

Peoria United Parent Council

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Volume 1, Issue 1



Contents

President's Message	1
PUSD Calendar Committee	1
PUPC Executive Board	2
PUPC Executive Committee	2
Meeting Recap	2
Membership Goal	2
Challenger Center Issue	3
Voter Registration Deadline	4
PUPC Meeting Schedule	4

Welcome to the Peoria United Parent Council

Jan Wilson, president

I am honored and privileged to serve as the first president of the newly formed Peoria United Parent Council. I believe very strongly in public education, supporting our schools, being involved in the decision-making process that affects our children and helping parents find access to quality information about raising children.

The PUPC is committed to presenting information that interests our members and concerns the entire district.

PUSD Superintendent Jack Erb has welcomed us to hold meetings at the district office and has expressed interest in receiving input from our group.

We have many PUPC committees that help and support kids and parents. Most of the committees are already being chaired and we welcome any and all enthusiastic parents.

Please contact me at (623) 334-3636 to find out how you can be an important part of making PUSD a great district.

By the way, we are not a fundraising organization.

Our meetings will be held on the third Monday of each month. We will alternate between evening meetings at 7 p.m. and morning meetings at 9 a.m., so that we can include as many parents as possible.

Please take this opportunity to start attending PUPC meetings and become educated on the issues that affect your children. There has never been a better time to let your voice be heard than now.

Even if you cannot attend all meetings, you can still be a member of the PUPC simply by sending an e-mail to PeoriaUPC@aol.com and asking to be included in the mailing of our e-newsletter and bulletins.

I look forward to meeting each of you during the Monday meetings! Be a friend and bring a friend. Plan to get involved. Together, we can work for the good of all PUSD children.

Parents, teachers: Vote for school start dates!

The PUSD calendar committee, made up of parents, staff, teachers and administrators, will soon be presenting several options and asking the PUSD community to vote on school calendars for the next three years. That includes start days and vacation days! Watch your child's backpack, your e-mail and the district lunch menu for voting info. The Governing Board will vote on calendars for the next three years in November. Make your voice heard! Don't forget to tell Governing Board members your choice in calendars. For more information, contact Jim Cummings, PUSD director of public relations, (623) 486-6040, or jcumings@peoriaud.k12.az.us



***“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”
~ Margaret Mead***

We have executive committee positions open to serve until PUPC elections, which will be held before the end of the school year. Please contact us if you want to serve. Thank you!

Executive Board and Executive Committee

Executive Board

Jan Wilson, president
Kim Olsen, first vice president
Vicki Moyes, second vice president
Kerri Kelley, secretary
Cheryl Lomax, treasurer

Executive Committee Chairs

Jennifer Johnson, membership
Martha Regan, special spokesperson for the Challenger Space Center issue

Joanna Yoder, calendar committee rep
Diane Douglas, Governing Board observer
Joe Macke, parliamentarian
Rebecca Allen, newsletter
_____, website
_____, legislative liaison
_____, directory
_____, legal council
Interested in helping out? Call us:
(623) 322-8289.

Last meeting recap

Kerri Kelley, secretary

Thanks to everyone who attended our first meeting at the Desert Schools Coyote Center (formerly Polar Ice) July 28. There were approximately 50 people in attendance, representing 12 PUSD schools.

We adopted bylaws and elected officers and committee chairs: Jan Wilson, president; Kim Price Olson, first vice president; Vickie Moyes, second vice president; Kerri Kelley, secretary; Cheryl Lomax, treasurer; Joe Macke, parliamentarian; Martha Regan, special

spokesperson/Challenger Issue; Rebecca Allen, newsletter; Diane Douglas, PUSD Governing Board observer; Jennifer Johnson, membership; Joanne Yoder, calendar.

Martha Regan provided the history of the relationship between PUSD and the Challenger Space Center. The presentation elicited questions and much discussion.

Special thanks to Eldon Meade for providing us meeting space at the Desert School Coyote Center, and for allowing our children to skate at a discount.

Membership goal-100%

Jennifer Johnson, membership chair

The Peoria United Parent Council seeks school and general memberships. There are two ways to be a member of PUPC-school organizations (PTA/PTO/PTSO/BOOSTER Clubs) can designate two members of their organization to represent a school and vote at PUPC meetings. And, all PUSD residents can join as general members. All members will receive our newsletter and e-mail bulletins.

Our goal is to register 100 percent of district schools and increase our individual memberships. To receive a membership form, call (623) 322-8289.

At this time, we are not collecting membership dues. As our organization grows, we may have some small expenses to share. At that time, you can decide whether or not you and/or your school would like to continue participating.

By participating in PUPC, schools and individuals can learn about issues relevant to PUSD and education. You can learn how to help your child, your school, as well as all PUSD students. You can be a part of a collective voice that advocates for quality education for all children.

If you would like someone from our organization to speak to your school group(s), please call (623) 322-8289.

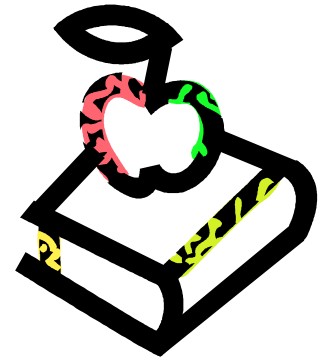
Challenger Space Center issue summary

Martha Regan

- From February 2003-July 2004, a handful of parents have been addressing the PUSD Governing Board about the issues surrounding the Challenger Space Center -- to no avail.
- In July, our members went to a Board meeting wearing red to symbolize our message: Stop subsidizing the Challenger with taxpayer dollars intended for the education of our children. In result, the Board still voted to include \$165,000, of non-refundable monies, over and above the outstanding and delinquent \$1 million loan to the Challenger. Board members agreed to hold a study session about the issue within 45 days.
- At the first PUPC meeting July 28, members voted to approve a position statement that asked the Governing Board to discontinue funding of the Challenger and return the money back to the classrooms where it belongs. The Challenger is a privately owned, separate legal entity and not a part of the Peoria Unified School District.
- In August, many PUPC members attended the Governing Board study session to express our concerns to the board. Our members made it clear that we do not want to see the Challenger fail, we simply believe private organizations like the Challenger should be funded by private donations and corporate sponsors, not money from state and local tax coffers intended for our children. As a representative of PUPC, Vice President Vickie Moyes read a statement to the Governing Board.
- Presently, the Challenger has offered and PUSD is working with a \$10,000-a-month repayment plan on the nearly \$1 million the Challenger owes PUSD. At this rate it will take more than eight years for the funds to be repaid. Additionally, per Dr. Jack Erb, PUSD superintendent, the repayments will not be added to the existing school budget but must be used to reduce the property tax base since the repayment is from funds expended in prior years. Therefore, the \$1 million collected

and allocated towards the district budget will never be directly used in the schools.

- At this point, there are no plans to discontinue all or part of the current agreement between the Challenger and PUSD. This agreement includes advancing salaries and "purchasing" one mission per school for approximately \$165,000.00 during the 2004-05 school year. The values of the missions are \$700 each and there are 36 schools in the district. If every school were to use one mission, the return on the annual \$165,000 investment would be \$25,200 per year. During the past couple of years, the district and Challenger representatives have explained that the value of the annual contribution of approximately \$165,000 also includes, reserving rooms (not free) at the Challenger on a priority basis, as well as other unspecified "perks and prestige" for the West Valley and state of Arizona. For this reason, we are left to assume that the remaining amount of money PUSD gives to the Challenger is a gift. In addition, according to Jim Cummings, PUSD director of public relations, seven months of the estimated \$70,000 salary for the Challenger's new education director, Nancy Sturm, will be paid for with PUSD funds.
- On a positive note, one of our members offered the solution below and the PUSD Board has expressed interest in exploring the possibility.



"Private organizations like the Challenger Center should be funded by private donations and corporate sponsors, not money from the state and local tax coffers intended for our children."

Solution submitted by a Peoria United Parent Council member

If the Challenger Space Center building is worth \$4-5 million as reported, the Challenger Board should consider borrowing against the building, from a financial institution. Then, the Challenger can return, in full, the \$1 million in loaned monies to the district, as well as have money in reserve to cover operating expenses of (\$165,000.00) that are donated each year from the district, as the employees work toward their goal of being financially independent. If such a loan is secured, the relationship with the school district can be severed and the Challenger's chances for success remain the same.

To read the Challenger Space Center information presented at the Aug. 16 Governing Board study session, visit:
www.peoriaud.k12.az.us
 and click on "Challenger Center Update"

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The purpose this newsletter is to provide information to PUSD residents. We plan to publish the newsletter each month. Please share your newsletter with your friends and neighbors. If you need additional copies, contact: Rebecca Allen at (602) 298-9773 or e-mail rebecca@desertware.com for an e-mail version of this newsletter.

PUPC meeting schedule

The PUPC meets on the third Monday of each month, alternating between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. meeting times.

Meetings are open to the public. A permanent meeting place has not been designated yet, please note the following dates and times. Contact peoriaupc@aol.com or call (623) 322-8289 for more information.

Meeting dates:

Oct. 18, 9 a.m.
Nov. 22, 7 p.m.
Dec. 20, 9 a.m.
Jan. 17, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, meeting date TBD
Feb. 21, Presidents' Day-meeting date TBD
March 24, 7 p.m.
April 18, 9 a.m.

Deadline to register to vote Oct. 4

Are you registered to vote? Not only with the next President of the United States be elected Nov. 2, three members of the PUSD Governing Board will be elected to serve four-year terms.

Register to vote on the Internet at www.servicearizona.com, call (602)506-1511 or pick up a form in your school's front office. To vote in the Nov. 2 election, you must be registered by Oct. 4.

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