

**Mercer Elementary**

**Mercer PTO Board Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, August 16, 2017**

**Attendees:** Board: Monica Gurbach, Leslie Cohen, Jill Lipman, Lauren Goodnow, Abby Botnick, Kris Gobel, Amanda Fort, Jakecia Durham, Laurie Schlein, and Mr. Florence.

**Meeting Minutes**

May meeting minutes reviewed and accepted after motion made by L. Moore.

**Principal’s Report – Mr. Florence**

* We have three new staff members:

Ben Lehman, Instructional Coach, replacing Kim Brown

Mary Martin, Lunch Aid

Lanell Thomas, Custodial Staff

* Several teachers have been moved to new roles:

Lisa Hardiman, moving from 3rd to 4th grade

Tracey Gerstenberger, moving from 1st to 2nd grade

* Changes have been made to the Recess/Lunch Schedule:

PK and K 11:00-11:50 (2 Lunch Aids available for PK, 1 Lunch Aid available for K)

1st Grade 11:30-12:20

2nd Grade 12:00-12:50

3rd Grade 12:30-1:20

4th Grade 1:00-1:50

* Thumb scans for access to lunch accounts are in place. The ID badge will no longer be used to keep track of lunch. After concern about the thumb print process was expressed, AVI reassured the district that no personal information could be retrieved from the thumb scan process.
  + Further concern was expressed from those in attendance that they were not aware that their children’s thumbprints were being taken last year or this year.
  + Mr. Florence will make sure this information is provided to parents and guardians by the district. The program was mentioned at the most recent Brown Bag Lunch and the district is aware that they need to improve communication on this topic.
  + Not every school in the district opted to take part in the thumb print scans. Mercer opted to scan every student for the 2016-17 school year, and plans to continue with this system for the 2017-18 school year.
* Mercer has 150 new Chromebooks that will replace the old laptops. The students will now be able to use a traditional mouse in conjunction with these new computers.
* All students will participate in MAP assessments this year. K & 1st Grade will complete their assessments in the computer lab.
* Physical Changes:
  + Cupola has been painted.
  + Dormers on left and right front of building were also painted.
  + Several doors have been replaced and/or repaired.
  + Gymnasium floor has been refinished.
  + The Mercer Wall project at Green and Woodland will hopefully begin soon. The initial bid was over budget and the district is seeking a new bid from it’s own contractor.
  + Next year will bring additional infrastructure repairs.
* Changes have been made to the state policy for attendance. Attendance will now be tracked by hours missed as opposed to days. It will not matter whether the reasons for the absences are categorized as excused or unexcused. No more than 90 hours of may be missed during the course of the school year. Parents are urged to be aware of scheduling vacations that may interfere with the school day. Should a child begin to approach this limit, a letter will be sent to the parents or guardians, a meeting will be held, and an intervention plan put into place.
* Teachers & staff have been hard at work on new strategic plans for implementing IB content, incorporating technology into the classroom (Google), reviewing assessments and gathering useful data, and incorporating Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) – a state mandate – using models already in place, ex. the ruler approach.
* Goals for the teaching staff for the 2017-18 school year include forming meaningful relationships with all students in the classroom and providing a great classroom education.
* Goals for parents and guardians for the 2017-18 school year include making sure students are attending school regularly and on time, practicing math facts with their students (5 min. a night), reading to and with their students (20 min. a night), using district resources (Compass Learning for K and up), and keeping students active, eating healthy, and getting a sufficient amount of sleep each night.
* Mr. Florence is proud of the family atmosphere created at Mercer and that things seem to be running like a well-oiled machine. Mercer strives to meet the needs of each student, and provides excellent activities for the students.
* QUESTIONS:
  + The middle school will be holding soccer practice at Mercer each day. There are large soccer goals being stored on the field.
  + There are (3) Kindergarten classrooms with 19, 18, and 20 students each currently. This can change.
  + Crossing guard decisions are made by the Mercer administration. If you wish to request a crossing guard for a specific location, please bring it to the attention of Mr. Florence. A crossing guard has been requested at the corner of Woodland and S. Green roads.
  + Entry into and exits out of the school will remain the same for the 2017-18 school year.
  + Preschool will begin recruiting a new class in September for the 3-year old class. The PS is a two-year commitment, however, there were some students admitted from the wait-list into the program this year for one year only. There is desire to grow the program, however cost and space are both important considerations for future growth.

**Teacher Liaison’s Report – Ms. Schlein**

* The teachers are excited for the catered teacher lunch on Monday the 21st.
* Teachers have been busy setting up classrooms and are excited for the year to begin.

**President’s Report – Monica Gurbach**

* The all-staff convocation will be held at the high school tomorrow (Thursday, August 17th). Sign making supplies will be provided beginning at 9AM. The cheering will begin at 9:15AM.
  + Please remember to photograph the students at events for future use.
* Social Media - Shaker is going online and plans to eliminate much of their paper correspondence.
  + Electronic newsletters and calendars will be available online. Each school has printed paper calendars available by request only in the main office. Presumably, the district will make a determination on whether to provide printed calendars to families based on demand for them during the 2017-18 school year.
  + Download the new Shaker Heights Schools app. The app contains all calendars, lunch menus, and PTO roster. Please note that if you download calendars from multiple schools to your own calendar program, many items may show up twice. It was suggested that we host an app/calendar demonstration at a future PTO meeting.
  + Get your #shakerfirstday school signs online. The district has provided printable 1st Day of School signs this year. Don’t forget the hashtag.
  + There will be a constant rollout of new social media campaigns throughout this school year.
  + Mercer PTO has a new Facebook page. It is a closed group, so please invite fellow Mercer parents and guardians to join. A code of conduct has been posted in the group. Apologies were made for the way the new FB page was rolled out - not many people seemed to know about the page yet.
    - Please provide the Marketing and Social Media co-chairs with the information for future events that you want posted.
    - Sign-up Genius sign-ups can be posted on the page to get more people involved.
    - Established to create a better sense of community and connect people.
    - Should a flyer be created to promote the FB page?
    - Is there a process for purging members of the group as needed? Posting a simple message reminding members to leave the group at the conclusion of the school year if their child has moved up or moved on might be sufficient.
* Rainbow Run is on September 18th. They are accepting volunteers or you can sign-up to run.
* Goals for PTO this year:
  + Inclusion! We would like to continue the work of the previous PTO President to get more families involved in PTO, and remove the stigma that PTO is an exclusive group. All parents and guardians are members of the PTO! In order to continue this work, the timing of events will continue to be taken into consideration so that all may attend regardless of work schedules. Can we provide childcare for events to make attendance easier for more families? We must continue to ask ourselves: Are we serving all of our community?
    - For example: The Father’s Walk this year will provide the opportunity for family members to accompany their students on the bus from those areas where walking to school is not geographically practical.

**VP Financial Management/Treasurer’s Report – Kris Gobel**

* The Olympics last year raised a record-breaking amount.
* Updated financial forms will be available online by the time school begins.
* If you have coins from events, there are coin rolls in the PTO mailbox in the office. Please roll all coins prior to submitting for deposit.
* The 2017-18 budget will be ready by the end of the month.
* A reminder to turn in ALL receipts. Donations are great, but the PTO needs to be able to keep accurate records on the cost of events for budgeting purposes.

**Previous Events**

* Two Kindergarten Playdates were held this year. They were a great success! Evite was used to send invitations to the families of incoming Kindergarten students and was very effective. The email addresses of incoming families were obtained from the district for this school-related event. Families without an email address on file were contacted by phone. The timing for both dates worked well.

**Upcoming Events**

* All volunteer slots are filled for the Teacher Welcome Back BBQ, 8/21. Drop off for food donations at 11:30/45.
* An email blast was sent out today for the Mercer Mingle/Teacher Meet and Greet, 8/21. The Meet and Greet name will be phased out. Teachers for all students in grades K-4 will be in attendance. The bus will be available between 4 and 6PM for rides around the block, and tours of the school will be given by students.
* All is set for the Parent Coffee, 8/23.
* All is set for the Ice Cream Social, 8/25.
* Volunteers needed for Popcorn Friday/Spirit Day.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 13, 2017 at 7:00PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Amanda Fort.