

PAC Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2020

Kindergarten Q&A

The first PAC meeting of the 2020-2021 school year took place on September 16, 2020.

Ana Barros, President of the PAC for the 2019-2020 school year opened the meeting by introducing herself and Meredith McCabe, President-elect for the 2020-2021 school year, and informed the PAC that officers for the new school year would be voted on during the meeting.

Meredith McCabe introduced herself as the parent of four (3) three children: Patrick (4th grade), Alex (2nd grade) and Mae (kindergarten), all of whom attend Old Post Road Elementary. Meredith said that she sat through her first PAC meeting when her oldest entered Old Post Road and did not know what the PAC was or what it did, so she thought it would be good to provide an overview, especially for those who were new to the group.

PAC is a group of parents who come together to enhance the learning experience for the students and the teachers through fundraising. This includes teacher stipends to mitigate costs; technology upgrades – last year there iPads were purchased for the student body; improvements have been made to the playground; cultural arts presentations are brought in for the students, etc.

Fundraising efforts range from large in person gatherings, where both parents and children attend – such as the Gingerbread Festival, Apple of My Eye dance – to small one-off events like restaurant nights out. There are also events that connect parents to the OPR community, like Parents Night Out.

People can get involved first and foremost by coming to the monthly PAC meeting. There is no need to contribute at first but come and listen and get an understanding of what we do. If you have ideas of how things may be improved upon, bring it up and we will find ways to make it happen.

Ana Barros then noted that in previous years there had been big fundraising events, but that will not be able to happen this year. As a result, the PAC is looking at ways to come up with ideas to continue fundraising in this environment.

Meredith agreed we will need to be creative because we will be limited in ways to raise money and the types of things PAC will be able to do will be different. Regardless, PAC would love for you to stay involved and, as she said earlier, Meredith had no idea what the PAC did when she first attended, so please do not hesitate to ask. No question is a bad question.

In addition to Meredith as President of the PAC, Margo Dornisch, Genevieve Jolley (who was not present) and Ann Walsh were unanimously elected to Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, after Margo and Ann also provided some background information.

Fundraising Event Coordinators

Meredith reiterated there are many ways to get involved and that each initiative has a coordinator assigned. One can choose an event that is a heavy lift or choose a one and done event.

Room Parents

The room parent is the liaison between the teacher and the parents for the coordination of school activities (craft day, field day, Gingerbread Festival gift baskets). Generally, there are two room parents per class. This year, each room parent for each class will be associated with a specific cohort. It is a great way to get to know the kids and the teacher.

Friendship Directory

The Friendship Directory is a depository for contact information of students and their parents. It is a resource for parents to connect for birthday parties, playdates, etc. Room parents also pull information from the Friendship Directory. The school is unable to release this type of information due to privacy concerns, so this is the PACs solution to meeting the need.

MAIN PAC MEETING

Mr. Barner: Everyone is on mute. If you have a question, please note it in the chat box and I will call your name and you can unmute yourself.

Ana Barros: Welcome everyone, my name is Ana Barros and for the next couple of minutes, I am your PAC President. I am excited because at this meeting we will be voting in a new officer group for the PAC.

First, I make a motion to accept the May agenda. Second. All in favor? Unanimous.

I would like to introduce Meredith McCabe. Upon approval she will be the new PAC President for the 2020-2021 school year. Meredith if you would introduce yourself.

Meredith McCabe: Thank you, Ana. My name is Meredith McCabe. I currently have three children at the school: Patrick who is in 4th grade, Alex who is in 2nd grade and Mae who is in kindergarten. I have not been overly involved with PAC to date, but am very excited to get involved. A fun fact for you all – I actually attended OPR myself!

Ana Barros: Motion to accept Meredith McCabe as the PAC president for the 2020-2021 school year? Second? Unanimous vote.

Meredith McCabe: Thank you everyone. Margo, would you like to introduce yourself?

Margo Dornisch: Hi my name is Margo Dornisch. I have two children who have attended OPR. Maggie is currently an 8th grader at Bird Middle and Will is a 4th grader at OPR.

Meredith McCabe: Motion to accept Margo Dornisch as the PAC Vice President for the 2020-2021 school year? Second? Unanimous vote. Ann would you like to introduce yourself?

Ann Walsh: Hi my name is Ann Walsh. I have five children, two are in college, one is a junior in high school, one is a sophomore in high school, and one is a 4th grader at OPR. All have attended OPR.

Meredith McCabe: Motion to accept Ann Walsh as the PAC Vice Secretary for the 2020-2021 school year? Second? Unanimous vote.

Genevieve Jolley, who was not able to be here tonight, has three children: Isabella who is a freshman at the high school, Anna who is an 8th grader at Bird Middle and Thomas who is a 4th grader. All of Genevieve's children have also attended OPR.

Motion to accept Genevieve Jolley as the PAC Treasurer for the 2020-2021 school year? Second? Unanimous vote.

Thank you everyone and a big thank you to the outgoing PAC officers. We appreciate everything you have done.

Treasurer's Report

Pat Lane: There really isn't a ton to talk about. The only thing we have done this year is the stipends, which came in \$450 under budget because some of the part-time people are not coming back.

There will be many things we will not see this year because of the situation.

Chandler Sullivan: Did the remote teachers also receive stipends?

Pat Lane: No, only in-house teachers received stipends.

(Pat Lane sharing his screen) many things that typically fall on here – such as Cultural Arts, the Ice Cream Social – will likely not happen this year due to Covid.

Some teachers are asking for different things that they would not usually ask for. There is a ton of money not accounted for in the expense report that we could use to assist teachers to outfit their rooms for social distancing.

Meredith, how would you like to talk about this? Would you like it to be me or you?

Meredith McCabe: Thanks, Pat, we will get to that in the section below Mr. Barner's update.

School Update:

Mr. Barner: Hi everyone. There was a certain amount of anxiety going into the first day of school, but it went better than expected. There are many procedures and practices in place that teachers learned within first eight days. Students have taken to it with ease. It feels very airy in the classrooms and people are very spread out. The students started learning right away.

Things have improved things as the days go on, as has dismissal. We can see things getting back to normal.

I always talking about the school and the parents being partners in education, but this is taking it to the extreme. It is very appreciated, particularly on these hybrid days. Thank you for everything you are doing and thank you to the PAC for what they do. As the saying goes, many hands make light work, so please do not hesitate to get involved.

My tip for a successful year is frequent communication. Please do not wonder or try to find information elsewhere. Ask us, ask the teachers or even ask the PAC if you do not want to ask yourself. We want to get the correct information out. Please keep that in mind and spread the message to others. We do not want incorrect information coming from other places.

There has been great learning going on, great technological professional development for teachers and for students to learn things. Our goal is to get back to normal.

Attendee question: Are the classrooms in which the kids are eating nut-free?

Mr. Barner: We feel there are nut-safe procedures in the classroom and therefore do not have to have restrictions. The desks are cleaned before and after, etc. Safe practices eliminate the need to ban things from coming in. If there was an extreme, airborne allergy, then we would notify and take precautions.

Attendee question: Is there a need to attest in Aspen every day as to whether your child has Covid symptoms?

Mr. Barner: No, if you read the document you will see that you just need to attest that you are aware of the requirements and that you will check your child for symptoms each day.

Meredith McCabe: Moving along to more information on PAC fundraising efforts.

As explained on PATs overview of budget the budget, it is a weird year. There were many things done historically that we will not be able to do this year, such as in-person gatherings, bringing presenters in from the outside. Many things are wait and see. For example, we know that because of the restrictions many things in the fall, like the Ice Cream Social, will not take place, but things may change by the spring, so we do not necessarily want to take them out of the budget at this point. We are trying to come up with creative ways to fill the gap and will continue to work on it. We hope to continue to provide the teachers with a monthly treat – trying to stick to Wednesdays, when there are more teachers at school and less kids.

Thank you to Kathy Martinez for doing the Friendship Directory. This year, in addition to collecting the standard information, we will also be asking people to reflect the cohort they are in as we feel this data point will be helpful to families trying to reach out or plan.

Room parents are a critical communication liaison between the teachers and the parents. This year we will be asking for two parents per room, one for each cohort. The form will be distributed shortly.

We would also like to raise money for Diversity and Inclusion this year and possibly move some money from Cultural Arts to support it.

We also need to support teachers in this new environment. We received a request from one of the kindergarten teachers to purchase bins for their classroom because they are unable to use the hooks due to Covid restrictions. We would like to add a line item to the budget to accommodate for these types of requests. Obviously, this is a work in process, but we looked at budget and identified expenses we knew were not going to happen and have pulled them over to this line.

Chandler Sullivan: Will the remote classes be included in all of the PAC emails? PAC pulls distribution from friendship directory doesn't it? The fully remote classes would like to participate.

Mr. Barner: Every student, whether they are remote or hybrid, receive emails from me so the PAC emails can go out through my email distribution.

Attendee question: With free meals being offered to all students, do they need to be ordered?

Mr. Barner: Preordering meals is out the window at this point, meals will come in for every student every day.

Chandler Sullivan: Where should we send fundraising ideas?

David Barner: You can send them to me and I can send them to PAC or you can send them directly to PAC at oprpacwalpole@gmail.com or reach out to any PAC officer. There are also Facebook and Instagram pages.

Chandler Sullivan: My idea was to have sleigh rides in the back of OPR – socially distant – and charge some kind of fee.

Meredith McCabe: That is a great idea. That is what this forum is for – to brainstorm these kinds of things so please feel free to bring up any ideas you have, and we can try to make them happen.

I would like to give a shout out to Carolyn Henjes for coordinating the Back to School Supply fundraiser – thank you!

Mr. Barner: The district has decided to postpone picture day until the spring. Worst case scenario, it will be held outside. We are not letting anyone in the building right now because it is too hard to track.

Meredith McCabe: There will be a PAC photoshoot fundraiser on October 17 and 18, 2020.

Ana Barros: The September Restaurant Night fundraiser will take place at Jimmy's Pizza on September 23, 2020. Jimmy's has offered to run this every other month if we prefer.

Kathy Martinez: Has the PAC decided how they will be handling payments? Will it be entirely electronic, or will we still be accepting cash and checks?

Meredith McCabe: We have not made a final decision on payment. Although electronic is preferred, we understand not everyone is able, so at this point, it is to be determined.

Kathy Martinez: Last year 70% of payment for the Friendship Directory was by cash or check.

Meredith McCabe: I will speak with Genevieve about payment.

So that is about all that we have at this point. Are there any questions?

Chandler Sullivan: Would you please post a reminder of how to link to Amazon Smile, so PAC is able to get the money back?

Mr. Barner: I will leave it in my emails all year long if someone can send it to me.

Meredith McCabe: Are there any other questions? There being none, I make a motion to adjourn. Second? Unanimous.

Mr. Barner: If anyone wants to stay on and talk about anything, I am happy to stay on as long as needed.

Meredith McCabe: Thank you everyone.