



**University Park Elementary**  
**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the PTA Board & Membership**  
**October 8, 2019 - 6:00PM**

**]Location of Meeting:**

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

**Present at Meeting:** Candace Kristensson, Angela Rathbun, Natalie Nove, Devon Parish, Eric Atonna, Natalie Jacobsen, Audrey DeHarty, Ashleigh Ruehrdanz, Julia Layton, Julia Gold, Jen Frenkel, Samantha Byrne, Christy Shand, Kerri Marshen, Amanda Schneider, Merrell Aspin, Nathan Lipke, JoAnn Fujcoke, Johann Vandenberg, Jamie Lin, Heidi Overbeck, Michelle Miller, Ashley Rippon - TOTAL: 23

The regular meeting of the PTA Board and Membership of University Park was called to order at 6:04 PM by Angela Rathbun.

**I. WELCOME AND MINUTES APPROVAL - Angela Rathbun / Natalie Nove**

Angela began the meeting by asking for minutes approval for the September PTA meeting. The minutes were approved.

- **Costume Exchange** - The 4<sup>th</sup> annual costume exchange will be held on Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> on the blacktop. The costume exchange aims to ensure that every student has access to a costume for Halloween. Donations come from UPark families, and the students with the highest need to will have a chance to choose their costumes right before the end of the school day, with all others having a chance after school. She mentioned that we may have a winter gear exchange as well.
- **Teacher Appreciation Luncheon** - The 3<sup>rd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> grade parents will help volunteer for the teacher appreciation luncheon on Wed., Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>. We are set for food. We need a couple more parents to help with setup. Another luncheon will be held in the spring, hosted by K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade parent volunteers.
- **Consideration of New Committee** - We have students from 20 different countries and 15 different languages, with all different socio-economic backgrounds. We are considering a new committee – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. This committee would work to ensure equity among all our students while helping us to celebrate our diversity. To begin, this committee could create a survey to determine areas of need regarding equity and inclusion. This committee could also oversee some of our existing events, like the Halloween Costume Exchange, and helping us expand upon some of our current events, like Multicultural Night. Candance mentioned that in the past we had someone to help take ownership for various activities on Multicultural Night. We are looking for anyone interested in chairing this potential new committee.

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

Eric began by thanking everyone for attending the Fun Run and Carnival. We have started up our Instagram page and we are brainstorming ideas to do creative things to use that as another platform to showcase our school. This is in addition to what we have on Facebook and our in-depth school tours for prospective parents. He talked about how our teachers are focusing on the habits of discussion that probe students on what they have learned as they complete the

work. This is to promote students talking about social-emotional and academic skills that they have learned. CMAS scores will be going out for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade families during parent-teacher conferences. Copies are available to parents beforehand. SPF ratings have been reviewed and will be released on Friday morning, Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> - a QA session will be held after that.

### **III. ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL INTRODUCTION & UPDATE – Natalie Jacobsen, AP**

We have been using iReady for our assessments for math and reading. We are required by the state to assess students three times per year. After the assessments, lessons are populated automatically for the student at his/her level. It's adaptive and gives us more data. It is one component we use to assess how our students are doing, and is more rigorous and accurate than our prior assessment. Our first assembly will be a Wise Owl assembly. There will be five assemblies that will align with the five character traits we have outlined for the school. This will be a fun assembly that will encourage school spirit while honoring students for their good character. The PTA has funded t-shirts for the assemblies. This is a way to celebrate our successes and promote our core values.

**Parent Question:** Is iReady just another tool for data for data sake? How is this data being used in the classroom in order to make it better for the whole student population? **Answer:** iReady is foremost a tool for assessment and not for instruction, assessments are required by the state. They feel this is the best platform to gather reliable results that help teachers determine areas where students understand, and areas where they need further instruction and assistance. We've had a lot of different apps used throughout the building in the past, a lot of which have been removed in place of iReady for more rigorous and consistent data. This platform is more robust and streamlines our assessments. It allows us to assess for one standard at a time.

### **IV. TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE – Ashley Rippon / Samantha Byrne**

Both Ashley and Samantha introduced themselves. Samantha is a teacher leader and special education teacher, and she talked about a reading pen that has been purchased for some of our older students. This pen can be run across words and will voice the words to the student and has proven to be extremely helpful. She will let the PTA know if more such pens would be beneficial after more use.

### **V. VOLUNTEERING & TOURS – Audrey DeHarty**

Art room, library and lunchroom volunteer forms have been set up and sent to those who expressed interest in each. For the book fair, there is one open slot for helping with the registers and one slot for Thursday from 9-11am for repacking the books that were not purchased. The sign-up link will be in the weekly newsletter.

School tours are quickly approaching. If you are interested in helping with tours, we are looking to train 2-3 new people. We are also trying out an open house approach this year in addition to PTA led tours. Our first open house for prospective parents will be held on the same night as Multicultural Night. We will have a little parent need support for this event. Jen Frenkel mentioned that in the past we have also had 5<sup>th</sup> graders help give tours with parents. Multicultural Night starts at 5:30pm on Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> and the open house will start around 6:00pm.

### **VI: COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- **Fun Run – Angela Rathbun (on behalf of Joanna Shear)** – The Fun Run was a huge success. The registration numbers were about the same as last year. We were

concerned about having in earlier due to less planning time, but that seemed to work out better with the weather. We are looking to do it again this time next year. We are need of committee members for next year. Joanna is looking for a co-chair she can train. The financials will be reported at a later date once all numbers are in. It was asked if we could not have it on a 3-day weekend, but it was explained that we are only given a couple of date options to choose from based on when the police can support the street closures.

- **Apple Campaign – Julia Gold** – As of tonight we are at \$37,000, which is about 50%. She has begun emailing families individually, which has increased donations. She is also looking for some additional help for this year, as well as a co-chair for next year. Every year we seem to hit our number, but we always need more support to get us their. She is looking for any idea.
- **Backpack Program – Angela Rathbun (on behalf of Ellen Landy)** – We are serving twice as many families this year when compared to last year. We have just over 30 families; therefore, we need some additional help to pack meals. They are done on Thursday afternoons at the school. We are able to purchase food from Food Bank of the Rockies and Ellen has partnered with additional programs in Denver. We are financially in a good spot to meet the needs of all the families right now, but need more manpower packing those meals on Thursdays.
- **Green Team – Ashleigh Ruehrdanz** – Green Team ran the hydration station at the Fun Run, which went really well. On Friday, Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>, a cafeteria waste-sorting video will be released. Also, the October meeting will be held this Friday, Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>. The cafeteria runs independently from the Green Team and is currently short staffed; therefore, we are looking to use compostable materials in the cafeteria when time constraints don't allow washing reusable items in the dishwasher. Ten zero-waste party kits are available for use for classroom parties and events.
- **Grounds – Angela Rathbun (on behalf of Becky Limanni)** – We were planning on scraping away grass and adding gravel where the Gaga Ball pit will go this weekend, depending on the weather, but will most likely have to reschedule.

## **VII. PRESENTATION OF PROPOSITION CC & SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS – Merrell**

**Aspin** – Colorado PTA is advocating a 'Yes' vote on Prop CC. Three handouts were distributed. The school board race will also be on the ballot this November 5th. The Colorado PTA is an advocacy organization. In 1982, CO spend \$232 more per student that the national average. In 2015, CO spent \$2,162 less per student than the national average. There are various fiscal challenges. CO ranks last in the nation in providing teachers will a competitive wage. Prop CC does not raise taxes, does not amend the constitution, or change any existing formulas. Prop CC does what TABOR requires by asking voters to vote on a policy change to remove the revenue cap. CO is underinvesting in critical areas of infrastructure; Prop CC helps address funding needs without raising taxes. Prop CC asks if the state can keep the excess revenue collected under the current tax rates and invest any additional revenue above CO's current revenue cap into K-12 education, higher education, and roads, bridges, and transportation. A representative from the CO PTA spoke about going to the website to sign up as an "Education Voter" and to get involved at [www.publiceducationvoter.org/copta](http://www.publiceducationvoter.org/copta). She encouraged the PTA to get others to register to vote and become educated on these issues, including Prop CC and supporting local school board members who advocate for kids. Just helping to educated three others will help tremendously, and ask them to do the same. The projected amount of revenue to be retained is considerable, and would allow the state to allocate quite a lot of money per K-12 student. The money cannot be used for recurring costs

and Prop CC will not solve the school funding crisis, but it will help and it works within the confines of TABOR without raising taxes.

### **VIII. FINANCIALS UPDATE / BUDGET REVIEW - Devon Parish**

The financials were reviewed with a discussion of income and expenses through September. We made a bit of money on the Fun Run, even though it is not a fundraiser, because of corporate fun run sponsorships.

### **IX. QUESTIONS AND OPEN DISCUSSION**

Angela adjourned the meeting at 7:24PM.

### **UPCOMING DATES**

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Oct. 14	School Tour	Volunteers needed
Oct. 14-17	Book Fair	Before and after school M-W; Before school Thursday
Oct. 15	Halloween Costume Exchange	After school on the blacktop
Oct. 15	Restaurant Night at Chook	All day; donating 10% of all sales
Oct. 16	Teacher Appreciation Luncheon	3-5th Grade Parent Volunteers
Oct. 18-22	NO SCHOOL	
Nov. 12, 6 pm	Next PTA Meeting	
Nov. 14, 5:30-7 pm	MULTICULTURAL NIGHT	Including a world music drumming duo
Nov. 14, 6pm	Prospective Family Open House	
Nov. 19	Restaurant Night at Wahoo	5-9pm; donating 50% back to UPark.