



SYCAMORE RIDGE

General PTA Meeting 09/04/2026

Attendance: Kate Kim, Kathy O'Neil, Sara Lake, Bianca Plotkin, Jody Folk, Ana Pons, Sandy Tanaka, Sesilie Bascombe, Heather Wesselo, Elham Zamanidoost, Nikol Varvaresou, Jill Maher, Nicole LaBrosse, Bernhard Peters, Janet Anderson, Prya Merrill, Thomas Loesel

Location: Sycamore Elementary School

Conflict of Interest & Antitrust Avoidance Affirmation: All attendees affirmed that they are not engaging in any conflicts of interest or activities violating antitrust regulations.

Welcome / Call to Order

- Kate called the meeting to order at 8:29 a.m. and welcomed attendees.

Approvals

- Checks #3801–3806 were reviewed.
- Motion to approve financials: Sandy moved to approve the financials; Nicole seconded; the motion passed with all in favor.
- Mini-grants are coming in.
- Motion to approve the March minutes: Jody moved to approve; Bianca seconded; the motion passed with all in favor.
- **Board Slate**
 - Kathy read the Parliamentary report.
 - Nicole presented the board slate and reviewed the open positions.
 - Nominations were closed, and the slate was approved.
- **Gift to School**
 - Kate presented the proposed Gift to the school for the lunch club and outdoor lunch activity tables.
 - The total budget is \$20,000.
 - PTA will contribute \$15,000, and Jenny will ask the district to cover the remaining amount.

- Motion: Sandy moved to approve the PTA contribution of \$15,000; Sara seconded; the motion passed.

Committee & Program Reports

- **School / MUR Audio Update**

- Jenny shared that the district has modernized the MUR sound system and is providing additional options for assemblies.
- The school still needs to explore theater microphones for Drama Club, as this equipment is very expensive.
- Jenny will review current equipment with Sara to determine what can be used now and what still needs to be purchased.
- Sara suggested that the district consider purchasing higher-quality microphones that could be housed centrally and checked out by schools as needed.
- The district also shared that Sycamore Ridge will be receiving six microphones and will continue to collaborate with the school on Drama Club needs.

- **Spring Carnival**

- Spring Carnival planning is underway.
- Donations for raffle baskets are currently being collected, and the baskets should be ready for Open House.
- Sponsorships have already exceeded last year's total.
- Kate confirmed that FAV Girls has been reserved to help.
- Additional volunteers are still needed.
- Approximately 20 volunteers will be required to help operate carnival games and other event stations.

DMUSD Budget Roadshow

Presenters: Marisa Janicek and Chris Delehanty

Marisa opened by thanking both PTA and DMSEF for their continued partnership and support. She also emphasized the importance of the Destination 2028 strategic plan and the upcoming community input meeting.

- **Destination 2028**

- Marisa reviewed Destination 2028, the district's strategic plan, and encouraged participation in the upcoming community input meeting.

- **District Priorities**

- STEAM+ — Sycamore Ridge continues to receive more STEAM+ support than some other district schools.
- Small class sizes
- Neighborhood schools
- Intervention support

- School counselors
- World language
- Leap Ahead program
- Small Class Size Targets
 - The district shared its staffing targets:
 - Grades K–3: 22:1
 - Grades 4–6: 25:1
- **Measure MM / Facilities Update** - Chris reviewed the district's facilities update, including projects funded through Measure MM.
 - Completed projects:
 - Pacific Sky School
 - Del Mar Heights — delayed by three years, which also affected Del Mar Hills
 - Del Mar Hills — opened this year and required major structural updates
 - The district noted that post-COVID inflation significantly increased construction costs across projects.
 - In progress:
 - Carmel Del Mar is scheduled to begin this summer
 - Ashley Falls is in the permitting/approval process
 - Future updates:

The district shared that future modernization work is being planned so that students will not need to move off-site.

 - Sage Canyon — projected around 2028
 - Torrey Hills — projected around 2029
 - Sycamore Ridge — projected around 2030
 - It was also noted that significant classroom work will take place at Sycamore Ridge this summer.
 - Sycamore Ridge Facilities Funding
 - School modernization/update needs are estimated at approximately \$22.5 million.
 - Funds to cover projected costs will come from Mello Roos, Measure MM, and district funds
 - Timeline for update completion estimated for 2030
- **Budget / Enrollment Update**
 - The district shared that enrollment continues to decline, which impacts staffing and long-term planning.
 - DMSEF fundraising has become more difficult as enrollment decreases, and the district is exploring alternative ways to help support those funding needs.
 - Current projections suggest the district may remain at approximately two classes per grade for some time.
 - The district reiterated that it wants to avoid dropping to only one class per grade where possible.

- **Combination Classes Discussion**

- There was significant parent discussion about combination classes, especially K/1 and 5/6 combinations.
- Key concerns raised included:
 - K/1 combination classes may not be ideal for younger students
 - Social concerns about 5th and 6th graders being grouped together
 - Questions about why property-tax-based district funding cannot simply be used to keep more single-grade classes
 - Interest in hearing more directly from teachers about how combination classes and intervention support are working in practice
 - Concern that combo class placements were communicated only a few days before school started, which created stress for families
- The district responded that:
 - Combination classes cannot always be avoided
 - K/1 and 5/6 are areas of particular concern and are reviewed carefully
 - Staffing and enrollment are monitored closely
 - The district understands the importance of clearer communication and advance notice when possible
- Title I / Intervention Support
 - The district explained that Title I provides additional federal funding based on school demographics and supports intervention services for students.
 - Parents also discussed intervention support and TOSAs in relation to combo classes.
- Parent Feedback
 - Kate shared that she is now satisfied with the combo classes.
 - Sandy noted that parents had expressed frustration about the late announcement of combo placements before the school year began.

- **Enrollment Buffer / High Turnover**

- Sara raised the issue of Sycamore Ridge's high turnover, especially due to Avino / corporate housing, and asked the district to leave some buffer in class sizes to accommodate students who often arrive in January and February.
- The district acknowledged the concern.

- **Neighborhood Schools / Long-Term Planning**

- Parents raised broader concerns about the long-term sustainability of maintaining nine neighborhood schools amid declining enrollment.
- The district responded that no changes are planned for next year, but ongoing evaluation and community conversation will continue.
- There was also discussion about whether future collaboration with neighboring districts could help families attend schools closer to home, though current policy does not allow general outside-district transfers except under limited criteria.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:55 a.m.

The next PTA Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 14, at 9:15 AM at Sycamore Ridge.

Ana Pons

X

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be 'Ana Pons', is written over a solid black horizontal line. The signature is stylized with loops and a long horizontal stroke.