

## Attended

Jackie Brawley, Isabel Meaker, Kristi Dominguez, Amy Allgood, Jeannie Chapman, Aeniah Frost, Heidi Ivcevic, Amy Berreth, Anioda Feeney, Kelli Nickison, Meredith Mitchell, Stephanie Korn, Summer Tridell, Matt Whitten, Rodolfo Riviere, Blanca Gonzalez, Samantha Anas, Sam Ashlock, Sharece Steinkamp, Ken Putney.

## Welcome and Introductions

Jackie Brawley, Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations, welcomed attendees and asked them to introduce themselves and share their role and what school they were representing. She introduced Birchwood Principal Matt Whitten and paraeducator and Birchwood parent Rodolfo Riviere.

### **How one PTA shifted its focus to community-building**

Matt Whitten provided a summary of Birchwood Elementary and changes to the PTA:

- Birchwood Elementary is a Title 1 School, with 65-70 percent of students receiving free or reduced meals.
- Spanish is the home language for many students.
- About eight years ago, the old Birchwood Elementary was closed and students were transferred to other elementary schools until the new Birchwood facility reopened five years ago.
- Once opened, the PTA started from scratch, but the traditional PTA model was not engaging half of the families. The PTA evolved to focus on developing community to engage all families and became Amigos de Birchwood.

Rodolfo Riviere shared his story about feeling welcomed after his family relocated from Puerto Rico. At a Birchwood BBQ, staff spoke to his family in Spanish and that made a huge impact. He now volunteers and is involved with Amigos de Birchwood, the former PTA, where he helps conduct the meetings in both English and Spanish.

### **What we have learned**

Kristi Dominguez, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning of Early Childhood Education, discussed the discrepancies across our district of PTA funded teacher stipends as a teacher over 19 years. She said some teachers receive hundreds each year and some get nothing.

She gave on average \$4,000 per year worth of snacks, dinners and shoes to support her students. Kristi concluded by asking attendees, how do we as a collective group do that for the teachers and move forward with that work? Remembering students can at any time move to another elementary school within Bellingham Public Schools, and one day into the middle schools.

### **What could collaboration look like? How can we be bold? (Elizabeth Boyle and Kim Lund, Bellingham Public Schools Foundation):**

Elizabeth Boyle, Development Director for the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation, summarized the change in funding that took place at the middle school level three years ago.

- Magazine fundraisers changed to a Buy Nothing Campaign.
- All four middle schools participated in the co-branded fundraiser distributing the fund to share across all the schools based on student enrollment and need.

Kim Lund, Executive Director of the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation, introduced the work of the All Hands Raised campaign by the Portland Public Schools Foundation as an example model for funding elementary schools in Bellingham. The All Hands Raised model collects a parent equity fund to distribute across the schools in the Portland Public Schools to get fund to where it was most needed.

Additional points brought by Elizabeth and Kim:

- The collaborative Buy Nothing campaign worked well for the middle schools because all marketing materials and templates were shared among the schools which unloaded additional work from parents.
- Molding the All Hands Raised model could start slowly, with 10 percent or 15 percent of school fundraisers being shared into an equity fund.
- The All Hands Raised model also leaves room for PTA's to tackle big projects together, such as building a second family resource center.
- The All Hands Raised model wouldn't be followed exactly, but can be edited to work for Bellingham.
- P.E. equipment is one example where there is a large resource gap school to school within Bellingham schools, and could be solved with a funding model similar to All Hands Raised.

#### **The following are comments and questions from attendees:**

- Where would be the first place the Foundation would look to distribute funds? Teacher Stipends? *Answer: This would be a part of the conversations together of how funds are distributed.*
- Some parents can be hesitant and even put off by One Schoolhouse efforts and didn't want to donate anything because they were scared their money wouldn't go to their child's school. This information is very inspiring.
- It will be important to have continued messaging to show parents the results.
- Allow parents to donate to another individual family may make someone feel good.
- The same parents engage in conversations, but this change needs to get to all parents. I wonder if there is a smarter way to engage more families in these conversations. Like a video and include pieces of what Kristi shared about iniquity. A way for parents to understand if they are not engaging in PTA or on a Facebook page.
- What appeals to me is the common marketing the middle schools did together and not putting it on the parents time to do that extra work.
- It could be possible to not share all the fundraisers, but schools could do a united fun run, and within this model it could be open for whatever schools want to be included.
- For a Jog-a-thon it could be held on the same day if it was a collective fundraiser.

- I'm really excited to hear the specifics about this, on the All Hands Raised and how things are shared. Having a central core and central district PTO and lead by representatives from each school will help make this happen.
- Funds could go toward parent education or sponsoring events for parents to come together and get help on parenting.
- We've talked about the idea, and finding a baby step into this but are not there yet. Or how do we pair up and take a little step to help another school.
- We need to look at it as building community, and thinking about how every opportunity in sharing messaging is building community.

## Closing & Next Steps

Kim provided attendees with three questions to be taken back to school parent communities:

1. What do I want for my school community?
2. What do I want for others?
3. What would action look like to realize this wish?

At the close Jackie thanked attendees for participating and invited them to provide feedback and share this information with other parents at each PTA. Jackie also invited them to take a survey that will be sent in the following weeks, or to contact the Foundation directly if interested in participating in a pilot funding project. Date of the next meeting to follow-up is to be determined.