

**Parent Community Link
Meeting Summary
Wednesday, October 11, 2017**

Attendees: Mo Copeland, Peter Kraft, Asha Appel, Ann Sulzer, David Lowell, Gretchen Reed, Liz MacDonell, Phillip Craig, Hilary O'Hollaren, Kristen Bradley, Elizabeth Hutchins, Ruchi Prakash, Michelle Fitzhenry, Diane Jones, Carol Bull, Jaime Sales, Frances Phillips, Clare Rathbone, Alicia Morissette, Jennifer Hapke, Chris Gong, Michelle Tubbs, Sandy Patrick, April Gilster, Anne Borus, Wendy Wray, Kate Fox, Rachel Young, Kristin Deshmukh, Heather Peizner, Dori King and Courtney Fitzloff.

Welcome: Hilary O'Hollaren, PCL Chair

- Hilary welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

Opening Blessing: Chaplain Phillip Craig

- Phillip began with the story of how the Bell Tower was a gift to St. Helen Hall from an Episcopal Church in Philadelphia in 1870.
- It traveled 13,000 miles by ship and barge from New York city, around South America, and through Astoria
- He also read an excerpt from Mo Copeland's email sent Tuesday, Oct. 10 on noticing and respecting how other people see the world
- It's important to talk about our story and share other people's stories.
- He noted the diversity in a group of parents touring the school with Sarah Ross Bailey and how this diverse group wants to join our story.
- There is an opportunity and an obligation to share our story and mission.
- Phillip offered a prayer and blessing for our time and work.

Head of School Report: Mo Copeland, Head of School

- Mo began by remarking on the change in weather and thanking Frances Phillips and her team for organizing a wonderful and fun Homecoming.
- She then went on to discuss the email that was sent yesterday saying that these are tough times that are hard to navigate.
 - She has received positive and negative reactions to the letter, which is expected when you put something out there.
 - We all try our best but sometimes make mistakes. It's important to get the conversation out there.
 - Some things Mo was thinking about as she put together the letter:
 - Episcopalians have a big tent and want to include and be open to different voices but you also have to be willing to listen to those voices.

- When she speaks to seniors she hears different voices. Most are happy with the educations, connections, teachers and other aspects of OES.
 - One thing they say is that not all voices are welcome here – religious and conservative voices especially.
 - It's important to be attuned and respectful to the different voices of adults and students in the OES community.
 - It's important to remember that Mo speaks for the school and as its representative she cannot choose to be personally, politically active.
 - Although some students want her to take a stronger stand she must keep her emotions and commitments private so people feel like they can share.
 - She goes back to school statements to keep the focus on what we believe.
 - It's important for kids to have agency and find their own voice and passion.
 - On Friday David Lowell was asked about a student who wanted to make a public statement by taking a knee at homecoming. It is ok with the school but parents should be aware that there could be reactions.
 - Another example of students finding their voice is the volleyball team writing a passionate statement about a trip to Ghana that was cancelled in part because a student was concerned she may be allowed back in the country.
 - While it's wonderful for the team to take a stance, it is also important to listen to different voices.
 - All Heads of school are looking for ways to engage kids in conversations that are safe, open and honest.
 - Please contact Mo with thoughts and/or concerns. Conversations help us negotiate this path.
- The Educational Advisory Board is an institutional research organization that has expanded their research into independent schools
 - They reached out to Mo and other heads across the country for a Heads round table to discuss top of the mind topics of high concern that schools want help understanding.
 - They report back after a year of research on three questions including how to engage young alumni in an era of social media, best practices in student wellness and financial sustainability.
 - The financial sustainability piece is a large one and important to parents. Independent school finances depend heavily on tuition.
 - The EAB has spoken to higher ed institutions and independent schools to see how they are addressing this challenge.
 - They will present at the next PCL meeting for about 45 minutes. There will be a Q&A during the presentation so please think about questions parents might have.
 - Board will hear the presentation the night before.

Administrative Team Reports

Associate Head of School Report: Peter Kraft, Associate Head of School

- Peter thanked Mo for her comments and said that he had spent the first 20 minutes of the class he teaches talking about her letter
 - He had two of the principal players involved in the conversation.
 - The take away – kids appreciate chance to talk and to be challenged in their own thinking and assumptions
 - This was an important reminder of why this hour teaching really matters.
- He spoke about the professional growth of the faculty and himself
 - The team working on EC3 design center will go to the Adidas design center on Friday and see how it looks from a corporate setting
 - They will talk to the team about design thinking and how Adidas uses the space to teach their own workforce.
 - He wants the center to be used as a hub for students, faculty and parents.
 - Olivia Williamson, a LS parent who works at Autodesk on user experience, has offered to help EC3 and will work with team to deepen understanding of process and design thinking work.
 - This is an example of parents showing their passion and helping.

Upper School Report: Asha Appel, Head of Upper School

- Seniors are working on college applications and she is helping with essays.
- There was a recent event in the 9th grade where parents were used as facilitators in conversations about drugs and alcohol.
 - Although parents were nervous it's not about what you know but how to engage others in conversations.
 - Thank you to the parents who stepped forward.
 - There are no answers on how to navigate difficult and dangerous choices but parent engagement is the key factor.
- US faculty will attend two workshops on Friday. One is on equity informed training and the other is a look at how we assess. Changing from asking students for answers to application assessment.

Middle School Report: Ann Sulzer, Head of Middle School

- Faculty in MS will be scattering to many locations on Friday:
 - NWAIS educator conference in Tacoma that will feature teacher leaders at their own schools and awesome keynote speakers such as Jennifer Bryant and Rosalind Wiseman
 - A NW Math conference in Portland that will include programming in Arduino
 - Other workshops include music webinars, coalition of foreign language teachers, Oregon Science Teacher association, equity based dialogues with Dori King and Project X with Anna Rossi

- Ann recently attended an institutional equity workshop
- David Lowell and Ann went to visit Park Academy, a private school in Lake Oswego that focuses on dyslexic students, yesterday.
 - They want to develop partnerships with other schools in the area.
 - Also want to have better insight into other schools to help students find their best fit school.
 - She will go with Mo on a school accreditation trip to Salt Lake City.
 - Heads will be attending crisis management training
 - Hosting three day workshop next week featuring Sherrie Hoover from the Crisis Management Institute
 - What is the relationship and obligation to the wider community in a crisis?
 - Want to have a plan and best practices in place.

Lower School Report: David Lowell, Head of Lower School

- For faculty it's a gift to be at a school with a significant commitment to professional development.
- A variety of experiences in professional development stirs up interesting ideas and allows faculty to be the students.
- The Lower School is looking at a new reading assessment program will which not just gauge how students read but also show teachers how to help students going forward.
- Teachers are learners. 12 faculty members in the LS are participating in the Project Zero course from Harvard on developing a culture of thinking. These teachers are collaborating and learning together.
- On Friday some faculty will be attending the NWAIS conference, doing ICC with Dori King, or following up on the reading assessment workshop.
- Chris Thompson and Kirsten McAuley have been working with the critical friends group, a professional learning community where teachers talk about the craft of teaching.

Finance Report: Gretchen Reed, Chief Financial Officer

- Professional development is also happening on the administrative side, including the controller going to a tax seminar and staff earning HR certificates.
- Gretchen is also going to the NWAIS conference and giving a presentation on how to get ideas funded.
- Some staff are participating in a paperless office webinar.
- Dori and Tammy are giving a presentation on inclusivity in hiring and employee development.
- There will be a class on how to be a leader of other adults.
- Hilary said that we are so thrilled to be at a school where everyone is excited about professional growth because we all reap the benefits and thanks everyone for the work they are doing.

Capital Campaign Feasibility Study: Liz MacDonell, Director of Advancement

- Liz attended an education advisory event on alumni and will be going to Seattle and Mo with trustees to attend a board source conference on board management.
- Liz noted the school's commitment to professional development.
- Update on capital campaign:
 - There's always something happening in a large physical plant so we are asking what is the next phase.
 - Campbell & Co in Seattle were hired to do a feasibility study on the capital projects that need to occur and whether our donor community is interested and able to support these projects.
 - Alicia and Don Morrissette are chairing the study.
 - The consultancy is engaging in one on one conversations with about 25 people.
 - A survey will be coming out to a larger group of parents, alumni and relatives of alumni and a focus group met with the board last week.
 - The report will come in December to the Board of Trustees.
 - Looking at expanding/renovating the gym and replacing the dorms which were built in 1964.
- The Sesquicentennial takes place in 2019-2020, prompting the question of whether we can double the endowment from 25 to 50 million over the next ten years.
- Liz requested that if the capital campaign comes up in conversation PCL members can share that no decisions have been made and it is still in the exploratory stage.
- **Question:** Does financial sustainability include endowment growth?
 - **Answer:** OES has a good endowment for the Northwest but not a great one for a school of this age. A larger endowment would make a big difference to the future of the school.

Inclusion and Community Engagement: Dori King, Director of Inclusion and Community Engagement

- Dori asked if any PCL members had direct questions that could be answered as the presentation occurred.
- There are three goals for the presentation
 1. Really understand elements of cultural competency
 2. Preview of what's going to be happening through the course of the year
 3. Engage in a little personal work
- Steven Jones is a thought leader who developed a cultural competency model and has spoken at NAIS conferences.
 - This model has four quadrants: cross-cultural effectiveness skills, cultural self-awareness, cultural intelligence and countering oppression through inclusion.
 - Most of the essential competencies fall into one of the four quadrants.

- Important to be aware of your own cultural identifiers and how they impact communication.
- You approach people of other cultures by being open and seeking to understand.
- Countering oppression looks at both system and individual standpoints and how can I act to make a difference in the community.
- All of the faculty except part time coaches received and read a YA novel by local author Renee Watson called “Piecing me Together”
 - Staff is doing professional development with the author who is coming to OES. Renee Watson will also be speaking with families, visitors and alumni tomorrow.
 - Watson is an educator, artist and Portlander.
 - The novel focuses on Jade, a low income African American woman commuting to a private school in Portland.
 - The novel will be used to explore social justice frameworks with faculty and what assumptions we make about students.
 - Dori played portions of a video of an US gathering where three students used the book as part of an art project for the SGLI Institute. The art project has a theme of peace and is meant to engage with the entire Portland community.
 - Students in the US heard portions read aloud and wanted to read more.
 - The goal is to have everyone engage with this book, perhaps through book clubs outside of the OES campus.
 - The book contains strong thinking about art, how we relate to kids, and their identity formation.
- An Inclusion Advisory Board is being created to create a plan/road map.
 - They provide feedback on adult engagement events.
 - They will look to all the iterations of the strategic plan that should be developed for the inclusion strategic plan.
 - Create a forum to discuss topics of inclusion that relate to the school’s growth as a culturally competent organization.
- **Question:** are kids welcome at tomorrow night’s event?
 - **Answer:** Middle schoolers will be meeting because they read the book over the summer.
- **Question:** Will books be available for sale at the event?
 - **Answer:** Dori has asked Powell’s to stock the book.
- Dori led the room through a reflection exercise where PCL members explored their cultural identifiers, which identifiers were shared with their friends, and how we should reach out to spend time with people we aren’t comfortable with.
- This is an example of in group/out group theory which the 9th graders are exploring. There is a tendency to say that the out group is lesser than the group we belong to. This helps explain racial prejudice.

Homecoming Wrap Up: Frances Phillips, Homecoming Chair

- Julie Kuni will be chair next year. Homecoming will be held on September 28th.
- Frances received great feedback on the event.

- One of area of improvement would be to get more families to sign up for the meals. Bon Appetit had 300 signups but served 600 meals.
- Some of the team players didn't eat the meals.
- Alicia asked if the Frisbee plates caused more people to get meals.

OES Fund Update: Jaime Sales, Annual Fund Chair

- Hilary noted that the Bell was an appropriate story during fund month because it was about giving a gift generously.
- The Annual Fund kicked off on October 2nd and has raised \$425,000 so far. Overall parent participation is 8% with the senior class leading at 16%.
- A healthy competition for parent participation will take place over the next few weeks.
- Designation giving has been well received.
- Jaime thanked the PAL chairs for reaching out to her to speak at a PAL meeting.
- There is currently no annual fund person in the development office so Jaime appreciates opportunities to reach out to parents.

There were no announcements and the meeting closed at 9:24 a.m.



ALWAYS OPEN

Affinity and Allyship Groups

How might affinity and allyship
groups expand parent
participation?

Oregon Episcopal School

Parent Community Link September 2018



ALWAYS OPEN

What is an affinity group?

An affinity group is a way of bringing together people that share a common identifier such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, age, religion, family status, and the list goes on...

- Do you identify as a member of the group?
- Can you speak from the “I” perspective when talking about experiences related to being a member of this group?



ALWAYS OPEN

What is an allyship group?

An allyship group is a way of bringing together people that share a common identifier such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, age, religion, family status, **and** those that support them.



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“Affinity groups” we already have:

- Grade levels
- Divisions (LS, MS, US)
- Sports teams
- Performing arts groups



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Affinity and allyship groups are a way to create a welcoming environment and help families thrive.

These groups will:

- Affirm identity [We see you!]
- Build community to strengthen our entire community
- Cultivate parent leadership



“I am here because my child loves the school. I want to feel more connected, but I just don't. My circumstances are unique and the other parents just don't understand them.” ~ OES Parent



“I want my child to feel beautiful! How can that happen when there is no one that looks like them on campus?” ~ OES Parent