

Democratic Party of Oregon Education Caucus Minutes Sunday, March 17, 2019

In Attendance

Paul Zastrow, Chair, Betsy Salter, Vice-Chair, Liz Marlia-Stein, Secretary, Mary Thamann, Scott Hays, Kathleen Jeskey, Ross Swartzendruber, Rex Swartzendruber, Bill Bordeaux, Scott Mills, Louise Currin, Rebecca Cambreleng, Nancy Lewis, Jackie Weissman, Lisa Gourley, Sarah Hewitt, Malia Hewitt, Thomas Wrisley, Gloria Bergquist, Vickie McCubbin, Andrew Villanoure, Shirley Vandermosten, John Vandermosten, Kevin Marr, Elaine Harris, Carol Christ, Mark McKelvey, and Greg Burrill.

Paul opened the meeting with introductions from all in attendance and read an overview of the December minutes, which were unanimously approved.

Reorganization

Paul read from the Education Bylaws to clarify those who were qualified to vote. Per the Education Caucus Bylaws current as of 03/17/2019, "Members in good standing are those who complete an application form, refrain from supporting non-Democratic partisan candidates in contested elections, and attend at least one meeting per year."

Nominations for Chair: Kathleen Jeskey and Paul Zastrow. Each were given two minutes to speak. Liz and Betsy kept time. Liz then passed out and collected ballots. Guest, Rebecca Cambreleng, counted them. Results: Kathleen Jeskey – 9; Paul Zastrow – 2.

Nominations for Vice-Chair: Scott Hays. As Scott was the only one nominated, all voted by acclamation to approve his position.

Nominations for Recording Secretary: Liz nominated Louise Currin who declined. There were no other nominations so we moved forward to Communications Secretary.

Nominations for Communications Secretary: Liz nominated Betsy Salter, and it was seconded. As there were no other nominations, Betsy also was approved by acclamation. She then agreed to act as Recording Secretary, but Louise moved that we hold this position open to give others at the next meeting an opportunity to serve, commenting that possibly by summer she might have more time. Her motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Treasurer: There were no nominations, and Liz mentioned that the bylaws were written when the Caucus was first formed and that they should be reviewed and amended to reflect the activities and goals of the Caucus.

SCC Delegate and Alternate Delegate: Louise Currin and Ross Swartzendruber volunteered for this position. It was agreed that whoever received the most votes would be our delegate and the other would take the alternate position. Ross received the majority of votes and will be our delegate; Louise will be our alternate.

Reports & Announcements

- Senator Lew Fredrick, Chair of the Senate Education Subcommittee for Ways and Means, updated us on the Education bills currently before the legislature. They are debating what programs are needed and must be funded and if standardized testing should be delayed or reduced. He commented that we are spending \$25 billion/year for testing. He noted that even Republicans are concerned about our current testing requirements. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/> is being reviewed as an alternative. The subcommittee is also looking at making changes in the Department of Education. Senator Fredrick urged us all to send individual letters to committee members and noted that form letters are sent to their “spam” folders. Please send your comments and concerns to the following committee members. There is still time to make a difference for our children.

Senate Education Committee

Sen.RobWagner@oregonlegislature.gov Chair (D)

Sen.ChuckThomsen@oregonlegislature.gov Vice Chair (R)

House Education Committee

Rep.MargaretDoherty@oregonlegislature.gov Chair (D)

Rep.TeresaAlonsoLeon@oregonlegislature.gov Vice-Chair (D)

Rep.CheriHelt@oregonlegislature.gov Vice-Chair (R)

Joint Committee on Student Success

Sen.ArnieRoblan@oregonlegislature.gov Co-Chair (D)

rep.barbarasmithwarner@oregonlegislature.gov Co-Chair (D)

Sen.TimKnopp@oregonlegislature.gov Co-Vice Chair (R)

rep.gregsmith@oregonlegislature.gov Co-Vice Chair (R)

- Rachelle Dixon, candidate for Vice-Chair of the DPO, dropped by to ask delegates for their vote, mentioning many of her goals for the Party...the key being better communication among all counties and with legislators.
- Rebecca Cambreteng, a lawyer representing teachers and classified staff in the Portland area, wanted to bring awareness to the issue of student disruption, harassment, physical abuse, suicide and lack of discipline in the schools and the need to come up with solutions for safe classrooms. She noted the KGW series, “Classrooms in Crisis” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Om7yVbuap9k> and

commented that she would be a guest this Thursday, March 21 at 6pm, KGW Channel 8.

- Kevin Marr from Josephine County reported that smaller counties such as his are not able to fund their schools through local levies because the voters don't approve them, whereas other school districts have greater support from their citizens and the money per student increases. Even though the State addressed equal funding per student across Oregon, the "Local Option," approved by the State Legislature in 1999 created this unfair advantage and needs to be addressed in order for every student in Oregon to have an equal opportunity to succeed. (See the following brief to get a clearer picture of K-12 funding.) https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen_engagement/Reports/FundingK12Schools.pdf
- Mary Thamann, chair of the Multnomah County Dems' Education Caucus, reported that a study group was formed in an effort to create an alliance with other county's Education Caucuses throughout Oregon. This group took on the name OPEN (Oregon Public Education Network) and members have been successful in meeting with legislators to educate them on issues that are crucial to Oregon schools.

Further Meetings

Kathleen mentioned that we wouldn't have to wait until the next SCC meeting to hold our Education Caucus meeting if we set up a ZOOM account to begin conversations among all counties. She and other officers agreed to look into this.

The meeting adjourned at 1pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Liz Marlia-Stein, Secretary