

**Washington Middle School PTSA
General Meeting, January 28, 2019**

- 1) Announcements & Approval of Minutes
 - a. Meeting called to order at 6:40 pm
 - b. Announcements regarding Membership (low this year) and Annual Fund (underway now)
- 2) Seattle Levies overview
 - a. Melissa Pailthorp presented information on behalf of Seattle SchoolsFirst regarding Prop 1 (nurses, counselors, textbooks, daily needs) and Prop 2 (capital levy, BEX 5)
- 3) Approval of minutes
 - a. Motion by Tania Westby, second by Janey Petty, passed with no noted abstentions or objections
- 4) Principal's Report
 - a. The District's February projection for 2019-20 shows a big dip in 6th grade enrollment. School total is at 615, down from 662 this year.
 - b. Ongoing budget cuts (regardless of levy, although cuts are bigger if levy fails): already lost 1.0 FTE for next year regardless of enrollment; proposal is to cut middle school librarian from 1.0 to .5; current per-pupil funding of 29:1 changes to 30:1 for next year; currently we have 37 teachers (including discretionary and SPED budgets); based on our enrollment numbers we will go down from current 1.8 in counseling
 - c. Will these numbers be different if we have a legislative fix for this year? We don't know.
 - d. Advocacy is needed on the BEX levy; advocacy to the school board is always helpful.
- 5) State education funding update
 - a. Guest speakers State Senator Jamie Pedersen and State Representative Eric Pettigrew (via phone) reported the current facts and outlook for education funding in Seattle.
 - b. Senator Pedersen reported the following efforts:
 - i. Seeking state funding for Special Ed, counselors, nurses (state funds 9 nurses in Seattle; SPS employs 60+). Seattle delegation is hoping to change this model.
 - ii. Levy cap: there is no support from Republicans on lifting the cap. A number of Senate Democrats share concerns about inequality. Currently there are 3 proposals, none of which comes close to allowing the \$5k/student in the current levy. Doesn't know where any of this will come out.
 - iii. Also evaluating opportunities to use state money for school construction in Seattle (could be \$10-20 million/year for building).
 - c. Representative Pettigrew added the following:
 - i. There is lot of pressure from other parts of the budget (contracts, court cases, HHS) that affects education spending.
 - d. Q&A
 - i. Q: do you look at other states? A: yes, there's a big range in spending across states
 - ii. Q: is education funding really going up? Or just maintaining? A: going up in both dollars & percentages
- 6) Panel Discussion on Issues and Advocacy
 - a. Guests & advice:
 - i. Emijah Smith, Children's Alliance: be authentic, tell your true story
 - ii. Senator Pedersen: tell your own story but also build coalitions of like-minded people & find common ground on solutions.
 - iii. King County Councilmember Joe McDermott: don't be afraid to get out there & tell your story, reach out to your elected officials

- iv. moderated by Legislative Co-Chair Kathleen Carson
- b. Moderator Q: how many phone calls until things come to your attention?
 - i. Smith: keep at it no matter what, even if it seems like nobody is listening, build relationships over time. Be relentless and self-determined.
 - ii. McDermott: it's about that personal connection—why is this important to you, why are you advocating for it? Tell the story behind the statistics and information.
 - iii. Pedersen: Agrees with being relentless, we have so many things coming at us all the time. Personal stories resonate. Understand where the other person is coming from.
- c. Moderator Q: related to education, what are the biggest challenges & opportunities?
 - i. Pedersen: challenge is money. Raising taxes/fees is hard in WA outside the 5 Seattle districts. We have to make the case to the voters. Opportunity: we have strong Democratic majorities in the House and Senate that work well together.
 - ii. McDermott: challenge is money. Need a more progressive tax base. Starting with capitol gains this year is a good place to start. Last ballot measure for a “high wage” income tax went down 2:1. We need to make smaller, equitable adjustments.
 - iii. Smith: even when didn't feel we were in a budget crunch, black and brown students didn't fare well—they've been over-disciplined, placed in special ed and the school-to-prison pipeline. It's hard to support a tax increase when you don't see the benefit. Biggest challenge: systemic racism—how do we value all human beings? Opportunity: all children should be valued regardless of funding. We can be courageous & talk about the whole story; every child needs our support.
- d. Audience Q: My middle school had many arts opportunities. Why aren't we doing more with all the untapped wealth here? Do legislators think the schools are getting better?
 - i. McDermott A: focus is on standards, eliminating the achievement gap—we have lost focus on foreign language, music, humanities.
 - ii. Pedersen A: my kids' schools compare favorably with my school growing up.
 - iii. Smith A: I do a lot of supplemental education outside of school—coding, arts, self-concept.
- e. Audience Q: I've been involved in advocating for equity in advanced learning. SPS seems to overlook some of those rules. Why is our district able to pick and choose from your laws? Specifically, a white student is 20x more likely to be ID'd as highly capable than a black student. Law says “advanced relative to circumstances.”
 - i. McDermott A: advocacy is needed here—come together with like-minded people, talk to school district, talk to legislature. Find how people listen/receive information (maybe it's not a public comment at a school board meeting—could be coffee, emails, etc., try many means).
 - ii. Smith: a lot of people don't know the details. Maybe legislators or board members don't know the details. Share information with schools/PTAs that might not have it. Build a coalition. Point out legal noncompliance.
- f. Audience Q: what can we do? What this school needs is a coalition of parents—to make an argument for our building. How do we make people invited & make them feel the urgency? It's hard to get people to get involved. How do we build a strong coalition?
 - i. Smith A: As a parent advocate, it's about building relationships. Mentor the parents who are coming in, tell them the history of organizing and let them know what advocacy is needed. Washington is known as a segregated school, need to build bridges. How are you moving to your priorities? Through conversation & relationship building. There are no quick fixes. You might be new here but there's been a community here for a long time. You might just be seeing these issues now but your voice matters.

- ii. McDermott A: maybe it's not PTA meetings. Maybe it's an email network.
- g. Audience Q: you need love for the whole child and community. Every child needs a little connection & motivation. A culture that values everyone brings people together. How do we bring a culture of love here?
 - i. Smith A: I agree 100%. You have a valuable resource on your PTA in KL. Try to stay connected at WMS even if it's just mentoring another family.
- h. Closing remarks:
 - i. McDermott: engage with people on a personal level
 - ii. Pedersen: I feel confident that when the legislature adjourns we will have significantly increased funding through some combination of state resources & flexibility for local levies. The most sustainable way is through state funding. There is a divide within the Democratic party about the relative priority of education and human services. This is a point for advocacy: every year education funding should be a top priority. Legislators hear very little from families about education. This session I have received 110 pro gun messages, 250 messages about hairdresser booth rentals, 15 emails from people who don't want to have to vaccinate kids, 10 people who think kids should be vaccinated—and 2 emails about public education.

7) Meeting adjourned at 8:19 for Post Card writing

In Attendance:

Brian Terry	Justin Kalm
Bridget Backschies	Kathleen Carson
Casey Sommers	Kathy Lynch
Chris Robertson	KL Shannon
Claire Hogan	Melissa Pailthorp
Cliff Meyer	Mollie Huppert
Councilmember Joe	Nancy Allan
McDermott	Natalie Zheng
Dana Cogswell	Representative Eric Pettigrew (by phone)
Emijah Smith, Children's Alliance	Senator Jamie Pedersen
Emily Lieberman	Sharon Khosla
Jan Munger	Sophie Dube
Janey Petty	Tania Westby
Jenny Ott	Ursula White-Oliver
Jeremy Mazner	
Jim Cary	

Minutes taken by Emily Lieberman.