

**Mercer Elementary**

**Mercer PTO Executive Board Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, August 17, 2016**

**Attendees:** Leslie Moore, Jen Bordeaux, Leslie Cohen, Erin Connell, Jakecia Durham, Lindsay Florence, Monica Gurbach, Deborah Hollander, Monica Hulett, Jill Lipman, Laurie Schlein, Tanya Simmons

**Meeting Minutes**

May meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted with minor edits to attendees

**Principal’s Report (Mr. Florence)**

* Kindergarten Meet and Greet was canceled since kindergarten orientation was same day.  He recognizes this did not put the kids first and will take this into consideration in the future as having an evening program allows those who cannot attend during the day to get oriented and also this builds community by meeting other families. However, he and others will be available on Thursday evening as well as on Saturday for those who would like to tour the school.
* This week has provided excellent professional development for the teachers. Programming has been led by Ms. Schlein, Ms. Feinstein, Ms. Baker and others. They have modeled different instructional methods and the staff have responded well.
* There are 2 new staff members: School psychologist - Colleen Krawczak who came from CMSD; Intervention specialist – Cara Luce There will be a need to add more aides this year. There is also a new first grade teacher, Tracy Gerstenberger who is coming from Lomond.
* There is a need for lunch aides, pay is $9.50/hour. Please spread the word.
* The intervention classrooms will be divided differently than in the past. There will be one dedicated to children who have autism and two others will be for children with multiple disabilities.
* There are no open classrooms in the school. Mr. Leibovich moved to the 2nd floor so that his previous classroom could serve as the new Pre-K room.  His moving was a major cost savings to the school and his previous room is ideal for Pre-K as it has restrooms in the room.
* There will be a new entry and exit plan for the children to allow for quieter entry/exit to and from school. Children will enter and exit to/from buses through door G. Carpool drop off will be at door F.  Children on the early buses in the AM for breakfast program will still go to the auditorium. Kindergarteners will also be picked up in the auditorium to be taken to classrooms. Pre-K will be picked up at Door B as their pick up is 3:00-3:15. Since there are many changes to past drop-off and dismissal, Deb Hollander suggested that perhaps a map with the changes be created and distributed. Information will also be in weekly Mercer newsletter.
* Thank you to custodial staff as the school looks great. Many areas/rooms have been painted, the gymnasium floor has been refinished.

**Teacher Liaison Report (L. Schlein)**

* Ms. Schlein was welcomed and we are excited to have a teacher representative on the PTO to allow for enhanced partnering. As this is new, we will tailor the needs of this role as we go along.
* Ms. Schlein reported that the catered lunch on this Friday for the teachers was announced and all are very excited. One teacher has offered to DJ the lunch and Mercer is the only school doing this so Mercer is the envy of the district!

**President’s Report (Leslie Moore)**

* Two goals for this year
  + To simplify the volunteer process so that more families can be engaged and make volunteering meaningful and purposeful. To do this, the volunteer form has been streamlined. It is now one page and in chronological order. It is on the PTO website and link will be provided in Mercer Mailbox.
  + To partner with the teachers and staff for increased exchange of information and to enrich the student experience.
* An additional goal that dovetails with the above is to continue to be a welcoming presence at Mercer, to be inclusive and to make connections.
* The calendar is in excellent shape with many events and few duplicated volunteers.
* Requests:
  + There is a need for a co-chair for the Mercer Play
  + At curriculum night, it is helpful to have a PTO board member say a few words about PTO and to stress that all families are part of PTO and welcome at meetings. Also nice opportunity to announce upcoming events. Jakecia will speak in Mr. Leibovitch’s room and Erin will speak in Ms. Beney/Ms. Mulligan’s room. Need someone for Ms. Morris’ room.
* Weekly newsletter, Mercer Mailbox, will be going solely electronic starting October. Until 9/30, paper copies will be sent home but after 9/30 via email only. All district wide and school information will be sent in a combined weekly newsletter.
* Volunteer tracking
  + Leslie would like to keep a running list of anyone who helps throughout the year so that they can be recognized. Please make sure you let Leslie know of individuals (parents, teachers, staff) who help out with events. She would like to recognize the volunteers in some manner at the end of year. She has also ordered thank you cards.
* Little Free Library at Chelton Park
  + This has been vandalized once again so the library has been dismantled and the post has been taken down for safety reasons.
  + New location has been suggested at Menlo Tot Park. It is believed that fewer teens go to this park so hopefully the library will not be vandalized. Permission is still needed from the city.
  + Leslie Cohen made a motion for the board to approve a new line item to be added to the budget for up to $200 to rebuild and installation. The Board approved this budget item unamimously.
* Father’s walk (walk your child to school)
  + This is not PTO sponsored, but is a community-wide event put on by the Fatherhood Initiative.
  + Because concerns have been raised in the past about this event, in order to be more inclusive, Mercer PTO will have a coffee in the library so that those who cannot walk their child to school can be involved. Additionally, the event will be opened to more than just fathers to recognize the diversity of our families.
  + It was suggested that an information sheet be attached to the event’s flyer stating our PTO’s support of the event but allowing us to differentiate ourselves. This will need to be cleared by Mr. Florence.
* Gratitude Project Initiative – tabled for next meeting

**Vice Presidents’ Reports**

First VP – Monica Gurbach

* Babysitting for Parent Open House/Curriculum Night & Sept. PTO meeting
* Lunch aides will be used to help out the teen volunteers at some events when larger crowds are anticipated such as the Sept. PTO meeting. Flyer to be sent home.
* Event Planning Form
  + Updated and changed to better help event chairs. New set up will be as a timeline and checklist. To be given to VPs to give to event chairs.
* Wrap up form (“Committee Report Form”)
  + Has not been well-utilized in the past. However, it helps provide feedback for next year event and helps for future budgeting. To help with completion of this form, a survey monkey survey will be created for easier use.

VP Communication – Debra Hollander (report given by L Moore)

* Mercer Mailbox to be transitioned from paper to only email copy after 9/30. If paper is needed, this can be requested.
* It was suggested that an informational sheet be made for distribution at curriculum night with any essential PTO information
  + PTO directory is available by app and not paper
  + Constant contact (bit.ly link) and A-Z mobile app (one-time signup). Suggestion was made to link directory be added to PTO page.

VP Educational Enrichment – report given by L Moore

* Meerkat club is used as a way to channel PTO afterschool activities (Snapology, Chess are run through the Shaker rec dept.)
  + This year, there will be another service project and book project (for K & 1st)
  + Adding in Garden Club led by Tiffany Goldstein. Plan is to fix and prep the raised beds. Likely will be held in Oct and again in spring. There will be limited space so may open to 1st and 2nd grades but details still in the works.
    - Due to the change in entry and exit procedures, we need to determine whether the beds need to be moved.
    - It was also suggested that it could be fun to see if the Cleveland Arts Project would donate a Meerkat that is currently on display at the Cleveland Public Library

VP Outreach – Jill Lipman & Monica Hulett

* Kindergarten playdates
  + Tuesday night’s had a good turnout (~60 adults/kids) with many new families; Thursday’s turnout during the day was only about 10 people and no new families. In the future, may need to focus on evening only. Also, would be helpful to have more current or recent families on hand to answer questions.
* Teacher Luncheon (8/19) is in good shape. Sign up genius used to for volunteers.
* Meet & Greet (8/18) for grades 1-4 is all set.
* Parent Coffee (8/22) – chaired by Colleen Pitrone. All set.
* Ice Cream Social (8/26) – soft serve machine has been reserved. Jen Bordeaux recommended using the same process of stamping hands at last year’s end of year picnic to help with repeat “customers.”
* Chelton Park Picnic (9/10) – Jakecia reported that planning is on track.
* Raider day (9/17)

VP Financial Management/Treasurer – L Moore gave report

* The financial positions have changed a bit from the past. Michelle Comerford is now treasurer and there is no longer an asst. treasurer. Mia Ruffing will be VP of Financial Mgt. Duties have been divided between the two.
* Reimbursement form will be updated and will be discussed at next PTO meeting.
* Proposed 2016 Budget
  + Created in July by looking over last year’s budget and plans for this year’s needs. Will be posted for 30 days and then can be voted on at next meeting.
* Spirit Store – Monica Gurbach reported that we have switched vendors and there is a new order form.
  + There will be two shirts available (Jersey and tie-dye), a cinch sack and water bottle. All will have the Mercer paw print logo.
  + During Spirit days, there still be many affordable items for purchase (erasers, pencils, etc.)

VP Education & Advocacy – Jakecia Durham

* Family exchange program- sign up/information table will be at the Ice Cream Social & Chelton Park Picnic. Needs families to establish committee and promote events.

Next Meeting:  Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in Mercer Library.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Leslie Cohen