

PTA General Meeting

Monday, 09.11.2017

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# Attendees - Speakers & Officers

* Donald D. Owen, Ed.D, Superintendent of Urbana School District #116
* Spencer Landsman, Principal of Leal Elementary School
* Lara Orr: Co-president
* David Guth: Co-president
* Angela Waarala: Vice president - General
* Whitney Street: Vice president - Communications
* Rachel Edwards: Co-Vice President - Membership
* Robert Nagel: Treasurer
* Luke Scharf: Secretary
* Mary Kate Arend, Walk-a-thon

# Agenda

## Welcome and Introduction of Executive Board - David Guth

* Lara Orr: Co-president
* David Guth: Co-president
* Angela Waarala: Vice president - General
* Whitney Street: Vice president - Communications
* Abbey Matz: Co-Vice President - Membership
* Rachel Edwards: Co-Vice President - Membership
* Robert Nagel: Treasurer
* Luke Scharf: Secretary

## Meet the Superintendent + Q&A - Dr Don Owen

* New faces in the school district and superintendent’s office
* Belief Statement – equity across SES, race, etc
	+ Aligned with, but distinct from, the Leal Belief Statement
	+ Narrowed test scores gap between white and black high school students to a statistically insignificant level. (Applause)
	+ Looking at other achievement gaps , like college admissions, etc
	+ Focused on equity, excellence, and engagement.
* Common Core implementation
	+ Getting involved at the board level with a nationwide movement to change the narrative around public education. See the [#LovePublicEducation](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/lovepubliceducation?source=embed) hashtag.
	+ Strong believer in the Common Core standards.
	+ Adopting Eureka Math, robust in addressing the higher level thinking skills which come with the Common Core standards.
	+ Redesigning math curriculum for the middle school
	+ Wants Algebra 1 available to all 8th graders. Petitioning for this algebra class to receive high school credit.
* Immigration Policy & Impact to Leal Families
	+ Firm believer in DACA. Most rational way to improve immigration policy. Need to have DACA to allow our students to become productive members of society. Dr. Owen credibly disagrees with President about the constitutionality of DACA.
	+ Please let the school know if families are afraid and/or need support. Wants to dispel rumors and provide support.
	+ The Illinois school funding system is better than it has ever been.
* Breakfast After The Bell
	+ From a policy perspective: essentially a mandate from the state. Any school district with an average of >=70% free & reduced lunch must provide breakfast. Only alternative is to show that we’re feeding >=70% before school, which we cannot do because children arrive on buses.
	+ Spencer: Good unintended consequences – hallways clear quickly, fewer tardies.
* Ask Me Anything
	+ **Comment:** Breakfast: Kind of like it, because kids can eat with their peers.
	**Announcement:** Breakfast satisfaction survey - David Guth
	**Handout:** Breakfast satisfaction survey form distributed - Whitney Street
	+ **Question:** Algebra credit: How does it work in special education?
	**Answer:** Same way other classes work in special education. Wants kids to have the opportunity to take Algebra, not that all kids must be in algebra. Other districts are doing this, as well. When Dr. Owens taught, he had one year where 2/3rds of the students were in Algebra, and another year had 3 students – depends on the principals and the expectations – why not try it and see?
	+ **Question:** What about students who are bored when they move to middle school math?
	**Answer:** Depends on the kid.
	+ **Question:** What about different math tracks for different students?
	**Answer:** Dr Owen wants to challenge all kids within the existing structure.
	+ **Question:** Math Extensions: More sections?
	**Answer:** Yes. Math Extensions in middle school applies and extends the classroom instruction with applied activities like rocketry and similar. Dr Owen likes Math Extensions and hopes to incorporate elements into the regular curriculum. Acknowledged a particular teacher who did a wonderful job with it.
	+ **Question:** Sugar content in breakfast options?
	**Answer:** Dr. Owens refers to the people who run the program.

## New Business

* Proposed Budget – Robbie
	+ Explained line-item changes from last year.
		- Increase to childcare budget to reflect staffing changes (loss of CJ).
		- Combined “multicultural enrichment” and “cultural enrichment” into one category.
		- Increased funds for teacher support.
		- Increased funds for staff appreciation.
	+ **Question:** Why is there no money for after school enrichment?
	**Answer:** PTA stopped that years ago when the district started providing 21st Century Grants to the After School program.
	**Explanation:** What the 21st Century Grants program is (SPLASH). An optional after school program which runs M-T for 6 weeks every quarter. Topic based. Kids apply for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice of topics. Examples: Fishing, gardening, scrapbooking, soccer, dance, etc. Growing every year. The Urbana Park District runs the program.
	+ **Question:** Is there a funding gap for SPLASH?
	**Answer:** Grant is sufficient. The bottleneck is finding teachers to offer the classes.
	+ **Question:** What is the appropriate way to provide support?
	+ **Answer:** Grant is sufficient.
	+ **Motion:** Remove the line for after-school enrichment budget category for now?
	**Result:** Tabled.
	+ **Call:** Fundraisers: eScrip / Amazon Smile. [http://smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com/)
	**Suggestion:** Put a reminder in the PTA newsletter?
	+ **Question:** What about the changes to the “Classroom Areas” and “Outdoor/Playground/Garden” line items in the budget? **Answer:** Promethean Board installations complete, so “Outdoor/Playground/Garden” increased to $3k for playground renovation, and removed from “Classroom Areas”.
	+ **Question:** Should we continue using the Student Directory service, which costs several hundred dollars per year?
	**Answer:** We should consider discontinuing the service.
	**Answer:** MemberHub is an option, and free. The PTA Board is still exploring its capabilities. Whitney will be happy to test it with anyone who is interested.
	+ **Comment:** “Bank and Other Costs” line item in the budget should be negative.
	**Motion:** Amend the “Bank and other costs” to include a minus sign?
	**Result:** Amendment approved.
	+ **Motion:** Approve the amended PTA budget for the 2017-2018 school year?
	**Result:** Approved.
* Walk-a-thon - Mary Kate Arend
	+ Description of event: Child walks for 30 minutes or an hour. Donations based on how many laps your child walks.
	+ Funds used for field-trip expenses.
	+ Funds used for other school purchases (picnic tables)
	+ Photos
	+ Need adult volunteers
		- On the field
		- Photographers
		- Paperwork help
	+ **Call for volunteers:** Volunteer SignupGenius and/or paper form.
	+ Landsman wants to restrain fundraising to people the child knows. Including grandparents!
* Scholastic Book Fair - Lara Orr
	+ **Call for Volunteers:** Will need volunteers
* Teacher Appreciation Meals – Angela Waarala
	+ Call for volunteers
	+ Need contributions of food – you can just drop it off
	+ Cleanup is easy

## Principal’s Report – Spencer Landsman

* + The school year is off to a good start.
	+ Continuous reading instruction based on student needs – fantastic corps of reading interventionists.
	+ Server issues with the district, and Google Drive slowing down work somewhat.
	+ Happy to have the kids back in school.
	+ **Question:** Who are the teacher Liaisons to PTA?
	**Answer:** Darcy Silver, and Jeff Poblano

## Open Discussion:

* **Rachel Edwards:** Call for PTA volunteers, particularly translators.
* **Jim McCune:** Started a recess running program. Had one kid who ran 8 miles last week. Toe tokens. Volunteers welcome.
* **Jim McCune:** Mr McCune teaches fishing during the summer, wants to teach it to more kids, possibly in conjunction with the PTA.

## Closing

* Next PTA Meeting: October 16th with dinner at 6:00, with meeting at 7:30pm
* Adjourned: 7:40pm

# Motions

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