

Lions Park PTO Meeting on Monday, October 4
Meeting called to session at approximately 8:03 PM

In attendance: Mallory Reyes, Monica Janiczek, Patty Susmarski, Sarah Deitch, Jackie Foley, Emme Higgason, Katie Kelly, Patricia Kennedy, Mary Gorr, Kevin Bull, Zhaleh Naghibzadeh (for Roar and Run), Molly Wintermute, and Nora (Lion's Park Parent)

1. President's Report (Mallory Reyes)

- There will be a ribbon cutting with Mary Gorr at Lion's Park, and both Monica Janiczek and Mallory Reyes will attend. The LP 5th grade chorus will also sing.
- The majority of the PTO met, outside of the typical PTO meeting schedule, to discuss collecting vaccine status and test results for in-person parent volunteers.
 - While the PTO is in support of following the outlined COVID mitigation requirements, there was some concern/discomfort about how this would be done successfully and confidentially.
 - It was decided to handle in-person volunteers on an event-by-event basis, and the PTO feels there is a good, and confidential, plan in place for collecting vaccine status and test results.
 - Monica J. noted that she could not login into the spreadsheet created by Katie Kelly for tracking vaccine status and test results using a Comcast email.
 - Katie K. knew this might be problematic for anyone without a Google email, and will work out the kinks.
 - The PTO sent out information to parents outlining the vaccine/testing requirements for in-person events.
 - Classroom Halloween parties will allow for limited in-person volunteers, and the PTO asked anyone who volunteered as a Room Rep to guarantee availability for this event.
- Mallory asked if the PTO wanted to continue with virtual PTO meetings or move to in person (both Fairview and Westbrook have had in-person meetings).
- A hybrid option was discussed, and Emme Higgason asked if in-person's would return to the previously scheduled 7 PM timeslot.
- It was agreed that November's meeting (11/1/21) would be held in-person at 7 PM. The format for the following meetings will be revisited at November's meeting.

2. Teacher's Report (Patricia Kennedy)

- Reported that staff are getting settled now that screening and testing are done for the fall.
- A big thanks to the PTO and parents for Kona Ice and the 5th Grade shirts.
- Patricia K. is in the final stages of booking a virtual author visit from Peter Reynolds (just waiting to sign the official contract) for mid-March.
- Booked the event in coordination with Fairview, which helped keep the cost down (will be around \$750)

- Mallory R. asked if Patricia K. needed anything else from the PTO, and Patricia K. said she will send the PTO the contract when she receives it, and take care of payment with Jackie Foley.
- The volunteer LRC crew is in place to help with shelving and processing, and all is going smoothly.
- Patricia K. had a few additional items to discuss/share, but they are later on the agenda.

3. Administrative Update (Dr. Mary Gorr)

- Dr. Mary Gorr reported that this is her 2nd PTO visit of the year, and that she is really proud of all the kids, teachers, and families.
- Administration and staff are committed to staying in a growth place, and continuing to learn, adapt, and move forward.
- All staff will have a professional learning day focused on trauma to continuing serving families and children in the best possible way.

4. Treasurer's Report (Jackie Foley)

- Jackie F. reported a Check Register and ending balance of \$15,981.14
- \$2,333.19 in expenses (mostly teachers supply, insurance, and 5th Grade Activities)
- Income reported was \$2,760
- Custom tablecloth has not yet been ordered, but Jackie will follow up with Zaleh N. (who used the same vendor for 5th Grade shirts).
- PTO Membership is down fairly significantly.
- Mallory suggested using access to the directory as part of the push to gain membership
- Currently, families still have access to last year's directory.
- Linda is having trouble pulling the directory list, and Molly W. plans to touch base with her.
- Tentative date for release of updated directory is 10/15, and as part of the push to gain PTO members -- communications will be made about loss of directory access.

5. VP Report (Patty Susmarski)

- Reviewed open chair and co-chair positions.
- Currently Paw-Looza needs a chair and co-chair.
- A 4th grade parent has expressed interest in Staff Appreciation, but doesn't want to run, and is only interested in co-chairing.
- Mallory expressed hope that hosting an in-person meeting might help recruit more volunteers.
- Emme Guest mentioned that in past years, St. Raymond's School has a "learn about the PTO and committees fair" every year, and this has helped increase the number of volunteers. Consider this for the spring or next year? This could possibly be connected to Pastries with Parents, but reformatted for an evening event.
- There has been a disappointing turnout for Room Reps.

- Patty went over specifics of what classes/grades are still in need of Reps.
 - There are quite a few classrooms with one or none.
- Katie Kelly said she could send an email on behalf of the PTO noting what classes are still in need of Room Reps.
- Mallory also said she could send an email, specifically to the classes in need.
- Katie K. reminded the PTO this is not an unusual problem, and that there has been a shortage of Room Reps in previous years.
- Molly W. mentioned that the commitment to be at the Halloween party could be dissuading some parents from volunteering. It might not be clear that you are not committing to all parties, just the Halloween Party.
- Emme H. Agreed because this was one reason she did not sign on as a Room Rep this year.
- PTO plans to reiterate in communication with parents that, at this point in time, we are only asking Room Reps to commit to the Halloween Party.
- Sarah asked about the time of the classroom parties. The parade is from 1:20 to approximately 2 PM, followed by class parties from 2 - 3 PM.
- The timeframe to volunteer as Room Rep has already been extended by one week with the hopes of securing more volunteers.

6. Ed Foundation Report (Mallory Reyes)

- The Ed Foundation met Tuesday of last week, and there was general consensus that the Foundation would like to host some type of fall fundraiser.
- The type of event (indoor or outdoor) is still TBA, and there are logistical things to consider when planning an event on such a short time frame.
The Ed Foundation is looking for teacher representation, and would ideally recruit two teachers from every school (for a total of 8 liaisons).
- Increasing the teacher representation would allow for more school-specific information to be shared, and additionally offer more insight from multiple grade levels.
- A plus to having 8 representatives would be a rotation of meetings (liaisons would not have to attend all meetings).
- Patricia K. is willing to share the above information with teachers.

7. Principal Report (Katie Kelly)

- Reviewed Safety Week (evacuations, lockdowns, etc.), and said that there are a few things staff plan to change to make things more efficient (follow-up scheduled).
- Always looking for ways to improve and refine safety plans.
- Last week was Data Days and Katie K. met with each grade level team.
- There was much focus on Tier 1 Goal Setting, planning, and instruction which increases learning in the classrooms for all students.
- D57 and Lion's Park continue to be hiring (including substitutes).
- It has been really fun seeing more typical things starting to happen

- Clare started chorus rehearsal. And both band and orchestra also started rehearsals.
- This year's Kona Ica plan worked really well, and might continue with the same format moving forward.
- Patty S. asked about Shield Testing, and Katie K. reported that it is scheduled to start next week and that more information would be coming from the District shortly.
- Mary Gorr weighed in, and said it has been a struggle to get Shield Testing started (the District partner has a backlog of clients), and the District will definitely communicate with parents before any testing is done.
 - The want/need to communicate clearly with families might delay the start date of testing, but communication is a priority.
 - Mary Gorr made it clear that opt-out can happen at any point if testing is not working for a child. The same for opt-in, but there would likely be a week of lag time to add the student to the system.
 - The goal is for testing to be minimally disruptive, and this will be taken into account, especially with young children.

8. Board of Education Report (Kevin Bull)

- Kevil reiterated shield testing is opt-out not opt-in.
- Noted Administration has done a great job communicating with families in regard to Shield Testing.
- The Board is preparing for the budget hearing.
- There is a November 4 community outreach event at Lion's Park. There will be a formal presentation followed by a more informal session. The event will also include a tour of Lion's Park. Encouraged PTO representation at this.
- *Mallory let Kevin and Mary know they were free to stay or leave (the remaining agenda items were PTO specific)*

9. Leap Into Literature (Patricia Kennedy)

- Parent Rebecca Boland, a librarian, is interested in doing this.
- The books for this program are ordered in December or January.
- The format of this event might want to be reviewed. In the past, teachers have chosen whether or not they want to participate.
- Katie K. suggested grade levels teams make the decision together for more consistency.
- Katie also noted sometimes the program has been done at recess (which would require vaccine/test results). If it is held in a classroom, with a teacher present, the vaccine/test result requirement would likely not apply.
- Patricia will reach out to teachers to gauge interest.
- Mallory asked about the timeline for this event, and Patricia said the books are usually processed in February or March and made available for parent readers in a grab-and-go bin.

10. Fall Book Fair (Patricia Kennedy)

- Super excited to have a book fair again!
- Requested the event move from the spring to the fall.
- The book fair will be held in person.
- Mallory asked about the parameters for hosting an in-person book fair, and Patricia said there would be no (or very few) parent volunteers, the bookcases will be spaced out, and only ½ of a class will attend at a time to maintain distance.
- The book fair will be open during parent-teacher conferences, and the LRC staff will monitor.
- A few volunteers might be needed for setup and breakdown, but Patricia can talk to Katie K. more if this is necessary.
- PTO agreed to move the bookfair to fall.

11. Blanket Project (Patricia Kennedy)

- Prospect typically hosts an event in honor of a student who battled cancer, and passed away.
- The student had also previously attended Lion's Park so Patricia would like to use the library Makerspace to give students a chance to make a blanket and learn about serving the community.
- Patricia requested money, about \$300 - \$400 to purchase blanket kits from Joanne's.
- The PTO approved this cost, and Patricia will work with Jackie F. to purchase.

12. Committee Reports

A. LRC

- Patricia K. reported LRC is going well.
- Molly asked if there were enough volunteers, and if having slots remain unfilled was an issue, and Patricia said it was not, and she would reach out if that changes.

B. Turkey Shoot (Molly Wintermute)

- Molly asked the PTO if this event could move forward (it is currently on the calendar for 11/12/21).
- After a brief discussion, it was decided this event could move forward.
- The typical setup of the event allows for volunteers to maintain 6" of distance so the vaccine/test requirement need not apply. The setup should plan to essentially, guarantee, distancing.
- Molly also plans to ask families to sign up for a specific time slot (in the past this has been more flexible), and will only allow small groups into the gym at a time.
- Considering having sign-in tables outside (or between doors), weather permitting.

- The event will involve more planning, but everyone agrees the core of the event will remain unchanged (stocking the local food pantry and giving children a chance to spend time with a parent).
- There are typically around 50 volunteers at the event, and volunteers will be asked to enforce guidelines (masks, distancing, etc.).
- As will all events, the PTO will review what went well (and what didn't) to help guide choices for other upcoming events.

C. Civic Engagement (Vicki Chung)

- Vicki briefly reviewed the events held during the 2019-2020 school year.
- Vicki asked if civic engagement events could move forward, and proposed the possibility of a Mayor visit or mock voting with the League of Women voters.
- Katie K. gave Vicki the go-ahead to move forward with events, and everyone agreed it should be fairly easy to meet safety guidelines for such events.
- Vicki will start planning by reaching out to the new Mayor, and see if he would be willing to meet with students, and if he has the time to do multiple sessions to allow for in-person distancing (virtual visits are also an option).
- Vicki will follow up with more information once she connects with the mayor (or other community groups).

D. Special Lunch

- It was reiterated, at this point, it still feels too difficult logistically to offer Special Lunch at Lion's Park.
 - Westbrook plans to move forward with Special Lunch, but only has to offer it for one grade level which makes it a much more manageable event.
 - Someone asked if we knew what Fairview was doing, and at this point, it sounds like Fairview is also holding off on offering Special Lunch.
 - Discussed the possibility of offering more than Dairy Queen if, and when, Special Lunch does resume at Lion's Park.
 - Katie K. said that whoever is in charge of Special Lunch is welcome to reach out to other businesses and restaurants.
 - At this point, it was decided that no communications need to be made in regard to Special Lunch, but that if enough parents ask an email can be sent out.
 - Special Lunch will, again, be revisited at an upcoming meeting.
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- Patty S. asked if it would be possible to go through the list of typically scheduled events, and make a note in regards to status (happening, on-hold, canceled, etc.). It was suggested we do this via email.

E. Roar and Run (Zhaleh Naghibzadeh)

- Roar and Run is this Friday, and as of tonight, we are just shy of \$18,000 (\$15,000 was the set goal).
- 40% participation rate, which is less than previous years, but larger donations were made by the participating families.
- Raffle prizes are not published, but there are (2) Kindle Fires, \$100 gift card to ABT, and Zhaleh plans to purchase Target and/or Amazon gift cards.
- At this point, the event is still planned for outside, and will run from 9:20 - 11:20 a.m.
- If it does rain, the length of the event will be shortened and volunteers will be eliminated.
- Currently, there is no volunteer for Leo Lion, but both Molly and Zhaleh are reaching out to parents.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:36 PM
Next meeting will be held in-person at 7 PM on Monday, November 1