

PTA Meeting Minutes

Thoreau Middle School, Cafeteria

Thursday, November 21, 2017

Attendees: Beth Eachus, Sarah Helmicki, Principal Azimi, Rebecca Aguilar, Laura Schmorrow, Missy Galus, Emily Korff, Samantha Rayburn, Tana Keefe, Diana Nash, Sonja Marsden

Beth called the meeting to order at 9:36am.

Our PTA representative, Missy Gallus, thanked the PTA on behalf of the staff for the pies that each staff member received for Thanksgiving.

Sarah Helmicki presented the minutes from the October 17, 2017, PTA meeting. There was a motion to approve the minutes by Tana Keefe. Diana Nash seconded, and the minutes were approved as written.

Principal's Report

Mr. Azimi also thanked the PTA for the pies that each of the staff received for Thanksgiving.

Mr. Azimi also reiterated the Madison pyramid policy that students (and teachers) should not have work assigned over the holiday break. While long term projects may be assigned nothing is due directly after the break so that students and teachers can have quality time to spend time with their families.

Mr. Azimi also reviewed the calendar options that Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) will be considering for the 2018-2019 school year. Calendar options A and B start 2 weeks before Labor Day. Calendar options C and D start one week before Labor Day. (Currently FCPS has a waiver from the state through 2020 to start before Labor Day due to the number of snow days that we had over previous school years.) There are benefits to starting before Labor Day. These include increased time for teacher professional development which is embedded into the calendar year, more preparation time for statewide SOL exams as well as high school AP and IB exams, and more time for students to request recommendations from teachers for college applications. Mr. Azimi let the parents know that they can send an email to FCPS if they have feedback on the calendar choices.

Mr. Azimi shared that the Navy Federal Credit Union (NFCU) and Thoreau Middle School business partnership won the FCPS Business Partnership Award for the year. The award was given at the Superintendent's luncheon and was held up as a model for other schools. The award celebrates the 28-year partnership between the school and NFCU.

Lastly Mr. Azimi shared that he his door is always open if parents need to discuss issues related to the school. At times, while parents sometimes feel that the school should be doing more to communicate about social issues facing the students that due to privacy issues these conversations cannot be held publicly. He reminded parents that news they hear might include incorrect or misinformation so if they have concerns, they should approach him or the administration directly for their questions.

Student Services Report

Ms. Aguilar shared that Mr. Fishman is back from his medical leave. He was cleared by his physician to return to school. She thanked Maureen Truncalli for her support as Mr. Fishman's long-term substitute. She appreciated Ms. Truncalli's wisdom and experience as she filled in for Mr. Fishman.

PTA Meeting Minutes

Thoreau Middle School, Cafeteria

Thursday, November 21, 2017

President's Report

Beth began her report by thanking the chairs, Mary Pat Julian and Kristyn Woldow, for organizing the 7th Grade Dinner held on November 15, noting that there were over 350 people in attendance. While there was a slight issue with the distribution of food, there were lessons learned for improvement in the future. The event was fun for all attendees. In particular, the DJ was excellent and was an improvement over previous years.

Beth also discussed Spirit Wear. This committee initially had issues with their vendor, so they have recently switched to a local company. They plan to have samples of their options available at the school store.

Dining for Dollars has had a successful start to the school year. The October Cava event was better than in the previous school year. The November Outback Steakhouse event was so successful that the restaurant offered to give the school double the percentage of sales (20% instead of 10%). Future Dining for Dollars events include the Vienna Inn (December 11, 2017) and Church Street Pizza (January 22, 2018).

A new event this year, the TMS Spelling Bee will take place on February 21, 2018. The chair for this event, Eliza Morss, also facilitates the bee at the county level.

Beth noted that Crosstown Hoops will be held at Madison High School. Thoreau is hosting the event this year. It is scheduled for April 6, 2018 (Friday). The coaching staff will have tryouts early in 2018. Watch for announcements! The Fairfax Falcons will again have an exhibition game during the event.

Treasurer's Report

Laura Schmorrow noted the following from the budget as of October 31. TMS has filed its taxes and paid their national and county PTA dues. While membership is low and is impacting the budget, the No Fuss Fundraiser raised almost \$10,000, just shy of the goal.

Committee Reports

The following committees provided updates:

School Store: the school store sold donated candy to students for two weeks prior Halloween. The sales proved to be a success, making \$540. As a result, candy sales may take place before the winter holiday as well.

Garden and Courtyard: The oasis is completed for the year. This committee is still managed by alumni parents. TMS is seeking parents of current students to help with this committee. The science teachers are interested in helping with the mosaic for the Courtyard as well.

Hospitality: Hospitality provided pies to all teachers for Thanksgiving. In addition, they will provide cookies to teachers in December.

PTA Meeting Minutes

Thoreau Middle School, Cafeteria

Thursday, November 21, 2017

Auction: A number of parents have expressed interest in helping with the auction for the school. A date needs to be scheduled for the event and planning meetings will begin after that time.

Directory: A new contact at our business partner at NFCU has delayed the distribution of the directory. The committee is hoping that it will be out in December.

Membership: A discussion ensued about ways to increase membership in the PTA, which is down for the school year. There are currently about 544 members out of approximately 800 families. Some ideas were suggested to improve that number.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Beth ended the meeting at 10:06am. The next meeting will be held at January 23, 2018, at 7:00pm.