



MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

SPRING 2015

2014-15 PTA BUDGET PRIORITIES SURVEY

Why did the PTA Board send out a survey?

- The PTA Board sent out a survey on April 21st so we could get a better understanding of what the General Membership's priorities were for spending.
- As requested by the General Membership, previous budgets over the last couple of years have focused on spending down the surplus from earlier years when the PTA held an auction annually. To ensure fiscal responsibility, the current PTA Board is working to put together a budget that more closely matches the ongoing yearly financial commitments to projected fundraising.
- 196 surveys were taken between April 21st and 26th. Thank you to all the PTA Members and Puesta del Sol Elementary Community for answering out PTA Survey.



THE RESULTS

On the following pages we will summarize the survey results. We have also made an effort to answer or respond to key comments and questions.

The teachers were also surveyed during this Spring about how they felt the PTA funding and programs impacts the educational experience for students at Puesta del Sol Elementary. The teachers expressed a great deal of gratitude to the PTA and parent community for providing so many wonderful ways to enhance student's educational experiences at Puesta del Sol.

Both the Budget Committee and the PTA Board have used the survey results to finalize the Proposed 2015-2016 PTA Budget which will be presented on May 14, 2015.

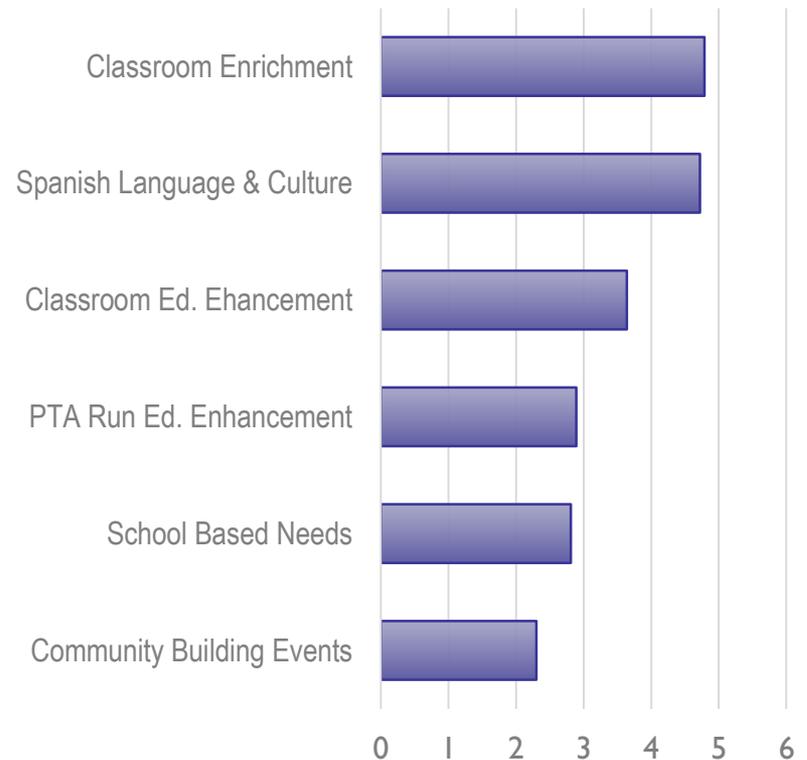
MEMBERSHIP PRIORITIES FOR PTA SPENDING

Our current PTA expenses fall into 6 Main categories.

What are the membership priorities for PTA spending?

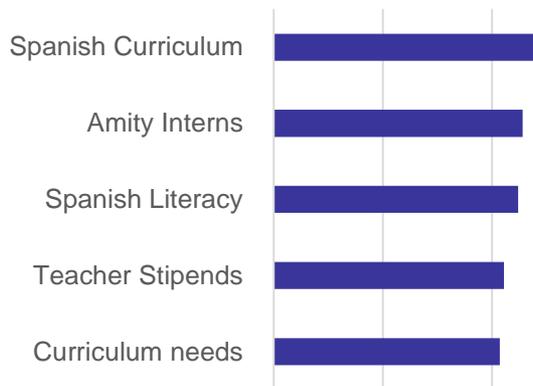
The chart to the right shows the PTA Membership would like Classroom Enrichment, Spanish Language & Culture, and Classroom Educational Enhancement to have prioritization for PTA spending.

Membership Priorities for PTA Spending



PRIORITIES: Is it important for the PTA to fund the following?

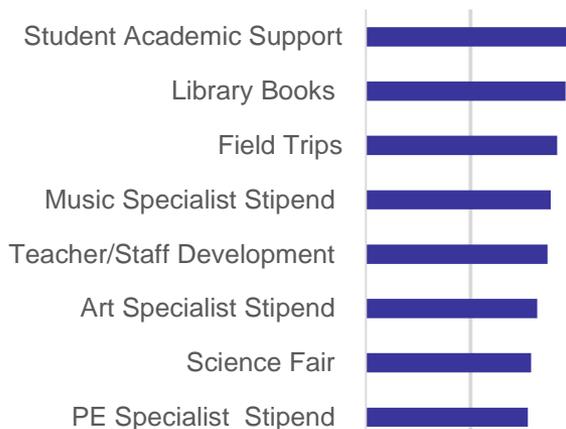
Extremely Important



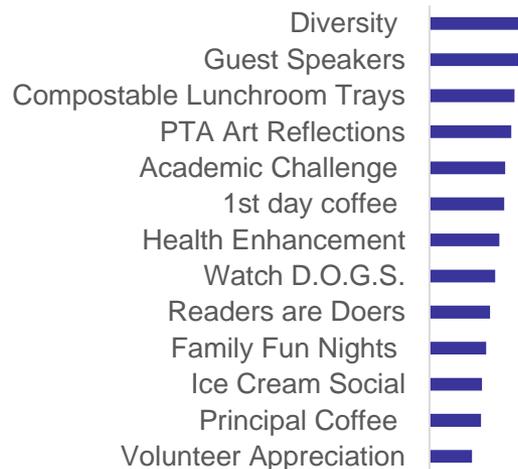
Medium Importance



High Importance



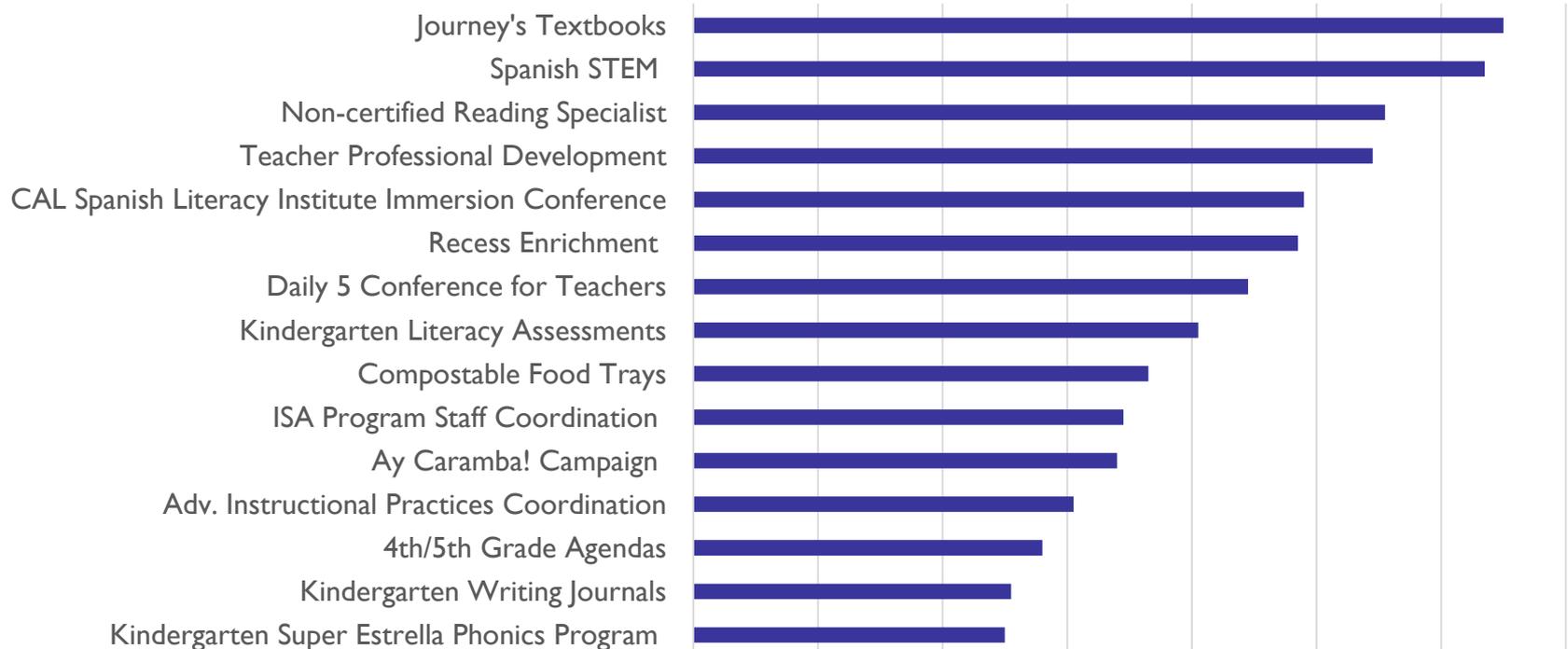
Low Importance



PRIORITIES: HOW TO FUND FUTURE REQUESTS

Each year the PTA receives grant requests from school administration, teachers, staff, and parents. We asked survey participants to help prioritize these requests if funds become available.

Prioritization for future spending on Grant Requests



BUDGET: QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

What happened to the PTA's large surplus?

It was spent wisely and under the direction of the General Membership each year during the budget approval process.

The Non Profit and WSPTA guidelines recommend keeping a monetary reserve of 6 months to 2 years in case of an emergency. Our General Membership, (at our October 2013 General Membership meeting) felt comfortable keeping a minimum of 6 months of reserves and requested we use any surplus as soon as possible to enhance our school.

Over the last three years, our existing PTA events and programming plus school and teacher needs were enhanced in addition to funding new PTA initiatives. Because we increased our budget line items to use this surplus, these line items are sitting at a spending level that seems like it should be the normal amount, but are actually bloated. We knew at some point we would have to bring the expense line items back in line with our current fundraising plans and the time has come. We can have a successful PTA without needing an auction every year to fund our needs.

To ensure fiscal responsibility, our goal is to create a balanced budget moving forward. We prefer to fundraise at a level that matches our projection for reasonable expenses and to prioritize where we want that money spent in order to maintain a balanced budget. If a surplus remains at the end of the fiscal year in addition to our planned reserve, the PTA Board will then look at all requests for funding and use the prioritization from the survey to make recommendations to the General Membership in the Fall of 2015.

BUDGET: QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

I don't understand why we are always saving our money for "next year"? Why do we have so much money in our "reserve" account?

Good question. Hopefully the following will help explain this further.

The "reserve" account is an account funded in case of an emergency or if expected fundraising does not come in. This is money that is not added to the budget for expenses. To be fiscally responsible, Non-Profits need to maintain a reserve account. The reserve account is currently set at a fiscally responsible level.

*Once the reserve account is fully funded, any excess money is **surplus**. The PTA has been spending down that surplus each year as per the membership's wishes. Because of the nature of our fundraising, it is very difficult to pinpoint an exact amount of surplus anytime other than at year end on June 30th.*

***Rollover Auction Revenue** is money raised during Auction years that is intended to be applied to the following Non-Auction Year's budget. When preparing the budget, we are actually looking at fundraising and expenses over a two-year period.*

I am uncomfortable donating to the PTA because I don't feel like I understand what the PTA Board is really doing with our money?

We are sorry you feel this way. We welcome you, as a PTA member, to come to our General Membership meetings (they are published at the beginning of the school year – please put them on your calendar and plan on attending) and ask questions. The PTA Board shares financial information at our General Membership meetings.

You can request a meeting with the Treasurer at any time to view our financials.

Read the information that is published about the PTA @Work in the El Sol newsletter throughout the year.

We also would welcome your volunteer time which would help you become more informed as well.

Please ask questions along the way if you don't see the answer about how things are done or how money is spent.

We are also going to spend more time next year ensuring this information is being shared more often.

BUDGET: QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Have you asked the teachers their opinions on the PTA Programs that affect them?

We also asked for teacher/staff input via a survey. Teachers gave us great information about the value of each of the PTA Programs in the classroom. We apologize we didn't have that information when this survey went out. We will be sending out the results of those surveys shortly.

I have a concern about which programs I think are educationally impactful or worth spending money on or not.

Great point and we talk about this all the time! It's difficult to just let go of legacy programs as there are so many differing opinions. That is why we put the survey out at the end of last year and this one along with getting the teachers' opinions at the beginning of the school year and again in a survey that was sent specifically to them last month.

Can you put the budget on the website or share financial information electronically?

PTA budgets are only for PTA members to review. Any member is always welcome to request a meeting with the treasurer to see financial documents.

Following National PTA best practices, the PTA will not post PTA financial information on the PTA website or send information electronically.

PTA members are encouraged to attend General Membership meetings regularly for updates. We have these meeting dates on the calendar at the start of the year. Please put these dates in your calendar and plan to join us. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Can the PTA Board create a budget committee?

We did create a budget committee and they worked hard to put our initial budget into place.

DISTRICT/STATE FUNDING: QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Why is the PTA paying for items like curriculum when it seems like the district or state should be paying for it from our taxes/their budgets?

This is a really good question. School funding is a very complex topic. Although we would like to think that all public school needs are funded by the state and district, this just isn't the case. In the Bellevue School District, both Bellevue Schools Foundation and school PTAs help to fill the needs of all students and still all needs are not met.

The schools within Bellevue School District are not all funded equally. They are funded based on the population within the school. School funds come from a variety of sources.

Please see the following 2 pages for more information about where the money comes from for the school budget and how Puesta del Sol Elementary's budget compares to the other District elementary schools.

DISTRICT/STATE FUNDING: QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Why doesn't Puesta del Sol Elementary get more money from the district?

This is really good question. Hopefully the following will help to explain where the school budget comes from.

- School Building budgets are based on student population. The main sources of money for schools are: state basic education dollars, district levies, and both federal & state grants.
- **Currently, there is no additional funding to support Language Immersion.**
- Funding sources that Puesta del Sol Elementary does not qualify for
 - ELL – State funds for English Language Learners
 - Title I – Federal Funds for schools with high poverty
 - LAP – State funds for schools deficient in basic skills
- The district Dual Language Schools have larger school budgets because they receive ELL, Title I, and LAP funds based on their student population.

Puesta del Sol Staff are doing more with less money!

DISTRICT/STATE FUNDING: COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

How does Puesta del Sol's school budget compare to other BSD schools?

District Funding by Elementary School					
School	# Students	ELL Services	Free/Reduced	Building Budet	Building Budget / student
Lake Hills *	485	34%	62%	\$ 129,319.00	\$266.64
Ardmore	343	34%	46%	\$ 80,572.00	\$234.90
Phantom Lake	322	19%	30%	\$ 74,216.00	\$230.48
Sherwood Forrest	429	31%	45%	\$ 95,985.00	\$223.74
Stevenson*	460	51%	48%	\$ 101,855.00	\$221.42
Newport Heights	622	12%	19%	\$ 104,892.00	\$168.64
Woodridge	625	20%	21%	\$ 102,766.00	\$164.43
Spiritridge	613	9%	9%	\$ 97,689.00	\$159.36
Cherry Crest	573	6%	2%	\$ 87,350.00	\$152.44
Eastgate	573	6%	2%	\$ 87,350.00	\$152.44
Entai	544	17%	17%	\$ 82,583.00	\$151.81
Puesta del Sol	572	6%	6%	\$ 79,351.00	\$138.73
Clyde Hill	663	17%	5%	\$ 86,223.00	\$130.05
Bennett	477	17%	4%	\$ 56,762.00	\$119.00
Somerset	709	11%	6%	\$ 79,558.00	\$112.21
Medina	554	6%	1%	\$ 60,089.00	\$108.46
Jing Mey	176	47%	4%	Unpublished	

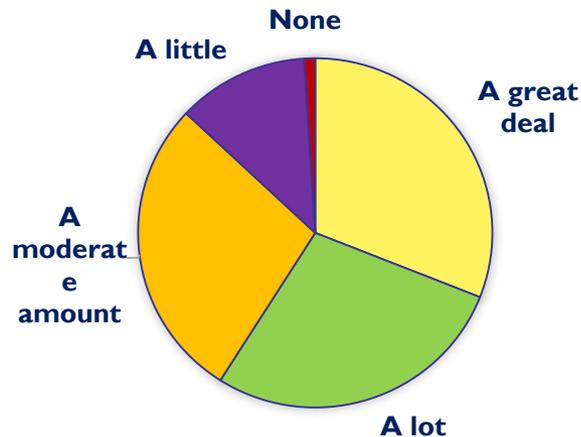
* Dual Language Program

Puesta del Sol PTA's Educational Enrichment for 2014-15 is **\$251 per student.**

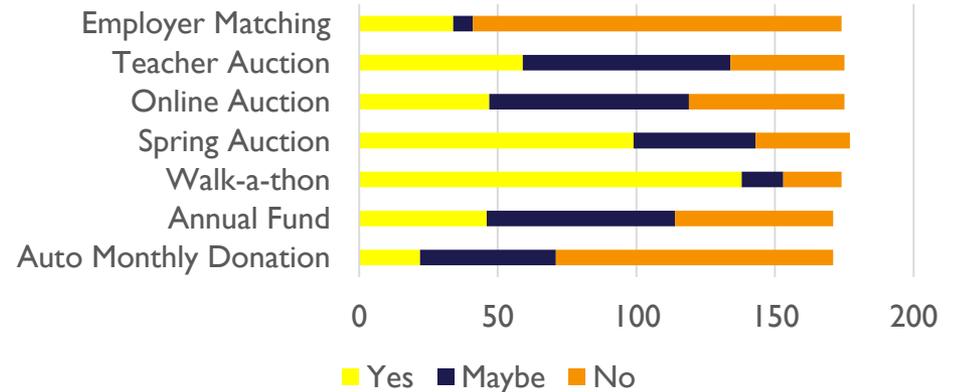
FUNDRAISING & DONATIONS

Puesta del Sol PTA relies solely on fundraising and donations to be able to enhance our students' educational experience. The following information will help to improve fundraising efforts.

Do you think your donation has an impact?



Would you participate in the following Fundraising Efforts?



Will you donate to Puesta del Sol PTA in the future?



FUNDRAISING: QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Why can't we use crowdsourcing or directed donations for certain items we might want to fund?

Since the Puesta del Sol PTA is run strictly by volunteers, the complexity of abiding by IRS rules regarding restricted donations limits the PTA ability to provide this option.

Can we please have easy visuals to understanding where our money goes?

Yes, we have a marketing plan in place to explain our programs, where our money goes and how to give your money and we will share it with all Puesta del Sol families before the new school year begins.

Can we just do a flat donation each year rather than attending and/or running multiple fundraising events?

Yes, you may absolutely do a flat donation each year via our website. However, due to the lack of support, flat donations cannot be the only source of fundraising.

Should we go back to auctions every year?

Annual Auctions take tremendous numbers of volunteer hours and resources from the local business community. Our last Auction was very successful due to the dedicated hours put in by the few members of the Auction Committee. At this time, we do not have enough parent volunteers to hold Auctions each year.

To clarify, the surplus from several years of Auctions was spent over a period of three years. We are attempting to create a budget that allows the PTA to rely less on large carry-over amounts and rely more on matching expenses to revenue with a modest carry-over to the following year. This would support having an Auction only every other year.

Are we looking for grants outside of our school?

We do look to Bellevue Schools Foundations grants and will continue to encourage this practice for teachers and parents.

GENERAL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Can you please provide descriptions for all of the programs the PTA provides?

You can find this information in several places. It is on the PTA Website under Programs, it is in the El Sol throughout the year, and a final summary of what programs occurred for the year is in the El Sol Highlights that goes home at the end of the year.

Why can't we have a certificated reading specialist vs a non-certificated reading specialist and why don't we have any type of reading specialist?

Yes, a certificated Reading Specialist would be preferred but the school doesn't have the money to pay for any type of Reading Specialist, the district doesn't provide one and the PTA may not pay for one. Per the district rules to make things fair across the district, they do not allow PTAs to pay for certificated staff. The PTA may pay, however, for an Instructional Assistant/Reading Specialist that is non-certificated.

The teacher survey also rated help with reading as a high need. The PTA is continuing the ongoing conversation with the school administration and district to find resources to help our students. There is no easy fix and many factors come into play that make it more difficult. But please know that this is a high priority for both the school and the PTA and we are working together to come up with viable solutions.

GENERAL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Why is the PTA paying for teachers' professional development?

Teachers need professional development and unfortunately, the district does not cover all of their needs. It is up to the Principal to spend the building's limited budget or for the PTA to help and cover the difference.

We are frustrated by the lack of teacher involvement in PTA events/programs. I don't want to donate money when they don't seem appreciative. What can we do?

Yes, this is a great observation that we have shared with Sr. Shearer and the teachers.

Where is the PTA Advocacy to get things funded at the district level?

Puesta del Sol PTA needs volunteers to become involved in Advocacy. The Advocacy Chair position has remained unfilled for the last few years. Puesta del Sol would benefit greatly to have volunteers work with the district to help get things funded at a district level.

Advocacy can work. For example, Puesta del Sol parents have complained for years about paying for school buses. This is the first year the district no longer charged Puesta del Sol parents for bus transportation because PTA Board members and parents advocated on our behalf to the BSD Superintendent and the bus fee was terminated. But we need someone who is or better yet, a group of people who are committed to Advocacy for our school.

GENERAL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Why is the School Garden, which is used classroom-wide like other PTA Classroom Educational Enrichment, included in the PTA Run Educational Enhancement at the start of the survey?

Good question. The PTA's portion of the School Garden is an optional garden plot for the Recess Garden Club that does not take place in the classroom. The physical School Garden is owned by the school and it is the school's responsibility to direct and maintain the garden for the plots that are used by the teachers as part of their curriculum in the classroom. So, for the purposes of our survey, we are referring to the optional non-classroom PTA program of the Recess Garden Club, not the use of the garden plots by the teaching staff.

Can you develop programs that are designed to entice participation from new families?

Over the last two years, the PTA has created several opportunities to entice participation from new families:

- 1. A New Family Welcome Chairperson, a New Family Flier with information new families would need as they join our school, and a webpage on our PTA website dedicated to new families helping to pave the way for them.*
- 2. Organized an Incoming Kindergarten Night potluck to help the new families meet each other before the summer.*
- 3. PTA Board members attended the Kindergarten Orientation night in August to explain what the PTA is, what we do and answer any questions.*
- 4. Introduced a Kindergarten-only table at the 1st Day Coffee.*
- 5. The El Sol Highlights are sent home via paper fliers for the first few weeks of school so all new families have the chance to get information on how to sign up for the electronic El Sol by the end of September.*