

**MINUTES OF THE 2023-2024 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING OF THE
ENCINAL SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

195 Encinal Avenue, Atherton, CA 94027

DATE: September 22, 2023

TIME: 8:45 am PST

PLACE: ENspired Lab, Encinal School

MEMBERS PRESENT: Allison Carlson
Eleanor de Jong
Allison Jagtiani
Francesca Baraggioli
FangFang Paulson
May Carr
Susan Blanco
Sharon Burns
Srujana Srinath
Lindsey Sikes
Anand Gupta
Amy Hinckley

MEMBERS ABSENT: Leah Wolf

OTHERS PRESENT: Colin Billings
Kinga Fern
Jessica Hix
Lisa Napoli
Christina Tatum
Liz Riley

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Paulson called to order a regular meeting of the Encinal School Parent Teacher Organization Executive Board (“*Encinal PTO Executive Board*”) for the school year 2023-2024. Ms. Paulson confirmed that all participants could hear and be heard by each other, declared that a quorum of members was present and that the meeting, having been duly noticed and convened, was ready to proceed with its business. Ms. Carr acted as Secretary of the meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

The Members then reviewed the minutes of the September 1, 2023, Encinal PTO Executive Board meeting. Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the Members adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the September 1, 2023, Encinal PTO Executive Board meeting be, and they hereby are, approved as submitted to the members at this meeting.

3. PRESIDENT’S WELCOME

Ms. Carlson welcomed the group and recognized several members of the PTO Board and school community for their outstanding work in the first month of the Encinal school year. Ms. Carlson recognized Ms. Napoli for her extraordinary efforts hosting events and spearheading communications on behalf of the One Community Campaign (OCC) and encouraged PTO Board members to participate as ambassadors and advocates for the campaign. Ms. Carlson recognized Ms. Hinckley for navigating the new website interface and uploading board meeting minutes.

Ms. Carlson recognized Amy Coolican for the Encinal Volleyball program’s great start this year. There are four Encinal teams, new uniforms and equipment. There is an upcoming even with Menlo-Atherton High School in 3 weeks: participants will watch a volleyball game at M-A and go out to dinner.

Ms. Carlson recognized the Encinal Treasury team, Ms. Jagtiani and Baraggioli, who have been working with Mr. Gupta on an audit, and have fixed and updated the expense reimbursement page online.

Ms. Carlson recognized Ms. Sikes for all her work putting together the Encinal Family Fair. It will be the coolest FFF yet! We are so thankful and impressed.

Finally, Ms. Carlson provided a quick update to today's meeting agenda: Scott Saywell is not present and will plan to provide a general update at the November PTO Board meeting.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Jagtiani provided an update on PTO income so far this school year, including \$650 from the sale of spirit wear sold at a pop-up event last week. Sweatshirts are especially popular! Expenses incurred over past month include preparations for the book fair planning, part of which is funding for each Caring and Sharing child. Other expenses include volleyball team insurance and gear, which has increased in cost from last year; new supplies for the Enspire Lab; clean up expenses for the school garden; \$6000 for the Encinal Fall Family Fair; and \$100 for the upcoming Move Night popcorn and snacks.

Ms. Smith encouraged all to use the updated online reimbursement form to submit expenses. Correct QR code links to this form will be distributed at a later date.

Not all teachers have cashed their classroom supply checks from the PTO. Ms. Smith relayed this information to Ms. Blanco and inquired if any feedback so far from the teaching staff about the process.

Ms. Sikes proposed involving grandparents in school fundraising effort and community events. Ms. Jagtiani and Ms. Baraggioli discussed feasibility of distributing QR code link to donate to OCC or Encinal PayPal directly to interested parties. Discussion followed of how best to involve family, friends who do not live locally.

5. OCC UPDATE

Ms. Napoli shared a summary of events hosted at Encinal School so far this year where OCC was promoted: a coffee, teacher events, and Back to School night. Ms. Napoli discussed the importance of PTO Board members answering questions for parents, educating the community on why the OCC is such an important funding source for MPCSD and Encinal School in particular. Participation has been lower this year; the board discussed potential reasons why: a shorter campaign period, school started later this year. Ms. Napoli encouraged all to spread the word that this last week of fundraising (the final week of September 9/25-30) is so important. Encinal has jumped from 29 to 46% family participation in the past week (9/18-22). Ms. Napoli encouraged PTO Board to answer any community questions, encourage family and friends to donate. Coming up: OCC coffee table on the Kinder lawn 9/28, then Fall Family Fair night of 9/28, and morning car line cheerleading 9/29 (0730-0740).

Ms. Baraggioli proposed posting messaging on MPCSD school buses to spread the word; perhaps a QR code with donation link on our yellow buses or front yard Encinal signs in neighborhoods near bus stops.

Ms. Napoli sought feedback on our parent coffees—are parents and community members aware of these events? Partnering the school Garden initiative with OCC made for a quite successful event this month. Ms. Jagtiani related that Friday events seem to be easiest for families to attend. Ms. Napoli and Jagtiani encouraged the presence of specialist teachers (for art, music, PE) at these events (car line, coffees, fall family fair, etc.). OCC buy-in from the teachers is so valuable and appreciated! Car line 9/29 will be another opportunity to interact with parents picking up and dropping off, encourage families to donate and to distribute written education about the OCC effort.

6. COMMUNITY EVENTS – FALL FAMILY PICNIC

Ms. Sikes shared the vendor list for the Encinal Fall Family Fair (FFF): a 5 person band (with bluegrass roots, pulling from all genres, kid friendly music!). The fair will have lots of participation from kids, parents, teachers. There will be face painters, a petting zoo, Joe from Hi Five Sports, inflatable slides, 2 food

trucks (families may buy food onsite or BYO) including Kona Ice truck. Atherton PD, Menlo Fire will be passing out hats and gear, OCC group will be painting rocks by the school entrance for the Encinal rock garden. Homeroom Parent (HRP) communications about the FFF have been hugely helpful, with an uptick in volunteers after HRPs messaged updates this month.

7. BOOK FAIR UPDATE

Ms. Hinckley shared that the Book Fair is planning for set up Oct 10th and seeking volunteers for set up. The book fair will be open Weds-Fri that conference week. This year the fair will likely will have no evening hours but this is still under consideration. Volunteer signups are looking good; Ms. Hinckley encouraged the PTO Board to participate for 1-hour slots. More parents will likely volunteer once teachers sign up for their own slots, which will go out the week before the event. We are looking forward to new books on offer for this year. This Fall Encinal is returning to Scholastic as the book fair provider, after trialing Literati in Spring 2023. There will be a full complement of Spanish-language books (in very high demand for past several years) pending supply chain.

Ms. Burns asked if fair will be open during recesses, given school in session for minimum days during week of the fair. Ms. Hinckley responded in the affirmative; children will have access to the fair during recess and teachers will facilitate.

Ms. Blanco asked if teachers will receive money for classroom books. Ms. Hinckley responded in the negative; funds will go to Caring & Sharing students this year.

Several Board members suggested measures to help teachers populate their classroom book collections via the Book fair: perhaps teachers posting wish lists on ParentSquare or children's book recommendations posted on shelves at the fair itself?

Ms. Hinckley shared some of the challenges in putting the book fair together: there is no longer a local Scholastic warehouse (pre-pandemic warehouse was located in Fremont); this means local Scholastic staff

cannot respond to specific book supply requests on a tight timeline. The warehouse is now in Texas, with an associated 2-day lead time for book supply requests. On the bright side, we have a new and receptive Scholastic representative to assist this year.

8. SAFE ROUTES UPDATE

Ms. Paulson shared plans for Bike rodeos at the end of this month for 3rd-4th grades on 9/26 (4th grade) and 9/27 (3rd grade) with Safe Moves. Ms. Kraska is organizing. There will be Bike Safety information x 2 sessions (10/16 and 10/23) during library hours for 5th graders, facilitated by parents. A Neighborhood bike ride will take place (10/30 or 11/6, polling 5th grade teachers to determine which is best). SafeRoutes will collaborate with Laurel School to do a group bike ride to Hillview in the Spring, facilitated by parents, with coffee gathering before/after.

Ms. Baraggioli asked about 1st and 2nd grader involvement—Ms. Paulson explained bike safety/traffic safety and signals are part of the PE Curriculum with Ms. Gee.

Ms. Paulson explained that most of available budget is spent on Safe Moves curriculum. San Mateo County was approached for funds but cannot provide. The Board is looking for less costly curriculum for next year. Ms. Paulson explained some challenges for Encinal's collaboration with the Safe Routes Task Force, which is a Menlo Park city wide group. Reps from each school have been planning to band together to make a SafeRoutes map. Challenging for Encinal in particular, however, is that we are located in Atherton, and Atherton City is not present at Safe Routes meetings so requests for traffic pattern alteration/safety measures in Atherton cannot be addressed. It would be great to have more Atherton residents participate.

BikeBest and carpool volunteers were solicited in the most recent Encinal PTO newsletter and 15 people have signed up so far. The plan is to solicit twice more.

9. STAFF APPRECIATION UPDATE

Ms. Riley shared that the first teacher appreciation gift was delivered today: cookies and dairy/gluten free options delivered to teacher's lounge today to commemorate 1st month of school. The goal is monthly gifts, except for conference week and May 2024 Teacher Appreciation week, which should include daily treats for teachers.

Ms. Riley will connect with Ms. Wolf to have HRPs more involved, enabling the Board to stay on budget for teacher appreciation. November desserts and Soup from the Heart initiatives were very successful last year, showing full-parent-community involvement as opposed to just PTO Board effort.

Ms. Blanco surveyed school staff re: desired staff gifts. Zip-hoodie preferred for all; the Board aims to procure and distribute to staff by winter break, and is currently searching for a vendor with adequate size runs in stock.

10. GARDEN PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Tatum shared sewer work destroyed several garden beds, and repair is still in process. Parents, grandparents have been assisting. Container gardens for TK are also in process. Biggest Garden hurdle currently is guidance from the MPCSD Maintenance department stipulating no food grown in the garden, due to vermin presence along Middlefield Road. Ms. Tatum and Ms. Burns are planning to meet with the Maintenance team about next steps.

Ms. Tatum discussed list of maintenance ideas. The school garden is 10,000 sqf and cannot be solely managed by parent volunteers, so ideally requires a larger budget and a discussion with Maintenance department about which upkeep tasks that department might be able to assume. There is significant green waste and ivy under the tree line in the garden which may be attracting vermin also. There is also a need to outline responsibilities for who will get green waste to compost bins (parents vs janitorial staff), and to determine whether compost bins can be brought closer to the garden itself for ease of use. Monthly garden clean-up events may also be helpful, so some of Garden budget will be allocated to PR in order to publicize those events, solicit signups.

Ms. Tatum, Ms. Burns, and Ms. Kraska are planning to meet with the MPCSD Head of maintenance, ideally before the week of October 2, when many teachers want to start scheduling 2 Garden classes per month.

11. ENSPIRED LAB UPDATE

Ms. Baraggioli, and Ms. Fern shared that the ENspired lab has disbursed 50% of its budget for the year, and will continue to solicit donations. Ms. Fern encouraged HRP's to ask for parent volunteers as individual homeroom classes cannot have lab time without a parent volunteer present. Ms. Fern reported success with parents helping to set up sewing machines, reinstallation of coping saws, and stocking of low-temp glue guns.

Ms. Paulson recommended initiating a weekly theme to guide lab activities for each class. Ms. Fern shared the ENspired lab rules (now laminated, posted). Ms. Fern will send out ParentSquare communications to parent volunteers before each session so parents come adequately prepared. As long as teachers sign up and bring the students, kids seem to be having a wonderful time so far! Ms. Fern will post routinely on ParentSquare to fill open volunteer slots; parents are allowed to volunteer for classes other than their children's own.

12. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Ms. Burns shared a printed summary of Encinal's learner aims this year and discussed what living the Encinal mission means day to day. Handouts posted in all classrooms use more kid-friendly language than in past years regarding the aims: Self-Awareness, Empathy, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Literacy, Advocacy, Perseverance, and Curiosity. There will be lots of messaging this year about how all our school events tie into the different learner aims.

13. TEACHER'S REPORT

Ms. Blanco thanked the PTO for cookies in the staff lounge and ongoing planning for staff gifts. Feedback from teachers about Home Room Parents is especially important—specifically, that no classroom initiatives should be undertaken without communication with teachers first (visitors, tasks, party planning, etc.). Ms. Blanco shared a message from Ms. Gee: thank you for the climbing wall in the Multi; kids use it every day and love it!

14. OTHER BOARD BUSINESS

There was no additional board business for consideration today.

15. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to come before the members, the meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting of the Encinal PTO Executive Board is scheduled for October 20, 2023 at 8:45am in the ENspired Lab at Encinal School.

May Carr
Secretary of the Meeting