

PTA Meeting Minutes

Thoreau Middle School, Eagle Hall

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

Attendees: Principal Azimi, Rebecca Aguilar, Beth Eachus, Sarah Helmicki, Rene Newman, AJ Snijders, Sarah Barry, Catherine Keightley, Sarah Lundquist, Brynn Pacitti, Lisa Eaton, Amey Fooks, Diana Nash.

Beth called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

Principal's Report

Mr. Azimi welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted that we had just begun the 4th quarter with 9 weeks remaining in the school year. He indicated that with the recent boundary changes, TMS has an enrollment of 1200 students for the 2018-2019 school year. Mr. Azimi must fill 22 full time equivalents (FTEs). He has already hired 9 new staff. He is pleased that TMS has been able to defy national trends, which continue to indicate teacher shortages. TMS has had success in finding, hiring and retaining its staff.

Mr. Azimi also updated the parents that by the end of April all students and teachers will have seen a presentation on Juuling and Vaping, a disturbing new trend among young people that has very serious health consequences.

Student Services Report

Ms. Aguilar reported that the SOL schedule was published. Ms. Aguilar also shared that her department would be using PTA grant money for "Mindfulness" sessions for a small group of students. Mindfulness is a research-based strategy that uses different tactics to teach students to experience the "now" rather than being sad about the past or worried about the future with the intention of helping students learn to cope with anxiety. One example of a mindfulness strategy is focused breathing. While all students seventh and eighth grade were given lessons on mindfulness, the grant money will be used for five small group sessions for a few students to help tweak lessons that will be given to all students again in the 2018-2019 school year. The intention is to help make the lessons even more effective. Mrs. Aguilar also noted that they would like to share the mindfulness sessions with parents in the fall.

President's Report

Beth distributed the Treasurer's Report and asked if there were any questions. She also thanked the volunteers who supported a successful Crosstown Hoops event, especially Stacey Leimbach who chaired the event. Stacey took care of all aspects of the event, including all logistics as well as all concessions, which is historically run through Madison HS. This year, though, TMS was responsible for purchasing, selling and managing all concessions. Beth said that there were 1000 attendees. This year, the Fairfax Falcons continued the tradition of a half time exhibition. We hope to be able to donate some funds to this group once the final revenue is calculated for the event.

This year, the PTA will formalize a program called the Thoreau Pantry, which would be a food pantry for those in need. James Madison High School and some elementary schools already have programs. Thoreau has informally provided this service, but will formalize the program now.

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Lastly, Beth reported that we are in search of PTA Board members and committee chairs. While the role of President is potentially filled and Stacey Leimbach will continue as Board VP, we are still in search of a new Treasurer and Secretary.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Guest Speaker – *Raising Children with Healthy Self-Esteem in a High-Pressure Culture* – Presented by Rachel Bailey, M.A., CPDPE

Beth ended the meeting at 8:45pm.