

PTA Meeting Minutes

Thoreau Middle School, Eagle Hall

Thursday, September 19, 2017

Attendees: Beth Eachus, Stacey Leimbach, Laura Schmorrow, Sarah Helmicki, Principal Azimi, Rebecca Aguilar, Jane Miscavage, Michelle Alonso, Emily Korff, Sonya Marsden, Sarah Barry, Natacha Moore, Donna O'Harren, Amy Steinfadt, Catherine Skinner, Diana Nash, Sarah Lundquist, Negin Dehn, Gayle Schlueter, Jen Wharton, Sam Rayburn, Eliza Morss

Beth called the meeting to order at 9:36am. After a period of introductions, Beth thanked volunteers who had been working to help make the start of school successful. These volunteers included:

1. The Hospitality Committee chairs, who have hosted 2 events since the beginning of school. These volunteers include Emily Korff, Nene Spivy, Margaret Herbold and Gayle Schlueter.
2. The School Store chairs, Tana Keeffe and Negin Dehn
3. The School Supply Kits chairs, Betsy Woolums and Catherine Skinner

Sarah Helmicki presented the minutes from the June 6, 2017, PTA meeting. There was a motion to approve the minutes by Sonya Marsden. Sarah Barry seconded, and the minutes were approved as written.

Principal's Report

Mr. Azimi noted that there has been a 30-35% reduction in people entering the education field. Given this, there is a shortage of teachers. This is a result of fewer people entering the profession and more people leaving after teaching for 5 years (or fewer). However, due to the work environment, mentoring, leadership and community (parents), the issue of fewer available teachers has not as of yet had an impact on Thoreau. The 7 teachers/staff vacancies in June were filled right away. Overall 19 positions needed new staff due to retirement or moves, but all were filled before the start of the school year. In FCPS, there are 140 open positions for faculty and staff (60 in elementary schools). He thanked parents for the level of support since he believes it is a motivating factor to keep teachers at Thoreau.

In the 2017-2018 school year, there are 950 students and 113 staff, which includes 65 teachers (including library staff and counselors).

Mr. Azimi also spent some time reviewing the purpose of Eagle Time. There are five key activities that students can do in Eagle time, including academic intervention, remediation, organization, work completion, and enrichment.

The students are assigned a teacher for Eagle time, but they can change classrooms to meet any of the above needs. There is a priority system for students who need special help in English (4th) and Math (5th). These special help classrooms are purposely very small groups so that extra attention can be given to students who need help.

The After School programs were also reviewed. These programs are directed by Shannon Campbell and will be available on 9/25. There are 3 "periods" in After School programs. Late buses will bring students home on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday when After School

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programs are offered. New programs are offered each week. Classes are listed online on BlackBoard and the Thoreau website. No pre-registration is required.

Mr. Azimi discussed the school's Retake Policy. When students have a grade of 72 or below, they must retake an assessment. There are pre-requisites to retake an assessment, such as doing test corrections, Eagle Time attendance, etc. These pre-requisites are determined by teams. Retakes are for major assessments only.

Lastly Mr. Azimi discussed the policy for electronic devices. At TMS, teachers make the policy for how devices will be handled in their classrooms. Teachers set expectations with the students. Some teachers collect phones at the beginning of the period. Some allow students to keep them on their desks, etc. Some teachers will use them as part of their instruction or will provide breaks when students can check their phones in class.

Student Services Report

Ms. Aguilar reported that the PTA and Navy Federal provided donated school supplies for students in need. In addition, Ms. Aguilar discussed wellness screenings. She noted that there would be resources available for parents through a parent portal. These resources will have information about topics such as depression, mental health, suicide, etc. Login information will be forthcoming. Lastly, Ms. Aguilar reported that Mr. Fishman is currently in treatment but is doing well. He has an experienced long term substitute who is filling in during his absence.

President's Report

Beth began her report by thanking the many, many volunteers who helped to make the start of the school year smooth and successful. noting that 5% of all sales at Whole Foods in Vienna would be donated to the Fairfax County Council of PTAs. In addition, she reminded the group about the James Madison High School Homecoming Parade.

Treasurer's Report

Laura Schmorow presented the findings from the 2016-2017 audit. The two findings were:

1. There was a recommendation that all deposits are made the next day. Currently, any money that is not deposited is kept in a locked safe.
2. There was a second recommendation that all voided checks should be saved.

Laura noted that a copy of the audit was available for review. Donna O'Harren made a motion to approve the audit results. Sonya Marsden seconded. The audit report was approved as presented.

Laura secondly presented the Proposed 2017-2018 Budget. Eliza Morss suggested the addition of a Spelling Bee into the Programs budget. As the cost of the program is under \$300, a formal approval is not required but was added to the budget.

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As noted in Ms. Aguilar's report, it was mentioned that moneys made with the school supply kits are passed through to pay for supply kits for families in need, so there is no net profit for this effort.

The Cross Town Hoops Fundraiser will be hosted at TMS in 2017-2018, so Laura anticipates that the numbers will change from the 2016-2017 school year when the event was hosted at Kilmer.

While the Principal Fund/School Needs budget remains the same in the 2017-2018 school year, the Principal Fund/Staff Training and Development went down for this school year to \$1500. However, there was a discussion at the meeting to keep that budgeted at the 2016-2017 levels (\$3000). This is to ensure that the teachers are supported as needed by the PTA. Emily Korff made a motion to move the budgeted amount for Principal Fund/Staff Training and Development from \$1500 to \$3000. Stacey Leimbach seconded the motion. The change to the budget was approved as presented.

Lastly, with respect to the budget, it was noted that the PTA is considering an auction for the 2017-2018 school year which would impact the line item of Campus Campaign in the budget.

Diana Nash made a motion to approve the 2017-2018 Budget as amended. Catherine Skinner seconded. The budget was approved.

Laura also discussed the preferred procedure for submitting receipts for reimbursement. She requested that email is the preferred method to receive Check Requests. Those requesting a refund can send an email to Laura Schmorow. The email should include a picture of the receipt, a check request, and an address where the check can be sent.

Committee Reports

The following committees provided updates:

Membership: PTA memberships continue to come in. We have made our third deposit.

Auction: The first meeting for the auction planning committee will be scheduled in October.

Hospitality: The 4 hospitality chairs have hosted 2 events for teachers thus far. These include dinner for teachers on Back To School Night from Jimmy Johns. The other event was breakfast for the teachers at the beginning of school. The next upcoming Hospitality events will be Tropical smoothies and then treats for Halloween.

Spirit Wear: Natacha Moore will work on spirit wear this year. She plans to keep the offering primarily the same this year. There was a recommendation to donate the TMS pajama pants to a custodian who particularly would like them.

7th Grade Dinner: The 7th Grade Dinner co-chairs will be Mary Pat Julian and Kristyn Woldow. The theme will be "Hoe Down." There will be a DJ, and BBQ from Famous Daves will be served.

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There will also be a candy bar. Donations will be needed for this. Families come to this event, not just students. Currently they are looking for volunteers and donations.

Cross Town Hoops: The event will be held at Madison this year. Traditionally, the Vice President of the PTA is in charge of this event. The date will be in April but is currently TBD.

8th Grade Party: The 8th Grade Party will be June 1. The co-chairs will be Diana Nash and Paris Jacobs.

Garden and Courtyard: There is \$5000 budget for the mosaic and new courtyard. Funds have been allocated from previous years. An additional \$3000 was approved as part of the 2017-2018 budget. The mosaic will be created by a local artist and will fill a vacant courtyard.

Additionally, the PTA is looking for volunteers because those who currently chair the committee no longer have students at the school.

New Business

Michelle Alonso reported that there would be a Dine Out on 9/28 with Ledo's Pizza from 4-10pm. This will include take out and dine in. There is a plan to have a Cava Dine Out in October. Future Dine Outs will include Zoe's, Outback, and Chipotle. Those dates are TBD.

Box tops will be due on Oct 27th.

A representative from Marshall High School noted that the Academy class for special needs students provides a catering service. They catered a recent event at Marshall HS that was well received. They can cater personal events as well.

There was a suggestion for Thoreau to host a Career Day. If there is interest in this event, send an email to Mr. Azimi and copy Ms. Aguilar. Another option might be speakers at lunch or Eagle Time as an alternative to all day.

The next PTA meeting will be October 17 at 7pm. The attendees at the meeting selected the topic of "Getting Past Procrastination." The speaker will be Ann Dolin.

Jane Miscavage shared information about a "Stuff the Bus" fundraiser that will take place and coordinate with the Whole Foods Fundraiser on Sept. 20. The donated foods will benefit "Food for Others" and will include "power packs" for students who do not have food on weekends. Whole Foods sells items for these packs and people can purchase items to fill them. The money earned at the Whole Foods fundraiser will go to grant programs for other PTAs. Purchases of gift cards will be included toward the donation from Whole Foods who will donate 5% of total sold on Sept. 20.

Beth ended the meeting at 10:54 am.