
PTA General Meeting Minutes

Monday, 09.09.2019

Agenda

Call to order: 6:35pm

Announcements

- Feeding Our Kids (presentation by Matt Hausman, Executive Director)
 - Weekend backpack program serving children who face food insecurity at 69 different schools in area including at Leal where 30 children are served
 - Students are matched to Feeding Our Kids via social workers at area schools and process is anonymous
 - Program is volunteer-driven so support from PTA's such as ours is important in promoting individual or family volunteering
 - Food sorting volunteering takes place on Mondays
 - Inventory takes place on Saturdays
 - Drivers needed! Consider helping with this if child is already at Urbana Middle School or in one of the local early childhood programs
 - Children welcome at volunteering events!
 - Program is also donation-driven, so school partnerships are important
 - Feeding Our Kids is starting an Adopt-a-School program to create sustainable fundraising relationships thus allowing Feeding Our Kids to establish new relationships at schools where there isn't reliable funding base
 - PTA's, religious institutions, and community organizations can all potentially sponsor schools
 - Specific foods are accepted for donation but must also fit certain size criteria so as to fit in child's backpack discreetly. Information on food donation can be found via <https://feedingourkids.org/donate/> (or on flyer distributed at meeting)
 - If interested in a fundraising event, reach out to Matt directly or consider allocating a fundraiser (such as a birthday fundraiser on Facebook) to Feed Our Kids
 - Also on Amazon Smiles

Officer's Reports

- Treasurer's Report (proposed budget): Sarah is treasurer and she's left contact info on treasurer report. She has proposed a budget. Questions? discuss now or can email Sarah. One item of note is that we had talked about t-shirts for next year and Whitney is of the opinion we need to do t-shirt design every two years for school spirit. The most cumbersome part is going through kids art. Could teachers run voting and selection instead Rachel wonders. Lara: maybe if kids want to participate or adults maybe allowing multiple designs. Some kids get really excited so

maybe doing grade representation? So then not voting for one kid. Brianna has offered to do it. How many designs do we usually get? A lot, Lara says, and it's tough so an alternative outlet that isn't just in classroom, in art class, or if there's a way of doing a different kind of involvement that's different though keep back design as that is statement of inclusion. Rachel will need to reorder shirts if we don't do it.

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- Cost of musical instruments for those who don't get free instruments. Previously instruments were subsidized by PTA but no longer, perhaps we should do that again? There had been money from promytheon boards and perhaps redirected to playground equipment. However, playground equipment says \$0. Everything is \$0. No building enrichment. Whitney needs to look into this with Sarah.
- Membership: must have 25 paying members to stay PTA. \$10 per person. NO family membership. Gives voting rights.

New Business

- Volunteer Opportunities, presented by Whitney
 - COMMUNICATIONS VOLUNTEER: A communications volunteer is needed who preferably knows both Spanish and English in order to post communications on Facebook, monthly email newsletters, etc.
 - SEARCH COMMITTEE: find the next PTA board! Recruit others to join positions that will open next year, with goal of letting recruits shadow for a year in future role
 - TEACHER APPRECIATION: will be spread throughout year versus one week only. Ideas include monthly lunches for teachers. Help with bringing food and other snacks. This position will be open in 2020-2021, so consider this as another opportunity to shadow Abby and take over next year
 - FUN FAIR: the school no longer has a May half-day that had been on same day as Fun Fair so now there's more flexibility to pick a day in May that shouldn't conflict with weather or graduation weekend
 - Help needed with coordination especially day of and perhaps day prior
 - Teachers help a lot with setup and hosting games
 - SILENT AUCTION: Jen is no longer running silent auction but she is willing to help with mentorship!
 - Position entails writing donation letter requests, maintaining spreadsheet with businesses asked, and there is room to think of new businesses as well
 - This is a time intensive project that begins in January and requires follow-up with businesses
 - Hundreds of businesses are pulled in as a result and it raised \$3,000 net last year
 - Email PTA address if interested
 - TASTE OF LEAL: a coordination opportunity with a lot of flexibility. Volunteer can choose to do the event either within building or with food trucks outside
 - GENERAL VOLUNTEERING: volunteer interest sheet is being passed around
- Walkathon on October 23, presented by George

- This is a fall fundraiser typically in September but later this year due to book fair being held earlier
- Flyer to come home in a couple of weeks
- Students walk laps around school
- In case of rain, makeup day is October 30
- Students report pledges on back of flyer
 - No door-to-door or soliciting strangers
- Class sponsors desired for each class, so let George know if interested!
- Volunteer opportunities
 - Biggest need is for volunteers on October 23 to make sure students are being safe on the day of the event
 - There are also paperwork positions
 - There will need to be a new coordinator for next year
- Donations can be made online, by check, or in cash but online is preferred
 - Fundraiser made \$2,700 last year
 - Money goes to grants for teachers and other needs assessed by PTA
 - Link available on the PTA website (Square)
- No photography this year but if someone wants to volunteer to do so they are welcome
- Call for new business
 - Whitney reports that the book fair will be different this year than in previous years
 - The process of distributing books to each student has become onerous
 - Instead, Dr. Williams will get donations of money earned through this fundraiser
 - It is not clear if we can still purchase books for teachers
 - Volunteer opportunity next year as Cheryl will not be running it
 - Proposed “Leal Sews” fundraiser by participant of meeting
 - A gathering or workshop once a month or even once a week where people can get together to sew socks, mittens, costumes, etc.
 - Perhaps even sew costumes or sell costumes that can be resold at a cheaper rate
 - Whitney notes that there are fundraisers or events that sometimes do not continue on or simply evolve
 - Science night is an example of this as volunteers have changed
 - Change Wars will continue
 - Luisana announces that she is the dual language coordinator for Leal, school-wide liaison so please contact her for questions or concerns

Teacher’s Report – Darcy Silver

- Darcy is literacy teacher and also works with SPLASH and FAC on family advocacy and activities
- ClassTag has been selected to help with communication to families
 - Preferred language can be selected to be used in correspondence
- For many years the DEAR calendar has been used but the staff are transitioning to new system
- Transitioning the delivery of books to students
 - Every year child will get book during birthday month

- August has already been done, June and July are done in January
- Allows for better selection of books
- PTA will continue to support
- Though some books are left from last year, more upper levels and Spanish are desired

Principal's Report – Adriana Ochoa

- Principal Ochoa is adjusting to her role, having left teaching, then assistant principal, and now in formal principal role
 - This also gives her a good picture of schools outside Leal and the diversity that all of the schools in Urbana bring and the students to whom we are catering not just at Leal but at King, Dr. Williams, Gerber, etc.
 - All of these students ultimately filter into the Urbana middle and high schools
- Principal Ochoa started school with limited English and limited concept of America
 - She is very focused on offering support to staff until they feel supported
 - This summer she worked at Parkland College with their migrant education program as well as at Camp Invention and she appreciates these experiences because they “bring her down” to remember the way in which she grew up, which is not how she lives now, to remember where she came from in contrast with being more “entitled” now. These experiences help her take a step back
- She appreciates the consideration that the PTA gives to all students, using the example of a participant wanting to reintroduce monetary assistance for parents who don't qualify for free instrument but also can't afford the monthly cost
- Principal Ochoa notes that we are not in competition with other schools as we are all ultimately moving toward the same goals of good education
 - How do we attain same goal and move forward? How do we want Principal Ochoa to lead us?
 - She hopes that we can talk about all schools in USD 116 equitably and not diminish other schools
 - Central office is listening to the voices of students in the district, whose voices can and should be heard regardless of background, regardless of level of English language
 - We should not dismiss the voices of families who can't always be here (at PTA)
 - They should feel encouraged to email, call, write letters, and communicate messages about their own concerns because they are welcome
- Every month prior to the PTA meetings, Principal Ochoa will hold a meeting with parents to ask parents, guardians, caregivers what they like, what they want to change, to discuss curriculum
 - Still doing RESPECT buttons, certificates for earning YAP's, celebrations
 - Also implementing different celebrations that many of us may not have heard of before
 - Philosophy remains the same to allow everyone to be part of things
- Question from participant at PTA meeting: is there any plan to expand dual language program?
 - Principal Ochoa says no, as native speakers drive the program so if we don't have a large number of native speakers it limits how many students can be matched
 - Follow-up question from same participant: can priority be given to Latino students first because it's part of a cultural heritage that gets lost without dual language?

- Principal agrees; it would be nice and adds that it would be nice to have increase in fine arts and language as a whole
- Second audience member reiterates importance of speaking with central office as parents need to push these programs
- It is noted that Lupe runs dual language program at district level so speak with her
- Family Forum meeting tomorrow from 6-7:30pm on East Main St at Neighborhood Connections Center
- Audience member states that parents should be aware of Acceleration Act and how it can impact children individually to meet children at all different levels but it's up to parents to become informed
- Possible club idea for future to learn Spanish or utilize Spanish similar to previous years where 4-5th graders worked on science and Spanish
- The current status of central office is that it is "getting its feet wet, doing housekeeping" but has been very helpful so conversation can continue and new ideas can be brought to the table

Closing: 7:35pm

- Motion to adjourn by Ravi, seconded by Brianna