



**University Park Elementary**  
**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the PTA Board & Membership**  
**February 12, 2019 - 6:00PM**

**Location of Meeting:**

U-Park Auditorium  
2300 South Saint Paul Street  
Denver, CO 80210

**Present at Meeting:** Candace Kristensson, Angela Rathbun, Scott Rathbun, Devon Parish, Rachele Montanaro, Michelle Gardner, Susan Westhof, Brooke Merkle, Erin Dunlap, Katie Riddle, Merrell Aspin, Jen Frenkel, Becky Limanni, Shannon Loo, Rachel Stone, Julia Gold, Carin Wagner, Ellen Landy, Nathan Lipke, Eric Atonna. (total: 20)

The regular meeting of the PTA Board and Membership of University Park was called to order at 6:06 PM by Candace Kristensson.

**I. WELCOME - Candace Kristensson**

Candace began the meeting by thanking Becky Limanni for organizing a fall leaf clean up of the school. She then proceeded by thanking the PTA membership for voting on the cover of this year's yearbook. The winning theme is as follows:



**II. PRINCIPAL UPDATE - Eric Atonna, Principal**

Eric began by thanking the PTA for fundraising and the hard work that goes into it. The UPark staff simply cannot do what they do without the annual donation from the PTA and UPark would certainly look very different without it. The support allows the school to make moves within the budget to make it a more desirable place for teachers to work by adding more teacher supports and opportunities for teacher trainings. Having paras in the building is vital to the success of the school.

One major move that has been made within the budget is to hire an Assistant Principal. They have been through an extensive interview process and made an offer, which has been accepted. However things are moving slowly in HR right now. Eric mentioned that he is really

excited to bring the new Assistant Principal on-board, he's confident she can bring excellent instructional support. Eric went on to explain that UPark is really the only school of this size, with an AN Center, that operates without an Assistant Principal. He concluded by assuring the PTA membership that UPark can fund this position and continue to fund this position moving forward.

Eric also thanked Mandy Lover and Steve Nederveld for hosting the Restorative Parenting session for the school. It was well received, so they will be offering more in the future. Planning these sessions will be part of the new Assistant Principal's job description.

Eric then went on to provide updates about the teacher strike. Eric has been starting each day with a morning meeting with 24 people in the building who are giving 110%. He assured the PTA that we WANT our teachers back, that is our goal. He assured everyone that UPark is doing well with district support. There are 17 certified staff members in the building: 3 are from the district office, 4 are substitute teachers, and 10 are UPark staff members. A certified teacher means they have their teaching certificate or a guest teacher certificate. He explained that 3 UPark paras received guest teacher certifications. Alexis and Sharon in the front office have been Eric's rock, along with Mindy Ostrom and Mandy Lover who helped to get a plan in place before the strike took place. Tobey Bassoff, Eric's Instructional Superintendent has been in the building everyday to provide him guidance and give support. There have also been many parents in the building providing additional support. This parent support has allowed them to make adjustments after day 1 of the strike. On the first day of the strike the 4th & 5th graders were in the auditorium watching a movie together because that was the only way to allow teachers a lunch/restroom break. On the second day of the strike the kids were able to go to recess because parents helped covered recess duty. There are 350 students, out of 457 students in the building. The teacher to student ratio is 24 to 1 (not including the AN Center). All 4 kindergarten classes are with 1 familiar adult (their paras). The classroom numbers are as follows: 1st grade - 23, 2nd grade - 26, 3rd grade - 26, 4th grade - 24, 5th grade -24. These numbers have been manageable for the teachers. Eric and Tobey will continue making rounds and walking through the building to check in with everyone. If staffing permits, they will try to get the library up and running tomorrow and parent, Maya Pingle has offered to do a movement class for kids. The school has also been opening up the gym and allowing team building games for kids, but he would love to have more offerings for the students. Tomorrow, the school will have one substitute leaving and another staff member returning.

Question 1 - How can we help?

Answer - The school could use support for lunch and recess duty. There will always be a certified staff member and lunch and recess duty as well. The time frame is 11:30AM - 1:35PM, Kindergarten is the biggest area of need, as well as, 4th & 5th grades. Additionally, if parents are so inclined they could bring in care packages for the staff that are in the building. It has been exhausting for everyone because they are taking on so much more within the building.

Question 2 - What are we doing about Valentine's Day? Are parties still happening?

Answer - Yes, Eric said he'd like to press ahead. Parents do not need to provide Valentines for additional classmates from split classes, just keep Valentines for regular classmates. Julia Layton and Candace Kristensson will coordinate with room parents to send out more information after negotiations this have concluded this evening. Spread the word that parties will move ahead with regular plans that were made before the strike.

Question 3 - Is the 2nd grade field trip canceled for Thursday?

Answer - Yes.

Question 4 - Is there a way to know who your child's teacher is for the day?

Answer - Eric mentioned that he was hesitant to release this information publicly because he doesn't want anyone to feel negatively about staff members who may or may not be crossing the picket line. He is happy to answer these questions via a one on one setting.

Question 5 - If your child doesn't come to school, is it counted as an excused or unexcused absence?

Answer - Eric said he needed to look into this matter because there has been varying information going around. Eric assured membership that he will get clarity on this matter.

Question 6 - Can packets be made available to students who are not here?

Answer - Eric said that packets can be going home, if parents would like to see them. Ask him and he will arrange for this to happen.

Question 7 - How did bargaining go today?

Answer - Candace Kristensson said that things were going seemingly better today. They just broke up again for caucus and that things were getting heated. It doesn't look like it will end tonight, but it is moving in the right direction.

Question 8 - Do you foresee any issues between staff members on strike and staff members not on strike, once the strike has ended?

Answer - No. This has been a deeply personal decision for all involved. The core value this month is cooperation and this is something the staff had before the strike and that they will need to move forward after the strike. UPark is about diversity and the choice to strike is no different. Eric views this as his job as the leader, to be sure to bring everyone back together.

Question 9 - It seems like there is biased one sided information coming from the Superintendent. Is there a way we can send out information from both sides?

Answer - Candace said there are various news sources that are doing a good job of this, she suggested checking out Chalkbeat and the Colorado Sun but that only the superintendent had access to all parent emails.

A suggestion was made by Rachele Montanaro that the school could send out more information with more transparency to parents. She went on to say that parents would be comforted by the information shared this evening, like certified teachers in the classrooms, attendance tracking, and how many familiar faces there are in the building.

### **III. AUCTION - Rachele Montanaro**

Rachele reports that the auction is off to a smooth start. The theme for this year's event is Lights, Camera, Auction! The event will take place on April 6th from 6-11PM at Archetype Distillery. Dinner will be provided by Cuba Cuba, dessert will be provided by Cuba Cuba and Nothing Bundt Cakes, Mile High Popcorn will be providing a popcorn bar for the event, and there will be music by DJ Goodie. Initially the committee hoped to keep the proceeds from the

cash bar, but due to new liquor laws in the state of CO, this has proven difficult. The committee has chosen to hire Designer Beverage, a company that will provide an open bar for guests, for \$12.50 per person. This means the ticket price has increased this year to \$60 per person, but attendees will get an entire meal, dessert, and an open bar.

Rachelle shared that the greatest needs for the auction were wine donations for the wine pull, lodging in NYC and San Francisco, and sponsorships.

#### **IV. BACKPACK - Ellen Landy**

Ellen has set up a time for 25 people to volunteer and Food Bank of the Rockies. It will take place on May 11th from 12:15PM - 3:30PM. She encouraged everyone to sign up by April 27th, otherwise Food Bank of the Rockies will open up the time to the public. Volunteers must be over the age of 14, but we have received special permission for 4th & 5th graders to volunteer if they are with an adult. For each who volunteers the 3 hour shift, Food Bank of the Rockies will donate 20 pounds of food to the Backpack program.

Jen Frenkel pointed out that this date is the same as the golf tournament for the Neighborhood Center.

#### **V. CO PTA Legislative Committee - Merrell Aspin**

The CO PTA Legislative session runs February through May. The bills they are currently tracking are on the CO PTA website, under the legislative committee. There was an update in the CO PTA newsletter asking PTA members to contact legislators, asking them to support the Governor's proposal to fund full day kindergarten. The budget request is for 207 million dollars. Merrell provided everyone with contact info for our state legislators: State Senator, Robert Rodriguez [robert.rodriguez.senate@state.co.us](mailto:robert.rodriguez.senate@state.co.us) and State Representative, Alec Garnett [alec.garnett.house@state.co.us](mailto:alec.garnett.house@state.co.us).

#### **VI. BUDGET REVIEW - Devon Parish**

Devon walked the PTA through the budget, line item by line item. She reported that the Apple Campaign raised another \$1,550 in January, the PTA gained 2 additional members, and that band restaurant nights have been going very well this year. The total income for January was \$3,443.49 and the total expenses were \$3,793.27. All is balanced

#### **VII. CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP - Carin Wagner & Scott Rathbun**

Carin and Scott reported that the UPark Gold Sponsors will expire on April 1st. They are unsure who will re-up and who will not. The 2018-2019 Gold Sponsors are Austin Signature Homes & iOrtho. Carin and Scott have set up meetings with both companies to discuss their involvement in the 2019-2020 school year. The sponsorship levels are : 4K, 2K, 1K, and additional other a la carte offerings. They said they would like to create a partnership with a real estate agent and encouraged the PTA to send any leads their way.

#### **VIII. GAGA BALL UPDATE - Candace Kristensson**

Marni Welch could not be present at the meeting, so Candace spoke on behalf of Gaga Ball. Gaga Ball is a game similar to dodgeball, but it uses an octagonal walled structure, making it a safer option. Many other local public schools like Bromwell and Steele have their own Gaga Ball pits or are in the process of installing them. Students came to the PTA with their proposal and

they are supported by PE teacher, Tracy Hartin. UPark has been weighing the options between two proposals and we will be having a vote at the next PTA meeting to approve or decline funds for a Gaga Ball pit.

#### **IX. OPEN BOARD AND CHAIR POSITIONS - Candace Kristensson**

Candace walked the PTA through the filled and open PTA positions for the 2019 - 2020 school year as follows:

- Vice President - open
- Apple Co-chair needed with Julie Gold - open
- Wellness Chair - open
- Yearbook Chair - open
- Restaurant Night Coordinator - open

#### **COMMITTEES OVERVIEW 2019 Proposed**

- **Apple Campaign - Julia Gold & TBD**
- Fun Run - Joanna Shear
- **Grocery Cards - VP (TBD)**
- Corporate Sponsorship Chair - Carin Wagner & Scott Rathbun
- Backpack Program - Ellen Landy
- Garden - Geoff Babbitt
- **Wellness - TBD**
- Green Team - Jeanne Zokovitch & Ashleigh Ruehrdanz
- Spring Auction - Tamara Reese & Rachelle Montanaro
- Legislative Action - Merrell Aspin
- **Yearbook - TBD**
- Room Parent Coordinator - Julia Layton
- Grant Writing - Susan Westhof
- Grounds - Becki Limanni
- Mobility - Candace Kristensson

#### **2019 Proposed BOARD**

- PRESIDENT- ANGELA RATHBUN
- **VICE PRESIDENT- OPEN**
- TREASURER - DEVON PARISH
- SECRETARY - RACHELLE MONTANARO

If anyone is interested in one of the open positions, please contact Candace.

#### **X. QUESTIONS AND OPEN DISCUSSION**

Candace adjourned the meeting at 7:34PM.

#### **UPCOMING DATES**

<i>Feb 14th</i>	<i>Valentines Day; 2nd Grade Field Trip</i>
<i>Feb 15th</i>	<i>School Choice Closes</i>
<b>Feb 18/19 Mon/Tues</b>	<b>NO SCHOOL UPARK</b>
<i>Feb 25/26th</i>	<i>5th Grade Balarat Field Trip</i>
<i>Feb 27-Mar 1</i>	<i>4th Grade Drama Performances</i>
<b>Mar 4 Monday</b>	<b>NO SCHOOL UPARK</b>

*Mar 7*  
*Mar 8th*  
*Mar 12th*

*3rd-5th Art Show*  
*Green Team*  
*PTA MEETING*