample cheese and apples and to take home some raspberry jam. Students also learned a bit about our watershed and how farming is a part of it.

Ms. Babcock showed a couple video clips about students explaining what they learned. Students said they liked the field trip and a couple specifically commented that “Fitbits” for cows (which monitor activity levels) were really interesting.

Ms. Babcock thanked the PTO for making this possible.

### **Camp Invention**

Ms. Babcock also reported on her summer 2017 experience with Camp Invention. It is a week long summer camp that features fast paced STEM activities for kids from kindergarten to graduating from 5th grade. This summer was her first year hosting it, and she felt it was a big success. There were 43 campers, mostly from Parkview, with 12 from other schools.

She plans to host it again for 2018 and to try to grow it a little: ideally around 60 campers and 4 teachers. There will be incentives for early registration and people may contact her for more information or visit [campinvention.org](http://campinvention.org) to learn more about the coming year’s program (which includes magnetic slime, robots, a smart house, and a cupcake catapult). She will need high school volunteers and middle school Counsellors In Training (CITs).

**6:45**

### **Meeting Minutes and Treasurer’s Report**

The group spent a couple of minutes looking over last month’s meeting minutes and Treasurer’s Report. One person motioned to approve the documents, and it was seconded. Passed with a unanimous “aye” vote.

### **Winter Wishes Program**

Kendra said there was a big response to our Winter Wishes program that aims to help support Parkview families that need a little assistance during this holiday season. The numbers are still changing a bit, but there are requests to help 72-78 kids with winter gifts and 23 families have indicated they could use Thanksgiving help. There is a SignUp Genius link on the Facebook page, or Kendra can provide the link. This allows those interested in providing help to volunteer to help with specific requests.

### **Washington Reading Corps**

Washington Reading Corps is an AmeriCorps program, part of the National Reading Corps, that provides reading intervention help for kids reading just under the standard for their grade level, as well as ESL learners.

Faline is a Washington Reading Corps specialist and she is based at Parkview. She explained the goal of the program is to build literacy, provide civic education, and encourage service.

Her curriculum spans K-5, but she also wants to move forward with some other fun learning. She is working on a program — Reader's Theatre of Leaders that may include costumes and involve a performance. Another idea is Epic Rap Battles of History, Lincoln vs. Hamilton, incorporating music and poetry. She is interested in possibly offering this type of program thru after school enrichment, for around 20 kids in January.

→ Shannon and Angela will talk with Faline about her ideas and the enrichment program and if something can be available for the next session.

### **Science Fair**

Parkview's Science Fair will be on January 30. It encourages student to develop a science research project or experiment, or record observations of the natural world. In the past, students have focused on all sorts of topics such as robots, fabric dyes, and colors of M&Ms (sorting) as just a few examples.

We will need parent volunteers — science experts — to judge the event. This is a fun task as parents get to ask participants to explain their work and learn about the projects. Some grade levels require students to participate, but most participation is optional. For more information or questions, contact Lindsay.

### **Enrichment**

Shannon and Angela are Enrichment Coordinators. The calendar for winter session is almost ready. Information packets will come out December 1, and registration starts December 9. The session goes until March 23, with one week where no classes will be held (snow day make up, if necessary). Scholarships are available — contact Ms. Gardiner for scholarship information.

Shannon has a 5th grader at Parkview, so this is her last year as coordinator. She is looking for a volunteer to take this on. She says it works really well to have 2 or 3 coordinators and it's a fun position.

Upcoming enrichment offerings are likely to include: choir, cooking (Common Threads), mythical crafts, authors and illustrators, keyboarding, guitar, science club, Spanish (K-2), maybe something with Mr. C (our gym teacher), and martial arts.

**6:52**

### **Principal's Update**

Principal Mylo Allen shared some information about the upcoming February school bond. He and Shannon both serve on the Citizen's Campaign, the entity that develops bond measures. They met today. He offered a handout: Bellingham Public Schools Bond Facts.

Mylo wants us to know what's on this bond and how it affects Parkview. Our new cafeteria and music room are considered Phase 1. Phase 2, which would be included in the February bond, would build a new school in what is now our grassy field. It would connect to the Phase 1 addition.

In addition, the bond would provide new synthetic fields for all the high schools, maintenance for all schools and more. Feel free to ask him questions.

Mylo can only vocalize pro-bond sentiments after he is off the clock, but in his capacity as a citizen, he is very supportive of the measure. He hopes that some of our group will be able to participate in phone banking in the week prior to the vote. It is the easiest phone banking that he's ever done. It involves calling people who have voted yes before. He's volunteered before and only had one phone conversation with someone not supportive.

He is not worried about getting the required 60% of voters to vote for the bond. But this vote also requires a certain percentage of voter turnout (40% of turnout from the November 2017 election, somewhere between 25,000-27,000 voters), so get out the vote efforts are crucial.

Shannon had an endorsement sheet. She's especially looking for business owners to sign it. It probably will be published and used in upcoming communications. These are likely to be small group communications, like Facebook, not lawn signs.

Important facts to remember about this bond: the local tax rate will not increase. It is a replacement bond, fiscally prudent, and although the Citizen's Campaign considered a larger bond to rebuild 6 elementary schools, in the end they decided to put forth a smaller bond and keep the tax rate unchanged.

**7:00**

**Mindfulness, Aileen Gardiner**

This is a popular topic - mindfulness is a practice where we think about the present moment without judgement. It is based on Eastern philosophies, and is meant to cultivate deliberate social and personal awareness.

In the classroom she has introduced a “core practice” that uses a small chime. She used it with us. Start by sitting up straight in your chair with both feet rooted on the ground, so that you feel grounded. (She likens this to a willow tree with a strong core and loose limbs.). Close eyes or look down. She rings the chime, and while it is sounding, about 20 seconds, she encourages you to feel aware, calm, and present in the moment. Focus on your breathing.

She is teaching this to all students at Parkview. She was able to provide chimes to all teachers so that they may also use this technique with their students. This practice can be done by everyone: those impacted by trauma are encouraged to keep their eyes open. The goal is for people to learn how to calm down, focus on awareness and be present.

She handed out a flyer called “Mindfulness at Parkview.” Our brains have 3 main areas to think about in terms of mindfulness:

- Amygdala — flight or fight response.
- Prefrontal cortex — logical rational thought, used to make good choices.
- Hippocampus — producing, storing, processing information. Memory.

When people are under stress, the amygdala is kept busy, and other parts of the brain are not as engaged. This makes it much more difficult to learn and make good choices. Mindfulness can be used to learn to reduce stress, which calms the amygdala.

Aileen plans to continue and grow this practice at Parkview. In February-May, she plans to build on the basics and take students on listening walks or play listening games around the school. These activities force focus back to the present. She will also link this to gratitude and self-esteem. The techniques vary based on age. 3rd graders are coached to think about how they got to this specific moment. Who contributed to getting the student to school and ready for school that day? How? 5th graders study optical illusions, learn about perspectives and different perspectives, and how this contributes to social awareness.

She encourages everyone to try practicing mindfulness. There are some fun phone apps that can be useful, but this doesn't require “stuff,” just intention.

*Question: First, thank you. This is good practice. Do you use these techniques with staff?*

The main focus is the students. Social emotional learning is a technique that has proven helpful. There is a framework around this topic for schools (CASEL) that is available. In addition, she works to provide trauma-informed classrooms, and teach students specific self-care techniques that may be useful for them. The topic of gratitude came up, and Aileen will be adding stronger emphasis on this in the coming months.

A parent mentioned that she had just completed a 6-week course at Peace Health for healthcare providers on these topics. She found it very useful.

**7:23**

### **Introductions**

We have some new faces in the room and a few minutes left, so let's go around the room with quick self-introductions and quick statements about something for which each of us is grateful.

### **School Carnival**

Amanda wanted to announce the Carnival planning meeting to be held at her house November 30th. She'll also post information on Facebook about the meeting. For those new to Parkview, it is the largest attended event of the year. It includes games and activities and is a lot of fun. We need volunteers, including a new coordinator to learn the ropes for next year.

### **School Zone Proposal**

Paul shared that he has been speaking with city traffic planners about implementing a School Zone at the intersection of Cornwall and Illinois. It would involve limiting speeds. He has hit a roadblock with the city, but feels strongly that it is necessary to keep kids that are walking and biking to school safe. He is starting a petition to gather signatures to continue the discussion with the city. Please find him on the playground after school to talk more or to sign the petition.

**7:30**

### **Reminders**

- November 30, Carnival planning meeting at Amanda's house
- December 1-7, book fair
- December 7, Movie Night at Parkview
- January 9, next General Meeting (no December meeting)

### **Adjourn**