

**October 26, 2023**  
**Ed Smith PTO - Full minutes**

**Attendees:** Principal Andrea Ellis, Ashley Kennard, Alex Waldauer, Chris Brunt, Brandi Williams (NYGearUp), Kari Zhe-Heimerman, Justin Pritchard, Vanessa Jones, Katie McDonald, Emily Thorson, Eric Ferguson, Abdulaziz Shifa, Ryan Demorest, Bridget Demorest, Sarah Workman

**Principal's Report**

- New Leadership:
  - Vice Principal Dr. Jen DiBello (K-2)
  - Starting 10/30 Stewart Amell (3-5); experience: very well-versed in administration, superintendent experience (12 yrs.); principal experience (14 yrs., Liverpool School District) – (3-5)
  - Vice Principal Ms. Karen Earl (6-8)
- 3-year plan: Starting listening tour and wants to release a 3-yr plan by Dec. PTO meeting; most schools do not have a strategic plan of this length; but we are in a good position to extend to the next level
- Goal Setting:
  - K-8: setting goals across levels; goals are set for May and students work backwards; early grades may work on counting to 100 or learning letter sounds, e.g.; teachers committing to action steps; goals will be public and visible on the coyote yellow wall outside cafeteria; also goal-setting: guidance, special ed, ENL
  - 4 times per year: depts and grade levels will meet with admin team + coaches as checkpoints
- Review of ELA and Math proficiency
  - Minimal growth but moving in the right direction; want everyone at a level 3 (considered proficiency)
  - Have to celebrate small wins: growth within levels (learning gains) but the state does not give us points for learning gains
  - Most important: action steps that we are taking
- Another goal: attendance – goal is 95% we want to remain in green – comes out in 5 week increments; we are doing ok at 92% ; have a good system in place
- Penny wars fundraiser for United Way of NY opens on Oct 30 - Nov 30
  - Past two years Ed Smith raised highest dollar amount of ANY school in SCSD
  - Week of Nov. 10: week of Penny Wars

**Gear Up NY presentation with Brandi Williams**

- What is Gear Up NY? Federally funded grant that has been around since 90s; follows cohort of students for 5 years until graduate; Higher Ed follows them through their freshman years; supports them social emotionally, financially, etc. in their freshman year and connects students with future supports
- Feb 2023 – SCSD awarded for 7 schools in district (875 students involved in program); started last year (Feb 2023) with 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- National gear up week was Sept. 26: featured external speakers; student assemblies; family night; professional development - focused on school culture and self-care for educators
- First full year in the schools: focused on after school programs and improving attendance
  - Have been in talks with SU, LeMoyne and OCC to provide tutors – hoping to wrap this up before Christmas Break to get tutors into the schools for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students

- Goal for mentors: talked to Falk College (SU) re: mentoring (esp. social work and counseling students at these institutions); will connect with Katie McDonald
- Supports CTE Program Choice: Working with Bruno Primerano, head of CTE – make sure families are aware of the different pathways
- Supporting student attendance with attendance – met with attendance director; most attendance initiatives are school-based; how can we financially support school-wide attendance initiatives
  - Holding Focus groups for families falling into chronic period of 18-days or more as well as families whose attendance greatly improved
  - High school students: students are not attending because of bullying, not connected to curriculum, or school – want to send invites to high school students to identify supports and figure out how to connect
  - Offers rotating spots for students on college tours (5 tours last year); public and private, 2-yr, 4-yr, across NY; has modest support for families to join
  - We are not a new school – we are here to add to/enhance community partnerships to make sure all of our student are served
    - Hillside, promise zone, etc. do similar things, but this serves ALL 875 students (not 20-25)
- Feedback: not all students were selected for field trips, but we try to create equitable opportunities and rotation
  - 4-5 schools each proposed to CUNY and SICU (sp) – so if one student doesn't have the opportunity now, there will be multiple opportunities in the future
- Can't get kicked out of program unless you leave the school/district; all students and families are welcome at the family events
- Comment: Kari reiterated need for tutors, especially algebra and living environment
- Comment: Ashley Kennard: how can we sustain tutors after 8<sup>th</sup> grade year?
  - Gear Up connect with Shaw Center (SU) to sustain tutors; biggest challenge is transportation
  - Principal Ellis: 3-yr plan: wants to connect on a deeper level with SU and other community partners and discuss impact on bridge program
- Williams acknowledges that sometimes 7<sup>th</sup> grade feels left out – BUT if Ed Smith wants to support 7-8<sup>th</sup> grade event, GEAR UP can support percentage

### **President's Report**

- September PTO minutes approval: unanimous – all in favor
- Event summary: New playground opening ceremony; Mr. Barber farewell parade
- How are individual learning about PTO meeting? Are flyers circulating? Difficult to track in middle school grades
- Upcoming events:
  - Nov. meeting conflicts with talent show (Nov. 16)
  - Moving to Nov. 14 (TUESDAY)

### **Treasurer's Report**

- \$72 of income (donations) - \$26 recurring donation (Sarah Brown set up recurring donation)
- Kindergartners went to Springside Farm – awesome trip
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade has already fundraised \$850 (Chipotle was \$360)
- Tully's suggested for future 9<sup>th</sup> grade fundraiser

- Funding request: \$200 from Ms. Juman for costumes, fabric, craft supplies, and music recordings for grade 1 musical and grade 2 musical performance – typically pays for them herself
  - Ashley motioned, Katie Seconds. Passed.
- Indoor recess play dough approved at prior PTO internal meeting for Ms. Jones
- Question on Zoom: How do we donate?
  - @edsmith-PTO or check to Ed Smith PTO

### Open Discussion

- Ashley Kennard: After school program in connection to clubs
  - Chess club: met on Fridays; this year they started with kids who were in it last year; Bob is trying a 6-wk session to keep it small (30 kids trying to play chess is too much)
  - 6-wk session for after school clubs proposed; to address equity, have kids sign up in advance or cap it with a lottery; Friday also presents equity issue: no busing on Fridays; no after school on Fridays
  - Ashley will talk to Ms. Karen Blue and Ethel McFadden re: possibility of clubs synched up with after school (Girl Scouts does this)
  - Katie would like to suggest foreign language clubs
- Alex Waldauer: Process for volunteering
  - To volunteer: visit or call the main office and ask for Lindsey Rogers. If she isn't there, leave a message for her. You can also email her at [LRodger2@scsd.us](mailto:LRodger2@scsd.us)
  - Your message or email needs to include: name, email, phone number, and you can list "PTO" as your reason for volunteering. If you do not receive an email from the district, be sure to follow up with Lindsey.
  - If you have any questions, please contact PTO outreach coordinator [alex.waldauer@gmail.com](mailto:alex.waldauer@gmail.com)
  - Ms. Jones – will send email to teachers to see if anyone needs volunteers
  - Eric will ask Principal Ellis – what do you need in terms of volunteers?
- Ski and Winter gear sale - Help needed on Nov. 3
  - Nov. 4 from 9 a.m. to noon in the Ed Smith cafeteria. We also are collecting new and gently used items for the sale! Please drop them off at Ed Smith from 3-5 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 3, or email Sarah Brown at [sarahkfbrown@gmail.com](mailto:sarahkfbrown@gmail.com) for early drop-off info or any other questions about the sale.
- Ed Smith Apparel sale ends Nov. 4: [tinyurl.com/ypnct6df](http://tinyurl.com/ypnct6df)!