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PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

PTO Special Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 20, 2020
6:00 pm via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance:

Judy Linares
Shannon Schroeder
Kelly Milazzo
Michael Paskin
Matt Genovese
Anne-Marie Matthews
Elizabeth Wagner
Lilia Hine
Cari Menchaca
Kim Kotnik
Shelley Eschelman
Susan Dunton
Dustin Todd
Kim Eubank

Staff Members in Attendance:

Denise Granger, Principal
Arielle Curry, Assistant Principal
Karen Slotnick-Lastrico, Teacher
Frida Blum, Spanish Interpreter
Jesse Aguilar, Spanish Interpreter

Parents in Attendance:

Bee Saunders
Erika Adler
Lisa Remorenko

Judy called the meeting to order 6:02pm

Denise Granger, Princial

Update: hybrid learning plan has been pushed to January Messaging of large amounts of info to parents is be spaced out. Health and Safety protocols are being tested and practiced with current on-campus cohort. Would like to add another cohort but there are staffing challenges; more adults are needed. There is the potential to expand cohorts up until hybrid learning begins in January. More info will be forthcoming periodically so that parents can make informed decisions regarding sending students back or not.

In the spring, we were under an emergency school closure, so report cards were waived; now school is required to report grades at end the end of trimester, Nov. 14th. Parent conferences will be the following week via Zoom. Teachers will make their messaging to parents relate to how they are evaluating students in distance learning format. Assessing students from home can be tricky.

CALM Parent Support Services – we are the only elementary school who has an intern (50% time) in addition to our counselor. Student and parent support groups are being held. Mrs. Granger wants all parents to know that these resources are available.

Questions: Q: How many people does Washington need to hire? A: As many as we can. The immediate need is for one, but we will need at least two more staff for supervision during student drop-off times.

Q: Will staff be hired on district's budget? A: Yes. The one that we need to replace due to a resignation would fall under our site budget, but additional required staff would be under district's budget.



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Q: Regarding Curriculum Specialists: most were hired elsewhere, do we know if they still are employed? A: School is trying to hire Curriculum Specialists outside of PTO budget. We get Title 1 funding (given to schools with students in low socio-economic tiers) which would enable to hire ONE for at least partial timing. We need someone to work on interventions, particularly reading interventions specifically with first and second graders. Parent feedback is heard: when students are in school 2 days in person with the rest asynchronous – asynchronous time is hard for students and families to manage. This is a common concern; parent volunteers could be used, if we can work around privacy issues. Comment: parent thought school board said teacher or sub would be provided for off days, meaning only one day would be totally asynchronous.

Q: Can at-home students Zoom in, so teacher is teaching live and on Zoom? A: Would be an adjustment for teachers, but could be possible. Teacher input Mrs. Slotnick-Lastrico applauds parents for their cooperation and hard work – this is not easy for anyone. We all want the same thing – students are learning, growing and achieving. Also teachers don't know the clear plan – still many unanswered questions.

Q: Did district give schools guidelines on when parents need to make the choice? District says they need time to plan site to site; is there a timeline on when? First proposed date was next week. A: That was too soon. We need time to develop plans then give to parents to think about. The latest is that parents will be asked to decide the week of Nov. 2, but that's not necessarily set in stone. Hoping by end of this week we all have more clarity. Elementary principals are pushing to have the same plan across all elementaries.

Q: What if families decide one thing, then change our minds? A: This is a struggle – school needs time to plan, families need time to decide. We've had 55 students un-enroll since the beginning of year; anticipate those students possibly re-enrolling when we go back on campus.

Q: If we had 50% students opt out of coming back, could those coming back come back full time? A: Don't know.

Q: How close was district to actually being prepared to go back in November, numbers allowing? There has been no indication from school district that a plan is actually being put in place. We've heard about tents, etc. but nothing is physically being done.

A: Hard to answer...but Mrs. Granger know they are listening to feedback, as is she.

Working to make sure each group feels included and engaged. Mrs. Slotnick-Lastrico commented that, as a parent she also wants to know all the answers. Comment: There is a lot of frustration with the lack of communication between the district and school staff.

There has been a lot of work behind the scenes regarding making sure students have all needed resources. Comment echoing the idea that if only half of the students want to go back, then why not have them back full time? Or am/pm schedule? Clearly the district has no idea so can we go back to drawing board and look at what is working at other schools?

Mrs. Granger responded that the am/pm model is not an option because of sanitizing schedule. Comment that teachers have had some opportunities for feedback, but on the whole they don't feel like the district is necessarily listening. Some of the ideas are unrealistic (every bathroom being cleaned once an hour for instance). Comment: it is the district's responsibility is to give families the opportunity to make a decision regarding their



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children; district has instead taken those opportunities away. Comment: our PTO board doesn't necessarily represent the vast majority of families in our school community. Superintendent and School Board members need to be told what families want...either by Mrs. Granger or by parents directly. Comment: parents are answering surveys without having adequate information to respond in an informed manner. Comment: parent joined district task force on reopening, and felt like they had already narrowed the choices to lowest quality choices. Why did we give up idea of going back 5 days? We are as a district considering the least amount of school in the furthest distant future. We need to raise the bar on what we're shooting for, then make plans accordingly. Comment: concur with above - write to Superintendent and Board, asking them to reconsider January plan. Q: Can we send a letter on behalf of PTO board? Comment: there are legitimate reasons locally and nationally that affect all families; not all parents want children to go back and possibly pass the virus on to vulnerable family members. Maintaining distance learning with equity for everyone is difficult, but this is bigger than that. There are no easy answers and people are conflicted. Comment: Disagree; families can make their own decision, and robust distance learning plans should be available for families who are not comfortable returning in-person. There should be, and are ways to meet both sides. Childrens' mental health is important too! Comment: there is issue of money / staffing when we come back. Comment: PTO can't write letter on behalf of all families because we just don't know what they all want. Individual letters would have greater impact. The majority of Latino population doesn't want to go back, and our PTO board does is not that population.

President position is still vacant. Will someone step up?

Judy Linares, Vice President

Masks being made from old Wildcat wear should be here any day; they look great.

Tara King, Treasurer

No update.

Lilia Hine / Kelly Milazzo, PRIDE campaign

We ended up at right about \$55k. \$9k was contributed by Business Boosters so should land around \$65k. We are in a good position with our known expenses. Matt Genovese indicated that another \$7,500 has been committed but not yet collected, for total committed of \$16,500 for Business Boosters. He is only about halfway through the list to ask. Kudos to Kelly and Lilia for a successful campaign, and thanks to Matt for hard work on Business Boosters. Elizabeth has gotten feedback indicating families aren't unwilling to donate; just being cautious because they don't know exactly what they're donating for, in light of the absence of Curriculum Specialists. When we're back – there is (hopefully) going to be a resurgence of enthusiasm for donating!! Important to continue to be transparent with families about what funds are needed for.

Axxess: does anyone have an update? Kim E will check in with Kristie Chapman.



Dustin Todd, IT Chair

No IT updates; just making sure we can accept payments!

Elizabeth Wagner, Communications Chair

Communications going well, pretty basic at this point.

Kim Eubank spoke about future fundraising opportunities. Hoping to do tamales over the holidays, which raised around \$3k last year. May bring back a wrapping paper fundraiser. Looked at doing small golf tournament in December but might not be permitted yet. Kim is working on marquis and looking to find an electrician to help? Water maybe dripping in the top? Maybe holiday marketplace for parents to sell their wares, and donate percentage or fee for PTO? Can we do anything as a morale booster and to promote school community? Encourage this at Room Parent level...but have to be careful to observe state and local regulations regarding mixing families physically. PTO should be cautious about promoting any type of large gathering. Could we somehow facilitate new families (who want to) in connecting with one another? Sharing class lists could help with this. Possible PTO assistance with matching up families.

Teacher support ideas? Through Room Parent channels – letters to teachers? Words of support – what teachers are doing right, and what parents appreciate? Teachers would love to hear this. Room Parents are working on getting updated teacher preference lists.

Teachers are concerned about ventilation in their classrooms when we go back on campus. Washington has purchased some air purifiers and Rosa is working on getting a quote on a bulk order. Would PTO be interested in working on funding that? Village Properties may step up to help through their Teachers Fund. Denise will send more info about specifics.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Next Meeting Tuesday, November 17, 2020, via Zoom.