PTA EB Meeting — October 1, 2026

In attendance: Sara Rastegar, Monica Lucas, Stephanie Resnik, Glenn Stanley, Ned Waters, Sarah Knight Marvar, LaToya Hutchins, Shannon Doyle, Beth Prince

1. Treasurer's Report - Sara Rastegar (PTA Co-President)

Sima's budget-tracking numbers show some line items on pace, others over budget. Overall, spending is outpacing income — a concern because it means drawing down reserves, which "aren't bottomless." Sara framed this as the core reason behind Owl Fund timing/strategy discussed later: fundraising needs to be more targeted, and the community, alongside admin will weigh in on which programs to continue funding (surveys to be sent to the community and PTA needs to meet with admin).

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2. Co-Presidents' Update — LSAT Recap (Sept 24) Sara Rastegar (PTA Co-President)

CLS Enrichment: Classes dropped from a peak of ~12–15 classes/semester (8 classrooms) to 3 classes across 2 classrooms (chorus with Ms. Baker, chess in the library) plus CLS's own art and Spanish, due to custodial/operational constraints flagged in August. Carla (CLS) provided year-over-year numbers. Per LSAT, Principal Hills has agreed to open the gym for winter (no longer renting it to outside groups, e.g. an outside basketball team) and allocate 5 additional classrooms to CLS enrichment — potentially returning close to last year's levels.

Next steps: Sara and Glenn coordinating directly with CLS on programming; LSAT asked for (1) a family survey on class preferences and (2) CLS to offer a range of price points (e.g., chess/Minecraft vs. lower-cost teacher-led or art/Spanish classes).

Discussion: Sarah Knight Marvar noted CLS already tracks fill rates as a preference signal (popular past classes: Ms. Gray's "Creative Cookies," Minecraft, chess) — a survey may be redundant with data CLS already has, though vendor availability may have changed this year. Stephanie raised whether CLS still trusts Hearst after a prior last-minute cancellation cost them revenue; Sara confirmed it was a real loss for CLS but that Carla and Suzanne have remained supportive and understanding of the custodial constraints, and have offered to help alleviate them where they can.

Assemblies: $15,000 budget line, unused last year. Dave Steadman (parent, performing-arts background) is now coordinating with Semhar Anthony (LSAT parent) on lining up groups. Principal Hills confirmed Step Afrika secured and paid for (per discussions during LSAT on Sept. 24th). Others will be scheduled against budget and calendar availability.

3. Owl Fund — Kickoff Readiness - Sara Rastegar (PTA Co-President)

Recap of the co-chair sit-down (Sara, Glenn, Ned, Margaret, Dave). Key change this year: **extending the campaign from October through December**, to allow more targeted outreach to specific family segments rather than relying solely on mass communication. Margaret has drafted a one-page explainer on what the PTA does and how funds are used, to go home via classroom folders before any direct ask begins.

- **Monica Lucas:** asked if extending into December risks overlapping with the staff holiday gift collection ask, and asking for two straight months/donate-donate-donate may be hard on parents. The Owl Fund will close 2 weeks before holiday gift collection begins.
- **CARE Brookland:** Jhonna Turner confirmed for the Oct 8 PTA meeting, possibly bringing a teacher from one of the schools CARE Brookland supports. **This is a renewal year** — the 15%-of-Owl-Fund commitment to CARE Brookland renews every 2 years, and this is the second year of our commitment so the community will need to vote at budget time (spring 2027) on whether to continue it for the next 2 years.

Community Day proceeds: Sarah Knight Marvar clarified Community Day has historically been paired with e-cycle and was conceived as a break-even community/environmental event, not a fundraiser. Consensus (Monica, Stephanie, Glenn, Ned): leave the proceeds/charity choice to this year's volunteer organizers and revisit whether to build in a specific PTA fundraising component eg just the pumpkin sale specifically, for next year.

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4. Committee Reports - Ned Waters (PTA Vice President)

DPR / Upper Field (Ned Waters): Productive call with Chris Dyer at DPR (previously out of office much of last year, which stalled prior email threads). The field's safety netting was repaired within days of renewed outreach. Ned recommends shifting focus from small DIY-fixable items (netting, the two patched divots) to advocating for the bigger-ticket item: replacing the artificial turf upper field, which is approaching the end of its useful life (DC's typical replacement cadence is 13–15 years). Beth Prince clarified the playground history: the original tot lot dates to the 2012–13 building renovation, but the larger playground was actually redone about 3 years later once it started falling apart — not part of a later (2019-20, pool-era) renovation. There is no systematic DPR replacement queue — community advocacy can move a school up in priority.

Stephanie raised a separate question about the turf's black crumb infill (environmental/safety concern) — Ned noted this is standard across artificial turf fields and a separate conversation for later in the process, not part of the current advocacy ask.

DPR's position is that full replacement (~$100K+) is DPR/DGS's responsibility, not the PTA's, since it's DPR property, not the school's.

Decision: Group endorsed Ned continuing to lead this advocacy effort (with his own capacity caveat — can attend budget hearings quarterly/biannually, liaise with Councilmember Frumin's office and local ANCs, and coordinate email campaigns). **Next steps:** Ned to research the DC budget hearing calendar and community-input process; PTA to prepare letter templates for families to sign and send to Frumin's office/ANCs; publicize the ask to the community (signing letters, attending hearings) once timing is clearer.

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5. Unanticipated Fund Requests — Sara Rastegar (PTA Co-President)

Compost Program: The EB's prior vote approved $250/ month for compost pickup only. Actual program costs include additional recurring items not anticipated eg. gloves, cleaning supplies & bins. These have been absorbed into the existing $500/year Recycling line, which wasn't sized for an ongoing monthly draw beyond the pickup fee.

Core question raised: how should the EB handle unanticipated recurring costs like this — decline to fund them, or draw from the $20,000 Discretionary Fund (of which $2,500 is already committed to compost, $17,500 remaining)? Context: the Discretionary Fund was raised from $2,000 to $20,000 this year specifically so the EB could absorb smaller unplanned costs without a full community vote (precedent: a $7,500 aftercare-scholarship overage last year required a community vote to draw reserves).

Ideas raised:

- Monica Lucas suggested folding predictable ongoing supply costs (liners, gloves, cleaning supplies) into the annual "My School Toolbox" bulk beginning-of-year order in future years, rather than treating them as recurring unanticipated draws.
- Glenn asked whether this year's compost spend should become its own dedicated line item (e.g., ~$5,000) in next year's community budget vote. Sara confirmed this is the standard path by which new programs graduate from discretionary funding into the formal budget — citing after-school tutoring, now in its third budgeted year, as precedent.

Sara proposed a future EB session dedicated to walking through the full budget together — both so the EB itself understands it fully, and so members can informally survey other parents on what they think PTA money should support ahead of the spring budget vote.

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6. Open Discussion — PE-Aide

Background: ~400 students enrolled at Hearst this year; DCPS requires 2 hours/week of PE. Hearst had only 1.5 PE staff (Coach G + a part-time coach), causing overlapping classes in the gym — a safety/overcrowding concern (per LaToya, younger classes in particular benefit from having two teachers present). To fix this, the PTA agreed with LSAT this year to fund a half-FTE PE aide, hired and administered entirely through CLS (CLS handled the search and hiring; PTA just receives monthly invoices for 3 hours/day). The aide covers lunch/recess support the first hour, then supports Coach G in the gym from roughly 1–3pm.

$25,000 was budgeted for the position, actual invoices are tracking towards $15,000, leaving $10,000 of that budget line unspent.

Discussion: Some other schools in this situation instead have classroom teachers cover health curriculum to meet the requirement instead of hiring an aide. Stephanie also noted that even without ending the contract, the EB could still ask CLS/admin to adjust the aide's schedule or responsibilities mid-year if the group feels it would get better value.

Decision: The program will not be stopped or changed mid-year — it's a signed, full-year CLS contract. Next steps: Sara to sit down with Coach G, admin, and CLS to gather data on how the arrangement is actually working, ahead of deciding whether to renew/continue funding it for next year.