

LAUREL PTO GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Date: April 22nd, 2005
Location: Laurel Library
Submitted By: Lexi Bisbee
Board Attendees: Lexi Bisbee, Jen Novak, Christie Tonsfeldt, Paula Hughes, Karen Iyer, Shari Conrad, Kirsten Keith, Jeannie Cole, Julie Roth, Nancy Hendry

Jen convened this meeting at 8:35 AM.

Guest Speaker: Superintendent Ken Ranella

Ken Ranella attended our PTO General Meeting to speak on district initiatives and how they impact Laurel.

Staffing:

Ken shared some statistics describing the staffing in our district.

- 137 teachers, 37 aides, 9 administrators, and 6 psychologists/counselors/nurses
- Class size is under 20:1 in 1st-3rd grades
- K has a 23 or 24:1 ratio
- Grades 4 thru 8 have a 24:1 ratio
- 15:1 ratio overall when you factor in aides
- 108 teachers started in the last 5 years
- We pay in the 90th percentile nationally
- Our salaries are competitive with Palo Alto schools

Finances:

He shared this financial data:

- Our budget for next year is \$21 million
- As a Basic Aid district, 85% of this budget is paid with local money; 14% comes from the state from categorical programs, such as the class-size reduction program; 1% from the federal government
- Local funding comes from: property taxes (57%), parcel taxes (20%), the Foundation (5%), and locally generated (3%)
- Most districts are 80% dependent on the state
- Funding per child is \$9521 compared to: State average \$7244; Woodside \$13,226; Portola Valley \$12,033; Las Lomitas, \$11,176; Palo Alto, \$10,400
- 17% of our property taxes goes to the schools

Question: How will the increase in Kindergarten enrollment impact our funding per child?

Ken: This is part of a larger enrollment spurt with many different causes (new development, families leaving private school, etc.). The district is expecting a 5-6% increase district wide. There is even a spike expected at Hillview.

Currently there is an EIR Study being conducted for development of 233 new residential units in Menlo Park, all East of El Camino. Previous studies show ½ child per unit added. This would mean an additional 116 students to the district (5% increase). The associated property taxes would only generate an additional \$3500 per pupil. This will definitely dilute our spending per child. In addition, we will have to look at the whole district to create more classroom and parking space. This might mean we will have to build second stories at some of our facilities.

Faced with these enrollment spurts, we are looking at:

- Demographic analysis
- Infrastructure needs
- Program needs
- Aesthetics (the last bond didn't address this)
- Funding methods

The picture is constantly changing. For example, the portables came as interim housing during construction. As the construction completed, class-size reductions came from the state, followed by local class-size reduction mandates. Consequently, the interim housing still remains.

Question: What is the district's philosophy on bussing?

Ken: The state never provided adequate funding for buses. Many districts with buses charge fees, but the state puts caps on the amounts you can charge. The shortfall would cost us millions and cut into the dollars spent on education.

Question: How do we support advanced learners?

Ken: Our remedial program serves up to the 50th percentile. A gifted program is tough to have here because we have such a large population that would be considered gifted. It has to be handled through the regular classroom teaching through differentiated education. To support this, we will employ 40% of our staff this summer to focus on differentiated curriculum. They will create parallel curriculum with an eye to the high-end learners since our remedial program comes up to the middle. These teachers will be responsible for leading and implementing the changes across their grade level.

Kindergarten Program:

Ken discussed the results of the kindergarten study and the decisions the school board made regarding the program.

Currently the district has three different programs with an inconsistency in number of minutes. After examining them, the conclusion was they all work well. So instead of setting one program, the board decided to set standards for consistency. Each school can then develop its own program to meet those standards.

The standards include:

- 45,000 minutes for each K class (up an average of 30 minutes/day)

- How the extra minutes are added will be determined by each school
- Begin implementing class sizes to 20:1 (we are planning for this now. If there is an enrollment spike in August, we will have to adjust.) This class-size reduction will generate some funds from the state, but we will have to add two more classes (and one more in 1st grade).
- Intervention programs for kids who need help
- Continue with the pilot of full-day kindergarten

Class-Size Reduction:

Ken reported that the district is committed to class-size reduction. He said the state is now offering some flexibility. Instead of complete loss of funds, there is now just a penalty if you go one child over.

In 4^{th-8th} grades, we have an average for all the classes of 24:1 in their core curriculum. This average does include 5th grade, which has a 26:1 ratio.

Ken's Conclusion:

Our district faces many resource challenges with growing enrollment. However, the district is committed to its strategic direction.

Principal's Comments:

Nancy reported that her staff has not completed its planning for kindergarten. At this stage, there appear to be no radical changes for next year. This is what they envision (subject to change):

- We will add 20-25 minutes extra to each day, plus a few full days that aid the program (such as field trip days). They are trying to set the dates for the full days, but field trips can not be set until August.
- The extra time will not include extra curriculum. It will just allow the teachers more time to do what we already have.
- We will still have split shifts with an AM, PM, and an overlap in the middle.
- There will be no formal full-day program. If a child could strongly benefit from the extra time, the staff will talk to that child's family about doing a full day. This is already in place this year, with six children benefiting from this intervention.
- We are adding more portables for classroom space, and Carl's room will be converted to a 1st grade classroom.

Parliamentarian's Report:

Karen announced the finalized slate for the new Executive Board. This included:

- Shari Conrad-President
- Traci Brinton-Vice President
- Christie Tonsfeldt-Treasurer
- Kim Steere-Recording Secretary

- Carla Posthauer-Corresponding Secretary
- Elana Stallings-Financial Secretary
- Bill Wilson-Auditor
- Renu Relan-Historian
- Mari Chazen-Room Parent Coordinator

A motion was made to approve the new slate for the Executive Board for the 2005-2006 school year. The motion was approved by all PTO members present.

A motion was made to disband the nominating committee. The motion was approved by all PTO members present.

Karen read the proposed changes to the Bylaws. (See copy of the By Laws for changes.)

A motion was made to change the Bylaws as read by Karen. The motion was approved by all PTO members present.

Other Announcements:

- Jen reviewed all the recipients of the HAS awards.
- Lexi reviewed the updated PTO Accomplishments list.
- STAR testing will take place May 3-5. They cut out standardized test for 2nd Grade and are only doing the content standards (which are very aligned to our curriculum.)
- Jill Roumeliotis thanked Jen for the great job she has done!

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52