

## **PTA Meeting Minutes**

Eagle Hall – Thoreau Middle School

Thursday, November 17, 2016

Attendees: Beth Eachus, Barbara Rousseau, Sarah Helmicki, Ms. Aguilar, Mr. Azimi, Kathy Keller, Sandy Pompelli, Michelle Alonso, Katrina Smart, Emily Korff, Sarah Barry, Rene Newman, Kelly Sund, Annemarie Harthun, Amanda Barker, Melissa LeTendre, Ann Lunger Wyborski

The meeting was called to order at 9:40am. Sarah Helmicki presented the minutes from the October 21, 2016, PTA meeting. There was a motion to approve the minutes by Barbara Rousseau. Katrina Smart seconded, and the minutes were approved as written.

### **Principal's Report**

Mr. Azimi indicated that school would be released 2 hours early on Wednesday, Nov. 23, for the Thanksgiving holiday. In addition, teachers have been instructed that there should be no homework assigned over the holiday. This includes no major tests assigned for immediately following the break. All principals in the entire Madison HS pyramid approved this policy not only for Thanksgiving, but also for Winter and Spring Breaks as well.

A discussion ensued regarding the results of the Presidential election and the impact that was having on students and teachers at Thoreau MS. There was some divisiveness created as a result of the recent Presidential election results. Plus some students and teachers felt they were being singled out based on their political views. Mr. Azimi asked for input from the attendees to discuss their perception of Thoreau's culture. A parent who was not in attendance at the meeting had suggested that Thoreau has a culture of bullying. Mr. Azimi was interested to see if other parents shared the same opinion. In addition, there was an incident in which there was negative language directed at a student (off school property) by another student.

Overall, parents and administration were in agreement that the school should be a positive and safe environment for the 905 students and 102 employees at Thoreau MS. Mr. Azimi regularly engages in strategies that are intended to ensure a positive environment, so there was not a major change to this policy after the election. For example, he encourages visibility of the staff and administration during classroom changes, which is when issues can arise.

### **Student Services Report**

Ms. Aguilar reported on bullying lessons that are a part of the TMS curriculum. The school is implementing multi-prong anti-bullying lessons for the classroom that are not the standard "traditional PowerPoint" format. Instead, they are planning classroom meetings with the intention to build a sense of security among the students and prevent both emotional and physical bullying. At the meeting Ms. Aguilar reported that students and teachers have been receptive to the new format but that they will review the new approach to see if it was more effective than the standard lessons.

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### **President's Report**

Beth began her report by thanking Navy Federal for the paper donation for the school directory. Navy Federal also helped by printing the directory for all students. Parents should have received their directories from their students.

Overall, Beth noted that she is pleased with the number of engaged parents in this year's PTA programs. The 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Dinner was sold out with over 400 people attending buying tickets in advance. The Landscaping and Courtyard Committee has also noted increased participation. There were a number of parents who volunteered for the hearing and vision screening. Lastly, there were more pies donated for the teachers for Thanksgiving than were needed in addition to a \$200 donation for packaging. Sandra Frederick, with the Hospitality Committee was very excited with the overall volunteerism exhibited thus far this year.

Crosstown Hoops will take place on April 6 this year at Marshall HS. There will be tryouts for 4 teams: 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls, 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys, 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys. There will also be an exhibition game by the Fairfax Falcons, a para-olympic team. Lastly half time will feature attempts at half court shots.

Beth noted that Michelle Alonso would be working on the Dining for Dollars fundraisers this year.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Laura was unable to attend the meeting. The Treasurer's Report was posted online.

### **Committee Reports**

Beth provided some updates for the following committees:

Membership: The Membership Committee reported that they were at 75% in terms of the membership that they expected to join.

Landscaping and Courtyard: The committee has been busy over the course of the fall repairing the courtyard that was demolished during construction. They oversaw the building of 3 new raised garden beds and tending to the turtles and fish, that have proven very resilient! Students have an opportunity to take advantage of this space that is a peaceful environment for the school.

Hospitality: Sandra Frederick was very thankful for all the parent support for the October and November hospitality provided to the teachers.

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7<sup>th</sup> Grade Dinner: Melissa LeTendre reported with the success of the advanced ticket sales that they expected to make a profit at the dinner, even though this event is not a planned fundraiser. The event had not taken place at the time of the PTA meeting, but it looked like it would be a fun and successful event.

### **New Business**

No new business was presented at the meeting

Beth ended the meeting at 10:51am. The next meeting will be held at Thursday, January 19, 2017, at 7:00pm.