



General Meeting

April 16, 2026; Called to order by Marcus Colbert @ 5:59 PM

ATTENDEES

Marcus Colbert, Michael Angulo, Ren Simmons, Bruce Brown, Michelle Johnson, Ms. Anna Mafchir (Art Department), Courtney Crowe, Sean Fogarty, Evan Pon, Stephanie Bentley, Lizzie Wright, Ben Keefer, Dan Toulson, Amanda Peden, Robin, Margot and Carsten Presley, Tara Horn, Rachel Havens, Beth Fitzgerald, Michelle Strahl, Rosie Hartman, Annie Paulson, Jessica Prochniak, Beranda Mortimer, Michelle Dawson, Ryan Aslett, Alexandra, EL, Lyndsey Mackenzie, Robin Godoy, Daniel Toulson, Devin Harkness, Oscar Murden, Maria Lalli, Hannah Love, Kate Malone Kimmich, Melissa Martin, Amanda Peden, Lyndsey Mackenzie, Tina Bruce, Jessica Moss

Call to Order

- Marcus called the meeting to order at 5:59 pm
- Marcus talked about how the meeting would involve a conversation about the budget and the PTA board member roles/election for next year
- Marcus thanked Lizzie and Ren on their work preparing the proposed budget

Old Business

- Marcus talked about the Art event at Vernon last week, how well it went.
- Big thank you to the Art team for making the event happen!

Approval of prior minutes

- Marcus discussed the previous PTA meeting and referred members to the minutes
- Minutes were approved by the members

Treasurers' Report

- Ren presented the Treasurer's Report
- No major updates
- Big spring fundraising events coming up
- Direct classroom support fund – still dollars available, but expected to be used
- Lots of field trips until the end of the year
- Ren introduced Evan Pon who responded to a question about the Playground Fund, he explained the efforts of a group of parents to improve the school yard area.
- Ms. Anna asked a question about the Arts budget, which Ren asked we move to the 2026-2027 budget discussion.



- Ren motioned to approve Treasurer's report, Lizzie seconded
- Motion was approved unanimously

Announcements

- Fundraising efforts
 - Melissa Martin reported about the Sustaining Donors program, a monthly contribution. More budget friendly option for families. Almost 40 have already signed up. She discussed how this effort could close fundraising gaps for things like musical instruments.
 - Melissa said there is a challenge to see which class signs up the most Sustaining Donors by May 1 – winning class gets a pizza party!
- Upcoming events - Emily shared
 - April 25, 10 am - 1 pm → Earth Day event
 - Bike Bus will be there
 - Plant sale - 10% discount for Vernon families
 - BRING A BLUE BAG filled for the bottle drop and Vernon PTA will get a 20% match!
 - Starting at 12 - Garden clean up
 - A reptile group will be there!
 - Free snacks and food for sale
 - Portland Free Fruit Tree
 - Native Plants Coop
 - Scavenger Hunt
 - Art Collage
 - May 6 - Kennedy School courtyard night - 5 pm to close
 - 50% of profits go back to Vernon!!!
 - We are renting the Kennedy School's Concordia event room for SPEED PUZZLING!
 - Custom Vernon themed puzzles
 - You can still order food from Kennedy School too!
 - May 30 - OWL FEST 2 - 6 pm
 - Volunteer and musician sign-ups coming soon

Affinity Group Reports

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New Business



- Marcus introduced the work of Ren and Lizzie to prepare the 2026-2027 proposed PTA budget
- Ren presented the proposed budget
 - PTA Treasurers did outreach to the Vernon community to see where people wanted to see money was dedicated or shifted from
 - May meeting will have final vote on budget
 - Fundraising has lowered and our spending continues to raise, as PTA doesn't want to hold on to any money
 - If income levels continue to dip, may need to make more changes next year
 - Proposed 2026-2027 budget is at \$102,512
 - Question related to the Playground Fund; Ren explained last year the fund came together and there was no line item dedicated. The new budget has a line item specifically for the Playground Fund from ~\$6 K that was raised at last year's Kennedy School event. PTA Board wanted to honor Playground Fund being the place people thought they were donating to at last year's Kennedy School event. This allocation can be adjusted based on community input in this proposed budget.
 - Classroom support: \$28,800
 - Garden Coordinator and SUN School: \$24,500
 - Celebrations: \$7,050
 - Community Events: \$5,500
 - Fundraising Expenses: \$26,906
 - Includes \$14k in passthrough to Maker Fair vendors
 - \$5,857 rollover funds for the Schoolyard improvements
 - Budget Priorities:
 - Classroom funds
 - Some shifts have been made based on class size and actual expenses over the past few years
 - Special projects
 - Arts Committee budget
 - Proposed "grant" funding
 - Events
 - Black History Month event
 - Hispanic Heritage Month celebration
 - STEAM Week
 - Art Show



- Proposed alternative funding for Fun for the Owls t-shirt, to ensure that every student/staff member gets a no-cost Vernon t-shirt.
 - Local business sponsor with logo printed on shirt
 - Cost to PTA has been \$4,000
- Melissa spoke about Vernon Athletics Support funding
 - PTA promotion of seasonal recreational opportunities
 - Recruitment and identification of parent coaches
 - Team registration support
 - Small impact on budget that could have a large impact on kids ability to participate in youth sports
- Ms. Anna spoke about concern about changes to Arts funding budget
- Last year was \$3,000, this year is proposed at \$2,000
- Ms. Anna explained the Arts Committee fund of \$5,000 has been used in the past to bring outside artists to the school
- Proposed budget shifts Art Committee fund to a “Grant” Program of \$5,000
- Ren explained that the idea of a “Grant” program was brought through feedback with the community, so that the most PTA dollars are used.
- Michelle Dawson spoke about the desire to see principles or guidelines for where the grants were allocated.
- Ren responded that it makes complete sense to set up guidelines
- Ms. Lyndsey spoke about how she used \$1,000 this year for a break dancing artist for 4th, 5th, and 6th graders; those students then performed at the Black History Month celebration.
- Tara Horn asked about how the grant program does not necessarily say “for the arts and humanities”.
- Ren said the intent was for the grant to be used more broadly than just Arts; new and creative ideas are encouraged
- Ms. Anna asked about Fun for the Owls and whether it is going away. Ren and Marcus reiterated that the Board is not proposing any changes to the event.
- Marcus reminded PTA members that they may make motions and proposed changes to the budget.
- Janet said she is happy there are no proposed changes for Fun for the Owls. She loves the t-shirts, because everyone gets one and kids that do not have other Vernon swag can wear them all year. She asked



about the proposed FTE reductions for Vernon from PPS. Janet said she saw comments parents made about the climate in the school and she was concerned that they made Vernon seem scary.

- Edith Johnson talked about the need to fund counselling services for students and mental health help; the need for more adults in the school for our kids.
- Ren talked about the constraints PTA funds face; we do fund the Gardner.
- Mr. Keefer said that PTA doesn't have the ability to bring in more staff.
- Kate Malone Kimmich asked about the disparities between FTEs at Vernon vs. other schools.
- Mr. Keefer talked about how Vernon is closer to a Title I school than others, and "Equity" funding continues to reduce.
- Rachel Havens talked about comments to the letter from parents who said they had removed their kids. Ben said that Vernon's capture rate is close to 70%
- Alexandra spoke in support of the letter and said she was concerned that folks who criticized it were supposing those who signed it were being racist.
- Janet explained that she was concerned with the personal stories that were shared.
- Delisse shared that we are all trying our best to improve Vernon and we should assume the best of intentions.
- Tara Horn motioned to to change the "Vernon PTA Grant Program to "Vernon arts & culture grant program"
 - Marcus seconded the motion
 - Motion passed unanimously
- Michelle Johnson motioned to increase the Music budget up to \$1,500
 - Ren seconded the motion, with a friendly motion to take the funding from \$50 each from grade level K-8
 - Motion passed unanimously
- Lizzie said she would produce a document with further details on the new Vernon Arts & Culture grant program, including application guidelines.
- Michelle asked if the band could do a band only fundraiser; Ren explained that they could but it does start to get complicated when



different groups all start doing their own fundraising.

- Edith Johnson said she wants to review the budget to see how there can be more funds for kids counselling.
- Michael motioned to lead the PTA election nomination committee, including Jessica Prochniak and Margot Presley
 - Lizzie seconded the motion
 - Motion passed unanimously

Administration Report

- Mr. Keefer spoke about the Right Siding Schools conversation is happening now in PPS, discussing consolidations and mergers.
- Alexandra asked Mr. Keefer what the best way for Vernon community to push for more FTEs. Ben said that the specific asks that are based on data is best. Alex asked how to get the best data. Ben said connecting the concern to conversations the school district is already having is helpful.
- Kate Malone Kimmich suggested a “We are PPS” campaign where families told why they send their kids to Vernon.

Questions/Comments/Concerns

Adjournment

- Marcus thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:42 pm

Meeting adjourned by Marcus Colbert @ 8:42 PM

Please find more information at www.vernonpta.org

Email vernonpta@gmail.com with questions, concerns, feedback, or great ideas. Vernon's PTA (Parent/ Provider-Teacher- Association) welcomes all people of every color, language, ethnicity, origin, ability, sexual orientation, gender expression, marital status, and life situation. We are a beautiful diverse school community. Join us - we are stronger when everyone's voice is heard.