MINUTES OF THE 2025-2026 ENCINAL PTO EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING OF THE ENCINAL SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

195 Encinal Avenue, Atherton, CA 94027

DATE:	September 18, 2025
TIME:	8:45 am PST
PLACE:	ENspire Lab, Encinal School
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Eleanor de Jong Lindsey Sikes Allison Jagtiani Francesca Baraggioli Emily Bhatia Prachi Parvin Jessica Kohli Chelsea Marinelli
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Anand Gupta Ashley Ludlow Stacey Shirer Leah Wolf
OTHERS PRESENT:	Sharon Burns Jessica Hix Kinga Fern Risada Panavija Adrian Silva

1.	**Call To Order**	**Eleanor de Jong**

- The meeting was called to order at 8:51 am by Parliamentarian Eleanor de Jong.
- Emily Bhatia took notes as Recording Secretary.

2.	**VOTE:** Motion to approve prior minutes	**Eleanor de Jong**

- Eleanor de Jong moved that the August 28, 2025 minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Chelsea Marinelli and approved unanimously.

3.	**President Update**	**Lindsey Sikes**

- OCC Update
  - We have reached 58% of district-wide goal
  - Encinal has reached 48% of PTO budget
  - 100% participation encouraged
  - Parents Happy Hour at Barebottle went well!
  - Amazing carline turnout with the Girl Scouts
  - Successful Coffee with the Principals in front of the Kinder Yard
- There will be a new family event at the ENspire Lab to showcase the lab as well as garden
- Superintendent Gracia's MPCSD Budget Meeting will take place tonight over zoom
- Thank you to the Garden Team for coordinating a wonderful event for the garden leads!
- Pizza Lunch is coming up on Friday, October 17th, for staff appreciation
- Book Fair planning is underway
- HRP update:
  - Every class has an HRP, and there are 21 brand new HRPs this year!
  - HRP training has been completed and "Teachers Favorites List" has been distributed
  - Outstanding: need to confirm with Jessica Hix that current staff list is up-to-date
- Fingerprinting will be required for all volunteers effective November 1st
  - All HRPs are aware of the new requirements, and are helping to spread the message to parents
  - Visitors do not need to be fingerprinted
    - Examples of visits that do not require fingerprinting include: attending BTSN, Open House, Parent Coffees, parent/teacher conferences, a classroom presentation, reading aloud to the class, watching a parade
    - Examples of volunteering events that require fingerprinting include: helping at classroom parties, chaperoning field trips, gardening, taking yearbook photos, helping with food service
  - Fingerprinting is only required once, unless an individual has left the district for more than 2 years and subsequently returns
  - The process for verifying volunteer fingerprints post-November 1st is still developing
    - Jessica Hix will ask teachers to send a list of volunteers for approval/verification. Tentatively, such list should be sent to the main office 5 days in advance of a field trip/classroom event so that all volunteers may be cleared
    - On occasion, volunteer lists should be sent to the office by HRPs/Lab Leads, in the instance that the the volunteering list is managed by an individual other than the teacher (i.e. ENspire Lab and Garden volunteers)

    - Sharon Burns brought up the issue that last-minute volunteer cancellations may present challenges for volunteer verification.
    - Perhaps the "Volunteer" option could be eliminated from the drop-down menu after November 1st, to deter check-ins by non-verified individuals
    - Confusion exists over TB testing requirements. When is a negative TB test needed? Additionally, the expense for such tests may be cost prohibitive for some.
- Upcoming Events:
    - 9/26: Fall Family Fair / Last Day of the OCC
    - 10/1: International Walk to School Day
    - 10/3: Jeanie Ritchie Grant Applications Due
    - 10/13: NO SCHOOL
    - 10/14-10/17: Minimum Days: Conference Week
    - 10/15-10/17: Book Fair
    - 10/17: Staff Appreciation: Pizza Lunch!

Encinal **PTO ByLaws** and **Standing Rules**

4.	**Treasurer Report**	**Chelsea Marinelli & Prachi Parvin**

- Checking account is $37,448 and savings account is $20,023 - total cash available: $57,471

5.	**Surplus Update**	**Lindsey Sikes & Chelsea Marinelli**

- Received submissions and possibilities include:
    - Water bottle filling stations
    - Eagle wings mural outside of the art classroom
        - Note: District approval for a large mural is contingent upon student participation. Ideas for engaging students in a mural project was discussed
    - Chicken Coop
    - Outdoor Learning Space
- Received Swank Movie License
- Sports insurance broker rescinded coverage, but insurance has been reinstated
- Volleyball registration is complete
- Upcoming: OCC marketing events (new family event), Fall Family Fair, prep for Book Fair, Caring and Sharing T-shirts

6.	**Community Events Update: Fall Fair / Movie Night**	**Jessica Kohli**

- Movie Night Update
    - "KPop Demon Hunters" was suggested as the movie for Movie Night to help encourage older student attendance
        - Common Sense Media age rating: 10+ due to creepy scenes involving demons
        - Could be recommended for grades 3-5 in marketing flyers
    - "Hotel Transylvania" was suggested as a second movie option for younger students. This would play on a separate screen in a different room, as done for previous Movie Nights during the 2024-2025 School Year.
    - Still needs to verify that both movies are included under Swank Movie Licensing

    - Costco Pizza to be sold for $1 until it sells out
        - Chelsea Marinelli advised that the CC fees are similar to Venmo, so the current plan is to advertise pizza sales as cash-only
    - Marketing flyers will include verbiage about adult supervision during the event (e.g. adult is required by parents; this is not a drop off event; there will be no staff supervision)
    - Chelsea Marinelli and Jessica Kohli plan to meet a week before movie night to discuss cash requirement for the event
- Fall Family Fair Update
    - More volunteers are needed, please spread the word!
    - There will be:
        - Obstacle course bounce houses
        - Petting zoo
        - 2-3 food trucks, including Kona Ice
        - Crafts: signage at tattoo station will include verbiage about tattoos being applied at the discretion of the parents
        - Music & more!
    - MOU between San Mateo County Library & MPCSD: Makermobile states that they are unable to attend the Fall Family Fair, as the Library is unable to confirm the terms of the agreement. Further insight on the matter was requested from Sharon Burns.
    - If Library cannot attend the event, there will be tattoos/bracelet stations
    - Fire and Police Depts will be in attendance, if available
    - New Eddie the Eagle mascot to be unveiled - 4th and 5th grade kids needed to help escort Eddie during the event
    - Sprinklers went off in the Kindergarten yard during the event last year, which can cause sprinkler damage by children. Jessica Hix has submitted a work order to shut off sprinklers for this year's event.
    - There will be a Yearbook display for 5th graders to vote on this year's design theme: Super Hero, Tie Dye, Stick Together, Neon Lights, Composition Book
    - Internet QR Code requested to aid with payment processing for PTO gear, etc. at events

7.	**Safe Routes**	**Adrian Silva**

- Adrian Silva presented on Safe Routes
- What is "Safe Routes"?
    - National movement that aims to make it safer and easier to bike and walk to school
    - Federal and state funds trickle down to local jurisdictions
    - Supported by SMCOE and City of Menlo Park
    - Parent volunteers run the program at the school level
    - Atherton not included
- Why?
    - Our children deserve the right to free and safe movement in their communities
    - Biking and walking to school help children develop independence
    - Traffic congestion creates unsafe and stressful conditions
    - Goal is to get more kids walking and biking
    - We must develop a culture that values transportation alternatives

- Walk Audit Recap
    - Walk audit was run by San Mateo County Office of Education
    - It included city council members, public works staff, parents, and county officials
    - 5th graders wowed everyone with their perspectives and were active participants in the audit
    - Report will be issued with recommendations that can be used to pressure Atherton and Menlo Park to invest in additional infrastructure to enhance safety (e.g. when it rains, students must walk in the bike lane to avoid mud)
    - Plans to prevent cars from veering into the bike lane on Middlefield Rd. are hopefully forthcoming after audit results are released
- Upcoming: International Walk, Bike and Roll To School Day - October 8
    - Parent volunteers will conduct a helmet fit check for parents and children
        - Helmet Check simulation to include:
            - Photo of Sharon Burns wearing her helmet the wrong way
            - Children to identify helmet-wearing errors before flipping the photo to reveal a second photo of Sharon Burns with the correct fit
    - Quick bike maintenance checks will also be conducted
    - Coffee, music and donuts will be provided to engage parents, and to create a fun atmosphere!
- Upcoming: 4th Grade Bike Safety Skills Lessons - October 20-24
    - All 4th graders will be taught a bike safety skills lesson during library time
    - 4th graders will practice their skills on the blacktop the following week at the bike rodeo
    - Volunteers needed - no bike experience required
- In the Future: Bike Safety Park / Traffic Garden
    - Scaled down street network designed for children
    - Children can practice bike safety skills in a controlled environment
    - Collaborative interagency effort
    - The first Traffic Garden in the Bay Area is located in Palo Alto and was funded by Public Works
    - Encinal could be the second candidate! This would be a great way to illustrate that we value educating our children on bike safety
    - Questions raised:
        - What is the rough estimate to install a traffic garden? Next step: Discuss possible funding with County Safe Routes
        - Could another school within MPCSD with more blacktop space be a better candidate? All children within the district could take advantage of this amenity.
- Other Ideas
    - Walking School Bus
        - Parents drop off kids at a specified location
        - Parent volunteers walk with children as a group to school
    - Park and Walk
        - Parents park their vehicles in a designated area
        - Parents then walk their children to school from designated parking lot
- Implementation for Walking School Bus / Park and Walk:
    - Can be trialed as special event that, if successful, can become regular practice
    - Potential parking locations:
        - 1550 El Camino Real (commercial office property)

        - Menlo College
        - Holbrook-Palmer Park - could work with Atherton/Felton Gables residents for gaining access through gate
    - Potential hazard: safety education needed for crossing train track if designated parking lot is located across El Camino/on other side of train tack
- Bike Safety Tips are included in the weekly PTO Newsletter to help educate parent drivers on bike lane rules. It was suggested that the next newsletter include information on the distinction between dotted vs. solid lines. The Safe Routes Team also plans to create a separate flyer that can be distributed at school to students/parents.

8.	**Principal Report**	**Sharon Burns**

- School Site Council meeting took place last night, September 17th.
    - One of the tasks of the Council is to approve the school Safety Plan
    - Big 5 Drill and recent Secure Campus (September 10th) order were discussed at the meeting
- Clarification requested in parent communications regarding Secure Campus and Lockdown events. Specifically:
    - What is the experience for kids at school when there is a Secure Campus vs. a Lockdown order in place?
    - Further clarification on this will assist with parent messaging at home with students vs. at school to maintain consistency and calm.
    - Additional clarification needed with regard to pickup and after school activities in the event of a Secure Campus/Lockdown order
- Note: after school activities are canceled when there is a power outage

9.	**Open Forum**	**Lindsey Sikes**

- Allison Jagtiani gave an update on assemblies:
    - 4th and 5th Graders will attend author Katherine Applegate Assembly today
    - Robotics Assembly will take place on Friday, September 19th
    - Diwali Rangoon Chalk Art to take place in October
    - Flamenco Dancers will perform on the blacktop and will bring a wooden platform for dancing
        - reminder to vendors: all vendors must bring their ID/license to sign in as a visitor at the main office upon arrival
    - TK will attend a CuriOdyssey presentation on Fur, Feathers, Scales & Ecoskeletons on Friday, December 12th

10.	**Adjourn**	**Eleanor de Jong**

- The meeting adjourned at 10:09 am
- The next scheduled meeting of the Encinal Executive Board is scheduled for October 23, 2025 at 8:45 am in the ENspire Lab at Encinal School.
- No attachments to these minutes.

Emily Bhatia
Recording Secretary of the Meeting