



Forecast for 2016-2017

Parents' Association Board Meeting and Strategic Planning Discussion

March 7, 2016

[Minor amendments for April 30, 2016 distribution]

Agenda & Goals

- State of the Parents' Association Today
 - Organization
 - Volunteers
 - Finances
- Focus Areas for Next Year – Executive Committee
- Focus Areas for Next Year – Councils
- Next Steps

This forum's purpose is to gain feedback on our major challenges, share our goals for 2016-2017, and discuss future priorities and opportunities

What We've Done This Year

Community Building

- ❑ Bizaarnival
- ❑ Walk to School Day
- ❑ Back2School Bagels
- ❑ Mix and Mingle
- ❑ Fan Day & Spiritwear
- ❑ Giant Gym Nights
- ❑ Parent Nights/HS Dinner
- ❑ Skating parties
- ❑ Restaurant Week
- ❑ LS Yearbook & MS Advisory books
- ❑ LS Bike Ride
- ❑ MS Dance, Grad rehearsal & reception
- ❑ HS Grad rehearsal and reception

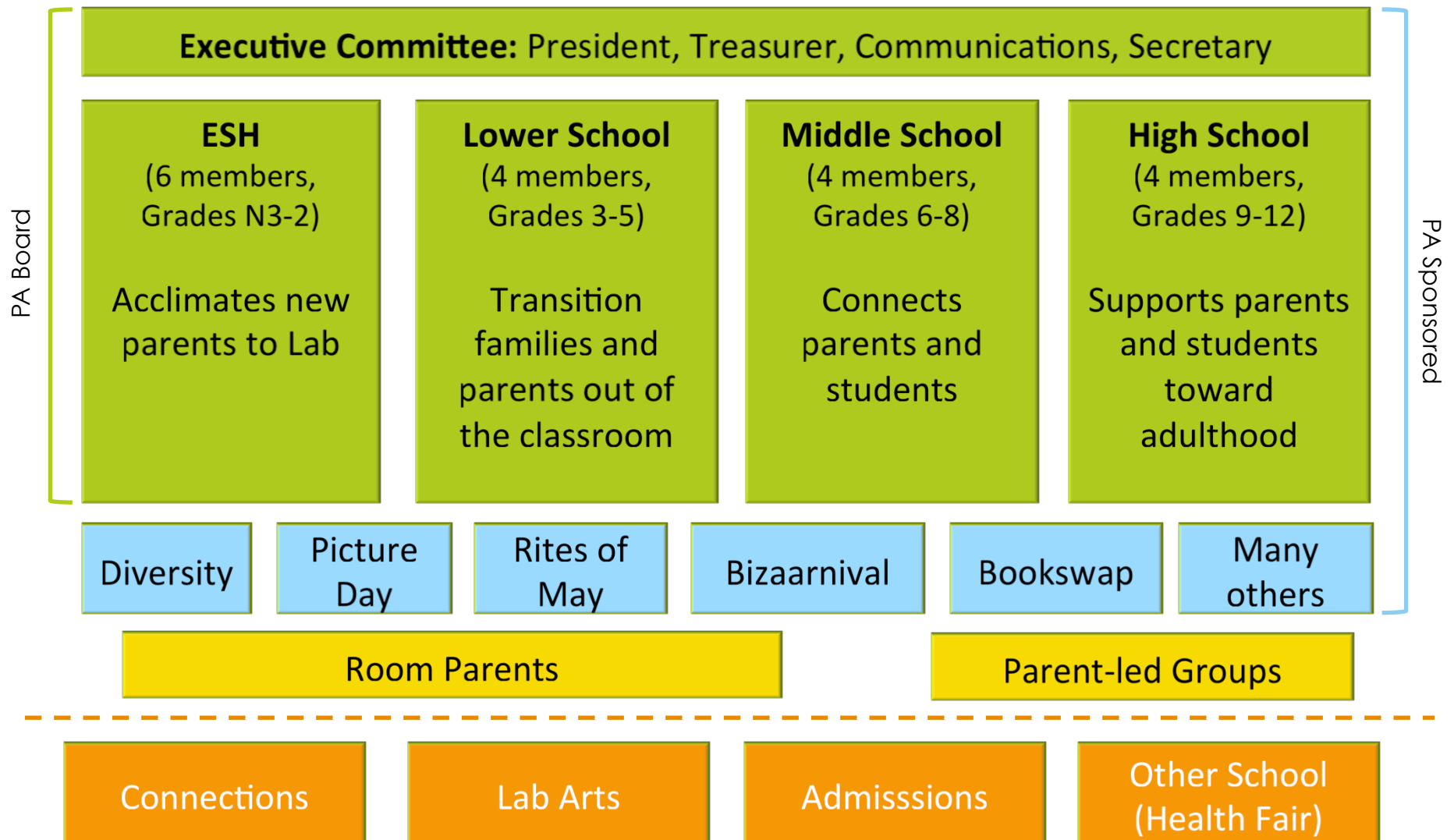
Parent & Student Support

- ❑ Mentor program
- ❑ New Parent/Freshman Orientation
- ❑ Conference babysitting
- ❑ www.labparents.org
- ❑ Carline Assistance
- ❑ Parent2Parent
- ❑ Testing snacks
- ❑ Speaker Series
- ❑ Learning & Counseling Book Groups
- ❑ Picture Day
- ❑ Prom Grant
- ❑ Lemonade & cookies
- ❑ Spiritwear
- ❑ Question answering

Curriculum Innovation & Faculty/Staff support

- ❑ \$11K+ Teacher Grants
- ❑ Parent Nights
- ❑ Nurse Clinics
- ❑ ArtsFest grant
- ❑ Relaunched Diversity Group; developed Recommendations
- ❑ Teacher Appreciation
- ❑ Bookswap
- ❑ Speaker Series (faculty sessions)
- ❑ HS Substance Abuse Position Paper
- ❑ 6th grade Art event
- ❑ Ken Garcia-Gonzales sessions & Climate survey support

Organization of Parent Groups

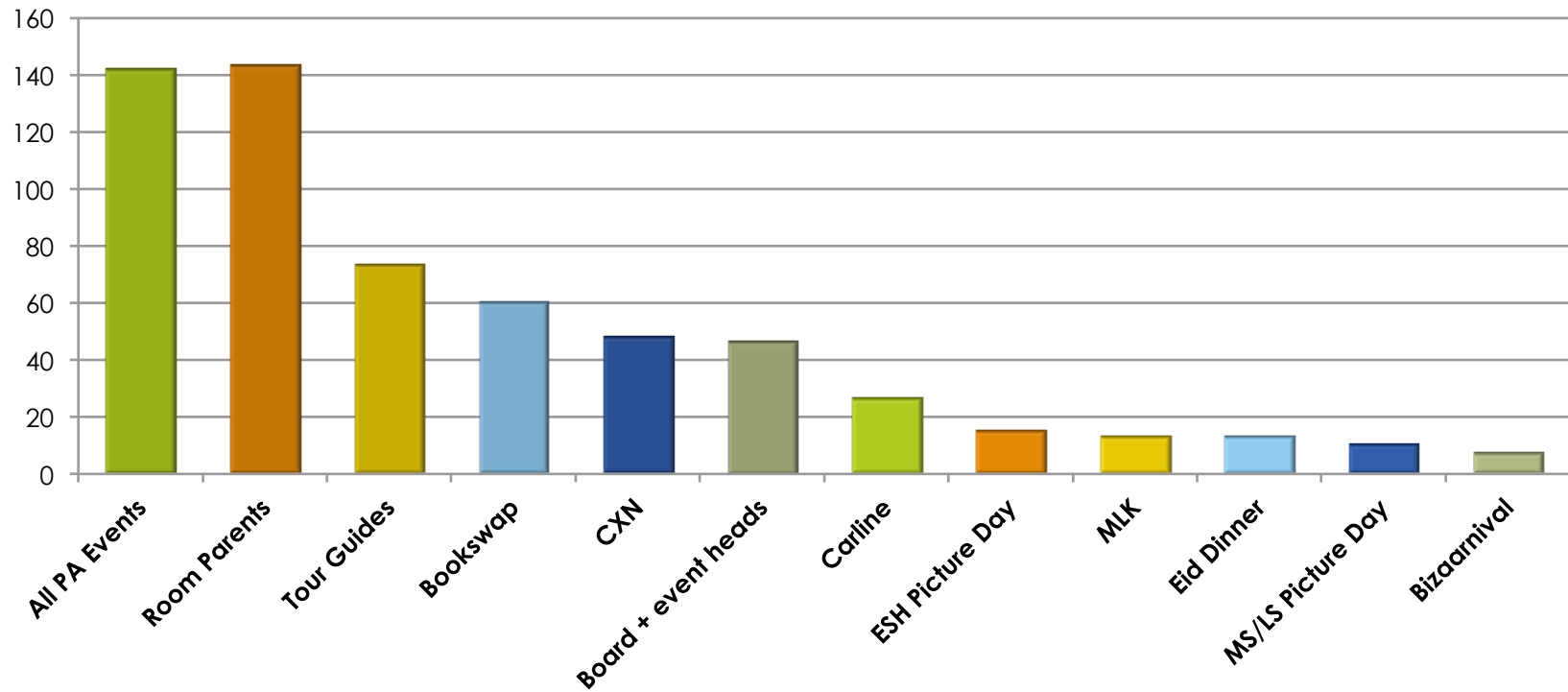


Our Realities

Growth
Communication Challenges
Changing Parent Interests

Our Resources

- ▣ **Volunteers**
 - ▣ **Finances**
 - ▣ **Faculty/Admin support**
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Volunteers at Lab

- ▣ 285 volunteers to date* across multiple events at Lab
- ▣ 42% of Room Parents also volunteer at PA events
- ▣ 62% of Tour Guides also volunteer at PA events
- ▣ 29% of Connections volunteers overlap with PA events

*Not counted: Volunteers with sports teams or clubs, LabArts and events to come

Volunteer Challenges: Hypotheses

- Not a strong sense of community obligation
 - People give in their own way, and volunteering may not be it
 - Different interests and availability depending on division
- Recruitment Issues
 - New parents overwhelmed; communication of opportunities an issue
 - Most effective recruitment tends to be one to one
 - “Warm bodies” roles
- Retention
 - Volunteers compartmentalized between PA, Room Parents, Development, etc.
 - Little acknowledgement; perception is that donors are more appreciated
 - Steep learning curve → Burnout
- Leadership
 - Transition issues
 - Coordination within teams
 - Inner Circle perception

Volunteers: Discussion

- ❑ What should we be doing to generate more volunteer interest?
 - ❑ What should we be doing to retain volunteers and make the experience more satisfying?
 - ❑ What are our challenges as volunteer leaders?
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Participants' Comments on Volunteers

Addendum to original 3/7/16 document:

Session participants offered these comments:

- 2-career families schedules dictate available volunteer times; weekends become tough (challenge)
- Lack of knowledge of which events are PA parent-led (challenge)
- How to harness volunteer energy to meaningful events (challenge)
- Every family should get a visual reminder (postcard) of opportunities to volunteer (solution)
- Mandatory volunteer hours (solution)
- Social Component is important part of volunteering
- Personal outreach to new volunteers are needed (solution)
- Make PA more visible at carline volunteering (solution)
- Limit the number of requests for volunteers per event
- PA's role in soliciting volunteers for administration is not clear (challenge)
- More communications about PA led events (challenge)
- Soliciting volunteers at Parent Nights
- Organizing grade events and delegating "leadership" so that there is ownership of each event (solution)
- Rethink Back-to-School orientations (challenge)
- Communications among Councils about volunteer opportunities could be better (challenge)

Where We Are Financially

- Net revenue is 86% Parent Dues, 12% Picture Day Commissions, 2% Misc Event and Sales Revenue
- Currently breaking even ~\$74,000
- Reserves are \$20,000 below minimum (defined as one year operating expenses)
- No capacity for new opportunities
- Council budgets running on bare bones
- Can't afford to run activities at a loss – Rites of May (\$5K subsidy), childcare, etc.
- Board members paying for things on their own

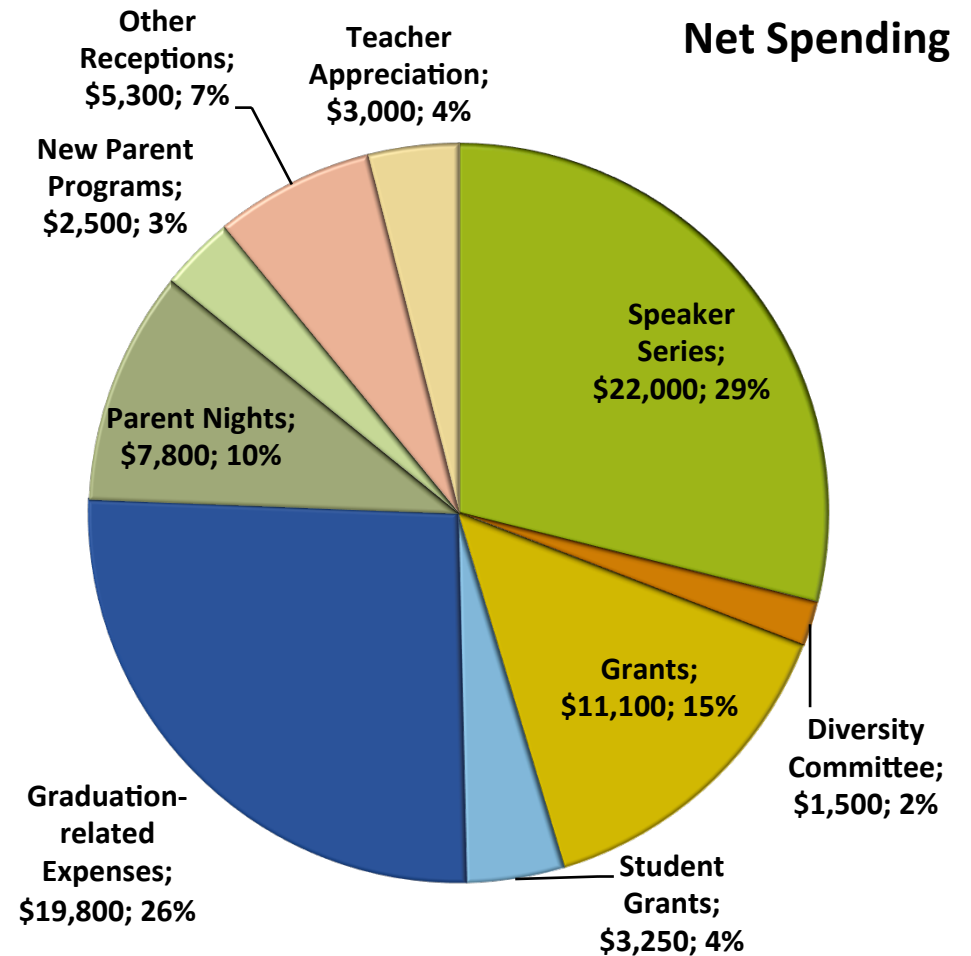
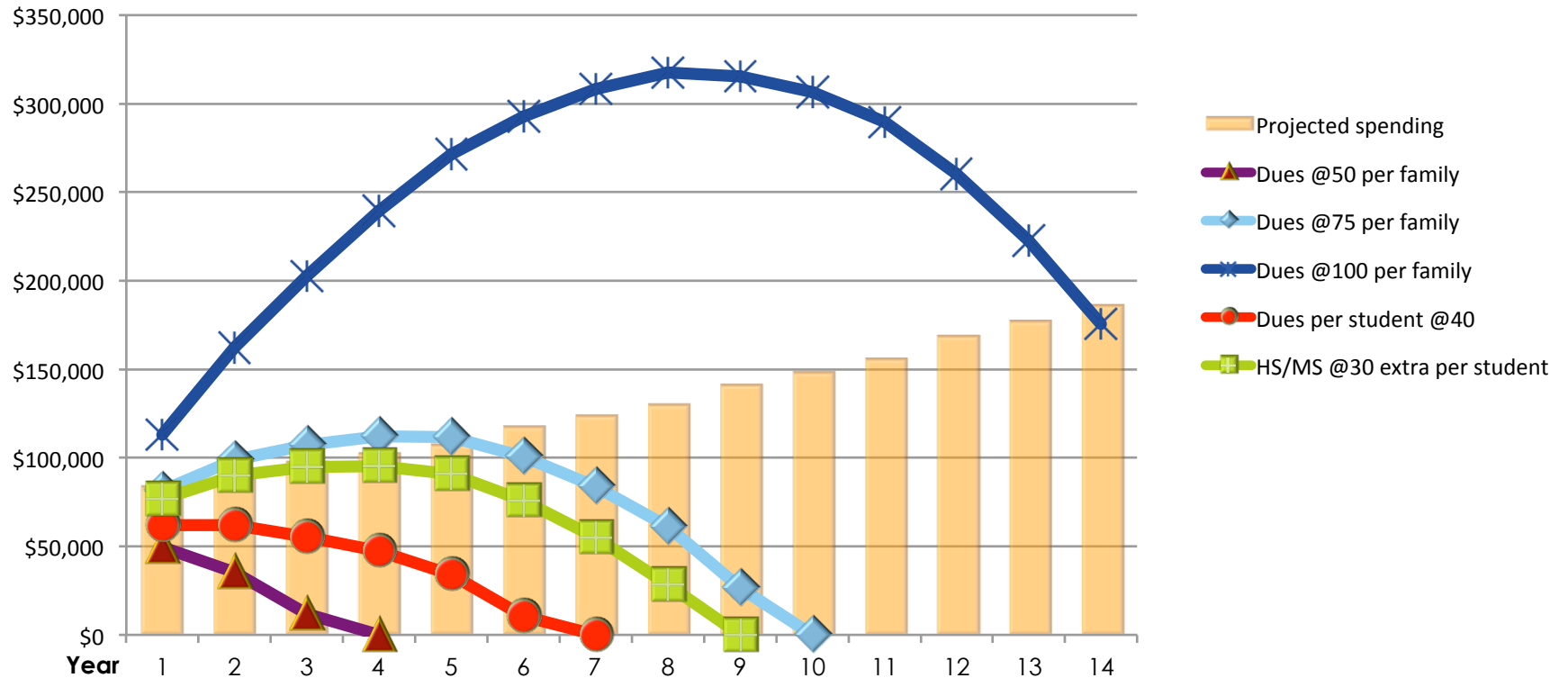


Chart amended to show \$ values

Reserves Balance Under Dues Scenarios



Outlook: Increased Dues

- Next year \$6,000 freed up by moving to 2 Speakers; however, no Bizaarnival will drop net revenue by \$1,000
- Fundraising has been difficult to sustain
- What is the right amount to invest in All Schools Events?
- What's the right length of time between dues increases?

New investments?

- What are our immediate spending priorities?
 - What would you launch if you could?
 - What opportunities do you want to see a dues increase address?
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Participants' Comments on Spending

Addendum to original 3/7/16 document:

Session participants offered these comments:

- More mini outreach events (wine, cheese, coffees, etc)
- Meet and Greet in like zip codes
- Welcome Brochure to new parents who are waiting
 - HP Chamber of Commerce has existing one
- Coordinate with ARD
- Build a bridge between parents of the same grade
- PA Grant Slush Fund to take advantage of opportunities that arise during the year (or are parent or student led)

2016-2017 Focus Areas

Redesign for Growth

New Family Induction * Ongoing Community Building * Parent Education and Advocacy

Volunteer Outreach & Empowerment

Communicate Opportunities * Tracking and Outreach * Toolbox

Strengthen Board

Reduce Learning Curve * Coordination Tools * Budget Priorities * Recruit for Special Projects

Focus Areas: Redesign for Growth

- Build a strong foundation starting with New Family Induction
 - More consistent mentoring program
 - New Parent Orientation & Back to School materials review, starting now
 - Office Hours? New Parent check-ins?
- Ongoing Community Building: Big and Small
 - At least one signature All School events – redesigned
 - Work with Development, Lab Presents, etc. to have a single Calendar of Events
 - Make it easier for parents to meet in small groups and be self-directed
- Leverage Curriculum Innovations, whether Speaker Series or Grants
- Parent Advocacy
 - Answer questions but teach parents how the system works
 - How can we do a better job of getting feedback?

Focus Area: Volunteer Outreach & Empowerment

- Understand and Acknowledge our Volunteer Base better
 - Track who is showing up to different events
 - Volunteer appreciation party jointly hosted by PA and Robin Appleby
 - Volunteer features on the website
 - Potential volunteer survey
- Design for Volunteers
 - Make it easier for working parents to volunteer
 - Ask: Is this a good volunteer assignment? Social, connects with purpose, etc
 - Reach out to volunteer base across events and divisions
- Document and ease transition burden for volunteers to take charge
 - “Shadow” opportunities
 - Recruit anew at the Historic Campus

Focus: Strengthen Board

- Reduce transition learning curve for Board members
 - Document procedures
 - Start before the end of the year
 - Set unified expectations for Councils
 - Get people into the right roles
 - Share information and group planning more seamlessly
 - Set budgeting strategy and guidelines with parent feedback; prioritize a few key areas to work on with Administration
 - What else?
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Focus: Recruit for Special Projects

- Volunteer strategy
 - Track names and manage lists
 - Find more creative ways to publicize – Newsletter? Social media?
 - Offer Volunteer Fair
 - External communications
 - More help may be needed to move website from startup to steady state
 - Social media
 - Graphics designer
 - Data gathering: surveys, polls, etc
 - L&C Coordinator, Affinity Groups
 - New events: Holiday Bazaar
 - Other Special Projects, e.g., Fundraising
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Council's Priorities

- What three things do you most want to accomplish next year?
(Break out groups)
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Emerging Council Priorities for 2016-2017

Addendum to original 3/7/16 document:

After small group break-out sessions, Council members offered these top priorities:

High School	Middle School	Lower School	ESH
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have an agenda for Parent2Parent, Principal Chats and advertise it• Administration should inform parents of issues happening among student population and how to respond to it• How to build community among HS families from disparate geographic areas• Better advertisement of all PA funded activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrate new families and get them invested in Lab• Provide an overview/outline of calendar events for MS so parents know what to expect during the year• Hold MS wide or grade wide events for students and/or families• Reach out to volunteers that are NOT the usual suspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grade Level events on a regular basis (skating, picnic, field day, book club)• Informal get-togethers (no big production value)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable mentor program• All ESH event<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RSVP w/ wristband• tickets for food• potluck picnic style• Grade Level Events: utilize room parents more (conduit) starting in N3

Questions

- If there are questions we didn't get to, email them to parents@ucls.uchicago.edu
 - Comments and synthesis will be on www.labparents.org
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Participants Comments

Addendum to original 3/7/16 document:

During break-out sessions, participants were asked to offer additional anonymous comments via post-it notes

- For teacher grants: Can we get a page/column in “Lab Life” to showcase what teachers have done?
- Are there Best Practices for a PA at an Independent School?
- Ways to thank volunteers
- Utilize the room parents more!
- I’d like to see the teachers support us more - promote our events, encourage volunteerism, etc
- Does turnout at Speaker Series justify it?
- Dues increase should fund more small events, lunches, coffees, etc
- It is shocking that there is administration concerns about PA dues, one day of Late Day is \$44. The school bus is \$2700/RT. This is a rounding error for families on financial aid.
- What is school organized and what is parent organized is confusing. Primary School Art Night was school and low volunteer, right? Confusing that you can just show up for that but need to help with RoM and Bizaarnival, etc
- Suggest involving PA more in Parent Nights. If that is unwelcome by administration, administration should pay for food.
- Would PA meetings get better turnout in the mornings?
- Like the idea of clusters of grade-level classes in charge of various events
- Volunteer appreciation - bring a friend
- Do we have a sense of how many parents are or are not interested in more community building?