**October 16, 2017**

**MLS PTO Board Meeting Minutes**

Board members present: Mike Irani, Jennifer Underwood, Sarah Kelsey, Stacey Carden, Beth McCarthy, Carleen Kupcis, Amylynn Johnson, Carey Grossman, Christina Keller, Melissa Hoover, Meg Franco,

Members-at-large present: Dan Stinnett, Christina Stinnett, Kisha Lashley, Bevin Etienne, Kristin Roth, Laura Ege, Shannon Roth

1. **Welcome**
2. **September Minutes approved**
3. **PTO Member-at-Large Comments**: Christina and Dan Stinnet, Kisha and Bevin Lashley, Kristen Roth
4. Kisha: Interested in doing a backpack drive for Dominica, which hit hard by hurricane, and wondering if PTO would help organize. (Enthusiastic reception to the idea.) She already asked for approval to put box out front of school for supplies and will send the PTO a list of things that will be helpful. Small backpacks with school supplies, storybooks and toy. The need is ongoing, so it’s not necessary for it to be immediate. Also considering partnering with school Kisha attended in Domenica.

Comment/question

Carleen-- idea of tying it into Thanksgiving themes in the classrooms?

PTO can advertise it into Meriwether Matters, and flier to be sent home (send fliers to Jennifer Underwood and she can copy and distribute)

Melissa—we have outreach money we could possibly use. She’ll look into it.

Kisha- Could be good to do for service projects in classrooms.

Amylynn – noted that our theme as a school this year is “How Can I Make the World a Better Place” and this opportunity fits in nicely

Dan – noted that this could be a good opportunity for sister- school relationship

Amanda – distribute the idea to room parents who may be looking for party service ideas for the holiday party

Beth – asked Kisha for write up to send out flier.

1. Dan and Christina introduction. Dan also considering how elementary education is changing, given High School 2020 initiatives and expressed interest in helping and volunteering for education ideas and initiatives. Mike said he hasn’t gotten any directives as to how High School 2020 will affect elementary education, but they look forward to learning more.
2. **Principal’s Report** – Mike Irani
   1. Fun Fair thank you to all the volunteers. Nice to see the entire community come together.
   2. After last meeting, discussing outdoor learning spaces, a committee was formed with a primary and upper-grade teacher, a couple of parents (with children who have been here and children who will be here), PTO reps and the first meeting will be on Monday, October 23.
   3. Main topic: safety and our school. Threat was made last week to Charlottesville City Schools who then went on a modified lock-down. The county was not on lock-down, but an email was sent out. Families would like to know more about what we do as a school and division because there is a lot of anxiety.
   * Mike wants to emphasize a balance to being as safe as we can be and not creating a sense of fear (still being warm and welcome).
   * Schools receive threats 3 ways: 1) Direct threat and 2) phone threat: there are procedures in place for a direct threat in the school. 3) general (more common now). Then it’s a division decision.
   * Our school does have a thorough crisis plan that we update and review every year and keep private internally. There’s a team that works on that.
     + It includes preparations for any disaster we can imagine.
     + The school has drills for lockdown, earthquake, tornado and fire
     + We are constantly reflecting as school and division on how to do this better. (For example, they will now draft an email for parents, so parents can be notified early while immediately and the staff can stay focused on children.)
   * Families have asked about physical, security upgrades to school.
     + Our entry to the school was changed. Have considered a ‘buzzing in’ system but the county has decided against it in favor establishing a warm and welcoming school.
   * Mike: we’re committed to doing the best we can, and if anyone has a great idea, have them come to us. We’d love to hear ideas
   * Comments and discussion:

Beth received email. Remember as a member of the board not to add to anything that would stir any fear.

* + Q from Sarah: Ezone admins often open the inside door well before 4pm, though that’s not supposed to be that way. It may be something we need to fix. Mike: we need to make that clear to parents, and ezone admin.

Maybe PreZone could sign out at the side door for P.E.

* + - Jennifer: maybe we could make a sign on the door. Probably have 6-7 people come inside and ask every day.
    - Beth: this is good timing for this discussion as communication for session II is going out.
    - Laura: different Admins do it differently. Placing table in different places.
  + Carry: are you sending a post-communication to parents after last week’s threat? Mike: part of our communication as a school would be to stay home, but this particular one is hard because it wasn’t under our domain. We have communicated the feedback we’ve gotten from the division. Beth: maybe a communication explaining the difference between a school-wide or county-wide decision.
  + Christina: as parents we don’t think about it until we go through it, but it would help parents to know that plans are in place.
  + Mike: sounds like our community could use a written version of what I’ve said here and that it’s foremost in our minds and that we’re doing everything we can.

1. **Faculty Representative Report** – Meg Franco
   1. During the Fall Fun Fiar, teachers worried about kids running on driveway and outside unsupervised, in the dark. Unsure how to address it. Many teachers helped kids who had lost parents.
      1. In the future, we should have 2 resource officers, one at the front and back.
      2. Christina: Can we set up a zone or designated area for kids who are lost? We could have a volunteer there too.
      3. *Henley volunteers and maybe some key club volunteers could be at the perimeter so kids aren’t running out into the dark alone and, say, going to the playground.*
      4. Mike: this is one we need to be more pro-active in communicating what families need to be doing (also flick on the field). Also having emergency first-aid kit on hand.
         1. Sarah will buy a first-aid kit.
   2. Scott Williams brought a letter from dentist who sends treats to troops and is wondering about interest. Enthusiastic response from PTO. Could also possibly send it to Domenica.
      1. Meg will send her info on who to contact.
2. **Treasurer**
   1. Spent $800 on movie night—came in under budget.
      1. Made money last year, but didn’t want to bill it as a money maker as it’s a community event.
      2. Last year we spent $600 on sandwiches and ran out right away. This year we paid $1300 and had leftovers (about ¾ was sold). Everything else was relatively comparable.
      3. Could try to do pre-orders next year. Would be more work, but could be worthwhile.
   2. Will probably make about $5000 from Fun Fair, but we don’t have numbers yet.
   3. We need to announce raffle winners: will be in Meriwether Matters on Wednesday and there’s a sign on the door
   4. Raffle went well.
3. **Communications**
   1. Moving along
4. **VPs**
   1. Parent council meeting: mental health resources in the county. There is a part of the website devoted to it.
   2. Another meeting coming up.
   3. Parent council has asked for suggestions for upcoming meeting topics.
5. **Presidents**
   1. Budget approved.

About 20 people voted. No one had a question. Electronic voting worked. Is a good way to work going forward.

* 1. Still don’t have anyone to chair yearbook or spring fundraiser.
     1. Meeting with Mike to consider adding yearbook as an ezone class for spring semester for 4th and 5th.
        1. Melissa: comments that we should not have kids pay to be in yearbook and we should, as a PTO just pay a teacher.
     2. General agreement that we should dial back the extensive quality of the yearbook.
     3. Melissa: note that whoever is in charge (a teacher or volunteer) needs to know now, not in December so they can prepare. How it gets covered, matters. Carleen: agree.
     4. Beth: One idea is we could outsource. We could get a teacher or teachers get $50/hr for ezone, but we couldn’t do hourly for this. This would need to be more of a flat fee.
        1. Meg: a teacher would want to know how much work is involved.
        2. Carleen: a number of 5th grade parents would be interested in helping.
     5. Laura: could we generate more income from them to offset costs?
     6. Beth: Carleen, could we get a message out about not having a yearbook if there isn’t a volunteer. (Yes)
     7. Will get together information for teachers to determine what the stipend would be and what the scope of the work would be like.
        1. Meg- maybe it could be shared between two teachers.
     8. Christina: could we get a UVA student (graphic design or media studies student)? There’s a pool of talented parents and UVA students.
     9. A flier will go out to 4th and 5th grade parents with Nov. 3rd due date.
  2. Auction, spring fundraiser.
     1. We have no volunteer chair-person for now.
     2. The auction will be online, regardless. Company we use has an online platform.
     3. Beth and Stacy are prepared to take on the auction-side of things for now, but the event-side needs work.
     4. Alternative ideas for event: Family picnic, or host it at the school
        1. Melissa, comment: what we make in the auction will go towards professional development (yet to be voted on). We could take a year off of professional development.
     5. We currently have 7 volunteers on auction committee
        1. Kisha, comment: realizes she doesn’t see a lot of this communication. There isn’t enough information in the request for volunteers because the parents don’t understand what volunteering entails. Could we cut the work into smaller pieces so it’s a smaller amount and define them well so people know exactly what they’re signing up for?
        2. Dan, comment: face-to-face recruitment isn’t happening either, especially early in the year. Parents aren’t interacting as much without back-to-school-night or pick-up.
        3. Melissa, comment: feels “clubby” the way we ask people to chair events and organizing.
        4. Kisha, comment: can the PTO put communication out about how things get done?
        5. Meg, comment: We could have a club fair: an event where we have committee chairs explain what we do on each committee and have an opportunity for parents to sign up.
        6. May try to do parents-night-out as we have kids-night-out which could help parents interact more.
        7. Jennifer, comment: at Charlottesville Catholic School, at the beginning of the year they have tables with every event laid out with sign-ups, timing, descriptions and sign-ups
        8. Amylynn: Teachers know the parents who are most eager to participate. Could Meg ask teachers for parents to contact. Meg: some teachers won’t be comfortable with that, but she will consider the question.
     6. To be continued
  3. Annual Fund v. Capital Campaign
     1. Annual fund is currently up and running and we are leading up to big push. It ends at the end of fall semester.
     2. Haven’t committed to capital campaign for outdoor space, but have organized exploratory committee that will eventually make a recommendation.
     3. If we did a capital campaign, it would launch in the spring. It would then be ongoing for 2 years-ish with the possibility of extending it. It would affect things in the future, like annual fund.
     4. We might also consider not differentiating between annual fund and the capital campaign in future years.
     5. It would maybe be launched in the spring or next fall.
     6. Comments
        1. Melissa: thought the annual fund would highlight something different every year, (and it’s used for operational expenses) and didn’t know the outdoor space would be a separate campaign.
        2. Carleen: have we checked with big donors? Uncomfortable having two campaigns.
        3. Stacey: we could always decide not to proceed, after more information gathering.
        4. Laura: if this launches in the spring, what happens to annual fund next fall and could it possibly take over annual fund.
        5. Beth: maybe we give people the opportunity to earmark funds in the annual fund.
        6. Mike: remembering the history about how we communicate with parents about the annual fund might be helpful. We used to sell wrapping paper, etc. Then we started a “sell no stuff” campaign, that then turned into an “annual fund,” and we needed goals which were also successful. In the same line of thinking, we focused on outdoor learning.
        7. Laura: would it make sense to tack it onto annual fund in the spring?
        8. Amylynn: from non-profit accounting point of view, the ‘capital fund’ designation can help people donate because it’s a specific thing to spend on and it’s restricted funding, as opposed to annual funds which are not restricted. It will be spent on this or not at all.
        9. Kisha: asking how this project (or projects such as this) gets chosen. Mike explained history of teachers and administration identifying issues and projects to go with. Jennifer: other schools have this and teachers know it is an option.

1. **Members-at-large**:
   1. suggest taking “board” off of the PTO Meeting announcements and schedules.
   2. Discussion around how to better include/invite other parents into the PTO meetings.
2. **Meeting adjourned**: Sarah moved to adjourn, Melissa seconded. Beth adjourns meeting.