

September 21, 2023
Ed Smith PTO meeting

Attendees

Brian Jacobson, Sarah Brown, Karly Grifasi, Ashley Kennard, Katie McDonald, Eric Ferguson, Vanessa Jones, Kerry Pritchard, Susan Fuller, Matt Fuller, Brigit Burt, Lesley Porcelli, Craig Meyerson, Daria Meyerson, Andrea Clark, Kari Zhe-Heimerman, Amanda Nichols, Nicky Fonger, Justin Prichard, Beth Myers, Alex Waldauer, Maura Ackerman, Chanelle Benz, Aidan Ackerman, Merima Ali, Gbenga Adewumi, Sebastian Modrow, Charity Adewumi

Principal's report

- Instituted PAWS (positive behavior reinforcement)
 - If kids do something good (e.g. following school rules), they get a paw for their class. Competition helps encourage good behavior; kids and staff are both enjoying it
- New administrator: Karen Earl, on the third/fourth/fifth grade administrative team
- The playground!
 - Kids are going outside, they do get recess, chat with the construction workers
 - Project nearing completion: was originally supposed to take six weeks.
 - Middle school will get a special recess by grade level so they can enjoy the new playground once it's done
- Principal search
 - Staff and parents both participate in interviews
 - Mr. Barber will stay here until the new principal comes, and will also help train them
- Several big focus areas for the school (the Big Rules)
 - No swearing, no hoods and backpacks (okay to wear a hoodie, just don't pull your hood way over the head so we can't see who you are), no cell phones (this has been going very well so far – less drama, more social interaction), no play fighting
- Free Ed Smith t-shirts for all the kids!
 - Will be handed out on Thursday so they can all wear them on Friday for Spirit Day

President's report

- Three goals:
 - Increase volunteer base and opportunities for involvement.
 - More opportunities for parents to be IN the school (e.g. after-school clubs, Carnival)
 - Promote the schools to our friends and family and neighborhood.
- Ice cream social was a success

Treasurer's report/Vote on proposed budget

- Most important thing: we start with a year and a half worth of surplus. Will be covered by checking account balance of \$23,000. Even if we didn't raise any funds this whole year, we could still support everything in the budget.
- Question about grade level field trip budget line –is \$450 adequate, etc. Last year we didn't spend the full amount, so some flexibility
- One goal is to get more money into the hands of teachers to fulfill their needs
- Kari motioned, Brigit seconded, budget was approved

Funding requests

- \$100 for fidgets (Pop-Its, Rubix cubes, mental health journals etc) from Marisa Wysocki.
 - Kari motioned, Katie seconded. Passed.
- \$150 from Miss Earl, we would like to reward the three staff members who have the best Cool-Down corner with a \$50 gift card. Goal is to make the coziest cozy corner and if you win you get the gift certificate. Things like bean bags, coloring stuff – the idea is to keep kids IN the room who are having trouble. Good way to help the kids reset.
 - Kari motions, Amanda seconds. Passed.
 - Request from PTO: can we get photos of winning
- \$264 from Erica North Daley for Little Spot Puppets to help with social-emotional learning. Helps student practice skills.
 - Katie motions, Kari seconds. Passed.
- \$450 for 56 kindergarteners to go to Springside farm in Fabius to participate in fall activities throughout the day (pumpkin patch! Zip lines!)
 - Brigit motions, Nikki seconds. Passed.

Middle school report

- Middle school is bringing back some pre-Covid activities. A preview of what's ahead
 - Harvest dance on Halloween, Pi Day before Thanksgiving, roller-skating party in January, student Council trip to Albany, more popcorn and movie days, another dance
 - More fundraising: Chipotle fundraiser on October 5
- Bridge program for 8th graders – NY Gear Up. Person in charge will come to next meeting to discuss
- Middle school student council is looking for a parent rep
- Karly Grifasi says GSA is active though working on a low budget (they had to spend the full grant last year), there will be fundraising. They meet last Friday of the month, and parents can support by helping with rides because there is no bussing for middle school on Fridays
 - Selling Coyote Pride shirts for \$5: If people want a t-shirt, stop by and give Mr. Wright \$5 or Venmo. But for the most part will be sold as part of the PTO gear sale

Open discussion

- If volunteers have been cleared in previous years, do they need to get re-cleared?
 - Alex will follow up
 - Ashley says that if you are here, you should go through the process
 - Call the main office, and then they will send you an email with the information
- What is the best way of getting photos for yearbook?
 - There is an app called Photo Circle that the school uses – the PTO may have access soon, and that will be helpful
- The issue of teachers making kids stay in for recess as a punishment
 - Eric will be in contact with Mr. Barber about this not being okay
 - Teachers go out with 22 kids, trying to keep track of them is tough. Could parent volunteers help with that?
- Screen time – are the Ed Smith levels consistent with other schools?
 - Kids get math games, iPads are extremely locked down