



SYCAMORE RIDGE

PTA Meeting 10/10/2024

Attendance: Megan Scanderbeg, Bianca Plotkin, Kathy O'Neill, Kate Kim, Sandy Tanaka, Sara Lake, Priya Merrill, Ana Pons, Brandon LaMonaco, Dr. McClurg

Location: Sycamore Elementary School

Conflict of Interest & Antitrust Avoidance Affirmation: All attendees affirmed that they are not engaging in any conflicts of interest or activities violating antitrust regulations.

President/Sara:

Welcome/Call to Order:

- Sara called the meeting to order at 9:20 AM and welcomed all attendees to the first meeting after school started. She expressed appreciation for the ongoing support from PTA members, school staff, and parents who have been actively involved in recent events and initiatives.

Treasurer's Report & Approvals

- **Approval of Checks #3596-3609:** A motion was made to approve checks issued from #3596 to #3609. The motion was unanimously approved by all present.
- **September Treasurer's Report:** The report for September's finances was presented, highlighting income and expenses for various PTA-sponsored events and programs. A motion was made to approve the report, all in favor.
- **Approval of September Meeting Minutes:** Sara requested approval of the previous month's minutes. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

District Update by Dr. McClurg

- **Creating a Supportive School Environment:** Dr. McClurg spoke on the district's commitment to making each child feel unique and valued. The focus is on fostering a sense of belonging where students feel happy and supported.

- **Parental Involvement:** Dr. McClurg emphasized that parent engagement is key to both academic and social success. Initiatives are being developed to increase family involvement and integrate parents into the fabric of students' learning and overall well-being.
- **Technology and Student Well-being:** The district aims to nurture student needs while helping them responsibly manage their interactions with technology, balancing digital skills with mindfulness and healthy habits.
- **Middle School Transition:** Recognizing the challenges of transitioning to middle school, Dr. McClurg discussed the need for smooth, supportive changes to ease students and families through this stage.
- **Measure MN:** Dr. McClurg updated attendees on Measure MN, which provides essential funds for maintaining school facilities and grounds.
- **Importance of Smaller, Community-Centered Schools:** Smaller schools play a central role in the community's life. The district is committed to preserving these community hubs, as they offer a more personalized educational experience.
- **STEAM Program Challenges:** Ensuring all schools have access to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) resources remains a priority, though challenges persist in providing equal access to smaller schools.

Principal's Update - Principal LoMonaco

- **Acknowledgement of PTA Support:** Principal LoMonaco expressed her gratitude to the PTA for their dedication and ongoing support of school programs.
- **Yearbook Cover Competition:** This year's theme is "Out of This World," and every student's artwork will be included somewhere in the yearbook. The competition is fostering creativity and a sense of pride among students.
- **Morning Announcements:** Students have been actively creating weekly video announcements. Under the guidance of IT teachers, students manage the creative and technical aspects, filming on Mondays and Tuesdays for the upcoming week.
- **Pep Rally and Annual Campaign:** Principal LoMonaco shared the success of the recent pep rally, which saw record-high participation in the annual fundraising campaign.
- **New School Marquee:** The marquee project is progressing, with installation anticipated by December. Final costs exceed the original estimate by \$4,000, increasing from \$28,000 to \$32,000. The motion for additional funding was passed.
- **Lunch Quality Feedback:** Sandy raised concerns about the quality of school lunches, noting issues with soggy food. The discussion focused on increasing fruit options, rotating menu choices, and possibly incorporating more cold lunch items to improve freshness. Sandy suggested involving students in meal planning to better align offerings with their preferences.

- **Student Recognition Committee:** A new committee is being formed to celebrate student achievements across various areas, aiming to foster a positive school culture.
- **Peace Patrol Initiative:** The school is introducing a peer support program called “Peace Patrol,” which encourages students to help and support each other, strengthening a sense of community and responsibility.

Committee Reports

Stallion Sprinters (Megan)

- **Program Launch:** The Stallion Sprinters program kicked off successfully today, with two volunteers assisting in the scanning process and distributing instructions.
- **Database Management:** The program still requires a volunteer to oversee the database and ensure tokens are distributed to teachers effectively.

Star Reading Program (Sandy)

- **New Book Purchases:** PTA funded new books for the program.
- **Volunteer Support:** Volunteers will start next week, and senior volunteers are scheduled to join at the end of October. Sandy has matched certain volunteers to specific students for personalized support.

Annual Giving Campaign Update (Sara and Sandy)

- **Total Funds Raised:** \$48,535, with additional funds expected from corporate matching programs.
- **Increased Family Participation:** Participation rate rose to 53%, up from 46% the previous year. The 4th grade achieved the highest participation (77%) and earned a celebratory party.
- **Grant Allocations for Classroom Needs:** Grants awarded included \$600 each to Kindergarten and 4th grade, \$500 each to 2nd, 5th, and 6th grades, and \$200 for 1st grade. These funds will support class-specific projects and resources.

Red Ribbon Week (Bianca)

- **Event Dates:** October 14-18, focusing on “Making Healthy Choices.”
- **Planned Activities:** Students will kick off Red Ribbon Week by wearing red on Monday and engaging in fun recess games with Mr. LoMonaco and much more. This week’s activities will also focus on supporting staff well-being, with special treats like teas and apples provided to help them “fill their cup” and prioritize their health and wellness.

- **Red Ribbon Week Additions:** Bike safety assembly to raise awareness of bike accidents, e-bike safety, and helmet use.
- **Helmet Distribution:** The group discussed the possibility of providing helmets to students who may need them, as the school has recently received a supply. They considered creating a system to identify and assess helmet needs among students.

Drama Club (Priya)

- **Fall Production:** The Drama Club is presenting “The Wizard of Oz” from November 15-17.
- **Production Updates:** Costumes are 80-90% complete, and set rentals are confirmed. A preview is planned for senior volunteers, who have shown excitement for the show.

Movie Night (Sara)

- **Date:** November 1, featuring “Moana” screened outdoors on the baseball field.
- **Food and Activities:** A Hawaiian BBQ food truck will arrive at 5 PM, and the movie will start at 6 PM.
- **Charity Drive:** Sandy will reach out to a shelter in Escondido to learn about their current needs. The group also discussed ways to involve students more meaningfully in community service through this event.

The meeting concluded at 10:15 a.m. The next PTA Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 14 at 9:15 am at Sycamore Ridge.

Ana Pons

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