

Portland Waldorf School (PWS)

**PARENT COUNCIL**

Drafted December 17, 2014  
Revised Summer 2016 to reflect 2016-17 School Year

**The Mandated group or committee:** Parent Council

**Current Parent Council Chair(s):** Dave Renzema, Rachel Bratcher, Jillian Nelson

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**Mandated by and Accountable to:** Self-mandated

**Purpose:** The Parent Body in a Waldorf school exists within the Economic realm and Brotherhood sphere (or community) of the school, and represents the Hands (or will) element in the Waldorf pedagogical tenet, which seeks to teach and work with the Head, Heart and Hands. It is the mission of the Parent Council (PC) at Portland Waldorf School (PWS) to coordinate these will forces of the school community so that the parent body can come together and successfully support the work of the Faculty and Administrative bodies, and foster parent engagement and volunteerism to meet all of the needs at PWS.

In order to achieve this, we work to:

- Enliven all aspects of community life
- Facilitate communication among the Parent body, Faculty body, and Administrative body, including the understanding of communication processes and shepherding parents toward resolution of questions or concerns
- Build better understanding of the cultural mission of the school as set forth by the College of Teachers
- Create organization and awareness for the volunteer needs at PWS
- Coordinate parent participation in festivals, fundraising events, workshops, and other volunteer efforts

*The healthy social life is found  
When in the mirror of each human soul  
The whole community finds its reflection  
And when in the community, the virtue of each one is living*

**PC creates and supports programs, activities, and initiatives that foster and enrich  
Portland Waldorf School community.**

**Duration of Committee:** PC is active year-round, in an on-going capacity.

**Areas of authority:** PC is authorized to review and accept/approve mandates for PC committees; organize and oversee financial activities for the PC account; and, with insights from the governing bodies of the school, create or approve structure each year for the delegation of any income earned through PC

activities.

**Areas of responsibility:** PC is responsible for mandating and overseeing PC committees, facilitating and communicating parent and volunteer engagement to support PWS' needs, and facilitating communications between the parent body and the bodies of the school.

**Communications:** The PC Chairs communicate with the bodies of the school by participating in Community Council. This group includes the Leadership Council (Administrative Chair, Faculty Chair, High School Chair, Admin Representative, Section Chairs) and the Parent Council Chairs. PC chairs report from Community Council at each meeting.

PC-rep communications may involve emails to classes or reports in class meetings, as well as communicating from classes or parents to Parent Council. PC reps should also be aware of PWS activities and communicate these as-needed to parent individuals or groups.

**Parent Council Membership:**

- Each class aims to have one or two parent representatives. The PC representative's membership is for two years, beginning in September and ending in June. The membership term is renewable.
- The College Chairperson will assign a College member to attend each of the Parent Council meetings as the **College Liaison**. Duties include reporting on the College's activities at Parent Council, bringing pedagogical and cultural insights to the Parent Council, and bringing Parent Council reports back to the College.
- A Board member or Parent Council member will be chosen to act as the **Board Liaison**. Their duties would include:
  - reporting on the Board's activities at Parent Council meetings
  - serving as the voice for Parent Council on the Board
- The primary administrative contact is the Development Office; and secondly the Administrative Chair

**The Enrollment & Outreach staff member** will support the work of PC, including event scheduling/calendar management, budgeting, publicity, preparation, access to school buildings, and acting as the primary liaison to PWS Staff through the event-planning process.

**The PC Co-Chair** role is shared by three individuals who have ideally each previously served at least one two-year term as Parent Council representative. Generally one co-chair will be new (incoming/training) to the chair, one will be in his/her second year, and the third will be transitioning out. Preferably the chairpersons are not concurrently serving as class representatives. The chair position is considered a three-year post. The co-chairs are volunteers identified by the Parent Council in May. The three individuals will be expected to share and rotate the duties in a way that both works for them and serves the council.

The co-chairs will work together, with insights from the bodies of the school and current activities at PWS, to plan and conduct monthly meetings, develop and distribute the agenda, and act as the point of contact for issues concerning the Parent Council. The Chair's work as facilitator includes efforts to ensure each member of Parent Council has adequate opportunities to express him/herself and that the decisions reached by the Council are by consensus.

Criteria and expectation for membership:

- Regular attendance and timeliness at meetings

- General strength in understanding community organization and complexities
- Availability via email, phone and in-person for most PWS events
- Understanding of the work involved outside the meetings
- Follow-through with commitments and tasks
- Understanding of the consensus process
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Willingness to support the best interests of PWS as an organization working to serve children, families, and staff.

**Evaluation:** Parent Council will complete the following **annual** evaluation activities:

*Fall:* Review Mandate to ensure that it reflects the activities of the PC for the coming year, communicate to other bodies of the school.

*Spring:* Provide a report of the work/events supported by the PC and its committees to the bodies of the school and receive feedback and requests for the coming year.

**Confidentiality:** From time to time, issues of a sensitive nature will be considered by Parent Council. At all times, the PC will notice when sensitive issues, or those that may conflict with other interests are considered, and create a plan for including all affected parties in the decision-making process to ensure that the needs of the community are best supported by the outcome. It is important that PC members can speak openly about any concerns regarding the impact of suggested events, so confidentially about meeting context and specified content is important.

**Monthly Meetings and Details:** At this time, PC meets monthly, generally on second Mondays from 6:30-8:30. Ideally at least one representative from each class is in attendance; and, if this cannot be the case, absences should be communicated to PC Co-Chairs so that meeting information can be brought to the non-represented class in a timely manner. Meeting Minutes are recorded, reviewed, and then posted on the PC Bulletin Board near School Store within about a week. PWHS PC usually meets separately, and Dave Renzema also Chairs.

*May wisdom shine through me  
 May love glow within me  
 May strength permeate me  
 That in me may arise  
 A helper of human kind  
 A server of holy things  
 Selfless and True*

~Good working!