

Kennard Classical Junior Academy PTO Meeting

November 5, 2014, 6:00 pm, Cafeteria
MEETING MINUTES

PTO Board Members present: Jennifer Anania, Jennifer Beffa, Myra Belgeri, Nicole Botchway-Colbert, Lisa Granich-Kovarik, Allison Miller, Nicole Scott, Gary Siddens, Tiffany Tibbs. Also present: Dr. Wanda LeFlore

PTO President, Tiffany Tibbs, called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Call to Order

Call for New Business Agenda Items

- No new items were added

Acceptance of Minutes from April PTO Meeting

- No changes or revisions to the minutes were offered. Motion to accept the minutes by Melissa Von Rohr, seconded by Kim Whitrap. Motion passed.

REPORTS

PTO President's Report, Tiffany Tibbs

- **Thank you's**
 - Received many thank you cards from students and teachers for library books, technology, etc. – many teachers have said how much they appreciate the document cameras, and many kids have talked about the library. Notes will be posted down on display board by gym, thanks to Allison Miller
 - To Cheryl Levine and her committee – purchased \$2450.84 books for our school library; committee and Ms. Craig have rearranged the Fiction section and the Series section of the library
 - To Grandparents Day chairs and volunteers, Kennard teachers and staff – the event was a great success, with over 300 guests. It was well organized, and it was great to have David Harding from SLPS in attendance.
 - To Box Tops committee - sorted over 3000 box tops this fall.
 - To Jennifer Anania – agreed to be parent rep on Character Ed. Thanks to Character Ed volunteers and Ms. Engle for anti-bullying pledge signing during recess.
 - To Teacher appreciation committee – who provided meals during parent teacher conferences
 - To Kennardwear committee – for delivering Kennardwear orders
 - For parents and teachers who helped clean and organize the attic
 - To Beautification, Green team, NEHS, teachers, and parents – who participated in Outdoor Cleanup on Green Apple Day of Service. It was great to be part of this International day of service, over 3700 other teams across the world); some of Kennard's projects included: planting apple & peach trees, blueberry bushes, weeding, trimming, picking up trash, painting buddy bench, buying hose and water key.
 - To Hispanic Heritage Night committee - very successful event! Special thanks to Nick Miller and to WU mariachi and salsa groups – who donated their time! Excellent music, dancing, games, food, crafts – loved the themes, love that it enhanced Spanish curriculum
 - To Fall Festival committees and families and teachers – for a creative and fun event
 - To New Families Committee, staff, teachers, and students who hosted the Open House event

- Thanks – Myra Belgeri renewing World Book online
- Thanks to Book Fair chairs for organizing the use of Scholastic Performance dollars for teachers to opt in to purchase books and/or supplies to help in their classroom – Dale Greenbury will be distributing them this week.
- **Upcoming events/dates**
 - Deadline for Indoor recess bin donations – November 7; Alissa Rowan is coordinating. There is a box outside Mr. Clement's room; we are collecting things like Legos, games, blocks, colored pencils/dry erase boards, cards, etc.
 - Math and Science Enrichment night: Theme is "Up, Up, and Away", scheduled for 11/19 at 6 pm. Mad Science will be in cafeteria; there will be 2 shows, with limited capacity. Students will get a card for visiting different areas; when they complete the card, they can enter their names into a drawing; Ms. Rois will take the winners of the drawing to the Science Center. There will be hand-on activities in different areas – St. Louis Astronomy Society, MO Botanical Gardens, Life Size R2D2; MySci Investigation station. Currently getting volunteers – through volunteer spot.
 - Trivia Night, November 21 at 6:30 – Immaculate Conception gym
 - Movie night, Friday, January 23
 - Next board meeting January 28, 2015 – 5 pm
 - Next PTO meeting is February 4, at 6 pm.

Principal's Report, Dr. Wanda LeFlore

- Thank you for the flowers and gift card I received for my birthday. I also want to personally thank all board members in attendance that chaired or volunteered at any event sponsored this school year.
- Coffee with the Principal: Friday, November 7 @ 8:30am. Hope you can join me!
- Curriculum Update:
 - 2nd grade teachers are implementing Equate, a math game that prepares students for algebra and equations.
 - 1st grade and kindergarten teachers are implementing Hands on Algebra (solving equations with manipulatives)
 - Funds received from Target's Take Charge of Education Program (\$1,212.22) were used to purchase the math resources for the primary grades.
- Facilities Update:
 - The holes on the bus parking lot were filled this summer and another request is in to refill them.
 - Installation of a 2nd elevator for access to the west wing of the building is currently in progress and the completion date is November 1, 2014. District inspectors came out Monday and now we are waiting for city inspectors.
 - Environmental Consultants, LLC conducted dust sampling for lead concentrations related to demolition activities reported acceptable levels. A copy of the report is available in the office.
 - As a result of the new construction in the area that was constantly flooding, I placed a request to Jeff Faust, that the classrooms and shared areas in the wing be evaluated again to make sure that no additional cleaning is needed. On August 13, Jeff Faust an Environmental Consultant replied that if the request was approved, they would begin the evaluation.
 - McCann Pest & Termite Control inspected the building the week August 25 for additional bat sightings and carpenters will be out this week to inspect and seal openings throughout the building. It was also, recommended that all classroom windows remain close at the end of the day.
 - A request submitted to remove dead trees from the bike rack on the bus lot and the

- YMCA License process for four year olds is underway. Bids have been submitted for a fence around the Pre-K area and the playground. Pending...
- Lunchroom Update: The Student Council with support from Ms. Batres and Ms. Spitznagel is currently working on a solution to reduce wait time during lunch caused by more students eating and more healthy choices. On Monday, the first component of the plan will be implemented. This week lunch times were adjusted with teachers agreeing to bring several classes to lunch a few minutes earlier. It's working much better!
- Magnet School Open House: More than 60 prospective families attended Open House today. Special thanks to Lindsay Lawrence and her committee for sponsoring this event.
- Nurse: We continue to share Nurse Sequetta Welford with AESM. She has been temporarily assigned to Kennard Monday thru Friday from 9:00am to noon until a new nurse is hired. A nurse is scheduled to report on Monday, November 3. Nurse Dedert has been assigned to Kennard. I met her Friday; she had orientation and special training earlier this week and should report tomorrow.
- Parent Contact Information Update Letter: Sent to families 10.29.14. Hard copies are available in the office. On October 29, Principals were brief regarding severe weather or other emergencies that could result in the district canceling or dismissing school early; the staff was briefed on Monday. Additionally, I contacted all after-school providers that use our facilities and requested updated rosters and student contact information.
- Parent Contact Letter Website Update: The SLPS Gifted and Talented Handbook are now available on the SLPS and Kennard website. It's designed to explain the policies and procedures the district has in place to meet the needs of our students.
- Vacation Statement: I spoke with Lou Kruger the beginning of the school year about the number of families requesting vacation time for their child during the regularly scheduled school year. My attendance team and I noticed that the number had doubled compared to the same time last year. Lou decided to send me a statement to use. The intent was to share only as needed and to make families aware that poor attendance could jeopardize our future standing as "Distinguished Accreditation" which is awarded by the state not the district via MSIP 5. After receiving the email and speaking with Lou Kruger regarding the statement and I've asked the teachers to refrain from sending until I receive additional information.
 - Dr. LeFlore did not send the vacation statement out to the Kennard families, but to the classroom teachers. Her intent was that they be used as talking points to families who want to pull their students out for vacations.
 - Karin Upwood: central office said there was no policy of de-enrollment at an SLPS school.
 - Sarah Pitlyk: what was supposed to be done with the statement?
 - Karin Upwood: when was the statement sent out? LeFlore: September 29th. Karen: this was not sent out by teachers
 - LeFlore: The intent was to send the statement out only as needed because attendance affects our status as accredited with distinction.
 - LeFlore followed up with Lou Kruger and he stated that his office said that if your child misses 10 consecutive days SIS drops your student automatically.
 - Parent question: Why was the statement specific to Kennard? LeFlore: Our concern is that Kennard is accredited with distinction and one of the MSIP 5 standards is attendance.
 - Sarah Pitlyk: The statement should've been distributed BEFORE people made travel plans, not after. LeFlore: I told teachers only to distribute to parents who inquired about the issue.
 - Karin Upwood: So only parents who've requested information get it? There seems to be a lot of confusion about this. The classroom teacher

else. All parents should've been privy to that information since it affects our child's enrollment.

- LeFlore: We don't have a policy exactly, we have a statement.
- Sarah Pitlyk: It hadn't occurred to me to worry about this. She shared her experience of trying to deal with SLPS and the Grand Canyon trip. There's a problem with confusion and consistency. Shouldn't this be in a handbook and a process that enforces and monitors this?
- LeFlore: I was unsure and unclear as well. Maybe it was too hastily pushed out to teachers. Our policies are aligned with the district policies. One of the things the district has done over the years is compile the information needed in the parent handbook so that it's unified across the district.
- LeFlore: The intent is not to single out or threaten or expel students from school. It was to encourage parents not to take vacations during the school year. She has now contacted the teachers and asked them not to put the statement out as a policy.
- Grace Kivindy: It was only given out AFTER vacation plans were made.
- Sarah Pitlyk: If this was to be imposed or implemented in the future, how would that happen?
- LeFlore: This would come from the superintendent and put out in advance. It would be under the umbrella of SLPS district as a whole.
- Karen Ruggeri: LeFlore directed parents to the district office.
- Kim Whitrap: Shouldn't there be a reasonable solution to allow for special family events or trips? Can we re-define what an unexcused absence is?
- LeFlore: We actually checked on that. The way the system is set up it won't do that.
- Karen Ruggeri: When we went to Italy, Lou Kruger said that 10 days was the cut off but that it was at the discretion of the principal. We were un-enrolled.
- Nicole Scott: Lou Kruger should have communicated the reason for the ten day guideline more clearly.
- Sarah Pitlyk: It might be a good idea to put out a clear statement pre-emptively explaining why it's very important to think hard about missing days for vacations.
- LeFlore: Things were handled on a case by case basis.
- Susie Anderson-Bauer: Does attendance count towards funding? LeFlore: Yes, absolutely. Susie: People need to be informed about what this costs the school to miss. I understand why people are upset and feel threatened, but people need to understand more clearly why their children to be here.
- LeFlore: In the six years I've been here, no student has ever been dropped that hasn't had the chance to be re-enrolled. I think there needs to be a discussion and decisions to be made on a case by case basis.
- Melissa: To clarify, does the system see it as either you're here or you're not, or are there "verified" absences.
- LeFlore: There are verified absences, but in terms of funding you're either here or you're not here. The expectation is that 90% of the students are there 90% of the time. If you have additional suggestions or ideas on this issue, please send me a note or email.
- Lara Fuchs: I would request that you advocate with the district that they put their calendar earlier. SLPS puts out their calendar later than most other districts.

Treasurer's Report, Myra Belgeri

- We have a current balance of \$21,440 (about \$7000 in our primary account, \$300 in the debit account, and \$15000 in our Friends of Kennard account).
- Stephanie: What do the astericks mean? That means they are break even events. We don't expect them to cost the PTO anything, or generate any funds for us.
- Do we do labels for education? We do, but we get points for items in a catalogue.
- We've spent the extra funds we had from last school year in accordance with the way it was allocated at the end of last year.
- Parent question: What is Service First? That is the event Wash U. students came and worked at Kennard.
- Parent Question: How do I get access to the World Book Online? Get that password through your student's teacher.

Vice President's Report, Nicole Scott

- We've had some great events these first few months of school thanks to the amazing volunteers and chairpeople.
- We still need one more chair: our outdoor learning garden. Dr. LeFlore and the staff are willing to help and sustain it. We think it would be amazing and would have a lot of help. If anyone is interested please let Nicole know.
- All the volunteer opportunities are on the Kennard website.

Fundraising Report, Gary Siddens

- We've raised \$15,000, 66% of our goal. We're about \$2-3000 behind where we were last year. Friends of Kennard is no longer charging us a 2% fee, which is helpful to us. Our participation rate is 25%, which needs to be much higher.

District Affairs Report, Nicole Colbert-Botchway

- Nicole reaches out to the district when there is a problem and we need to advocate for our students and school. She will not need to do this for the elevator since it is on schedule. The other concern was that there was not a full time nurse, but that appears to be rectified too.
- LeFlore: Malinckrodt only has a nurse two days a week and another school that only has a nurse as needed. Kennard is lucky to have one.
- Tibbs: We as a board will be sending a letter to the district thanking them for their actions with the elevator and the nurse.

Information Officer Report, Jennifer Anania

- The buzz book is done and you should have received it via email from your child's teacher. It is available on the website and password protected.

Room Parent Officer, Allison Miller

- The room parent list is finalized and is being utilized. If you want to send something out to everyone, it needs to be approved through Dr. LeFlore.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Vacation Statement

- Dealt with in the president's report.

Donation Drive for Indoor Recess Bins, Alissa Rowan

- Items are still being collected for indoor recess bins. The deadline is next Wednesday. Alissa will then inventory the donations and purchase items as needed. We will spend about \$50 a bin. The goal is to have the bins ready by the end of November.

Interest in Paypal and/or credit card fundraising, Gary Siddens

- Some parents are interested in the option of paying their donation with paypal or credit cards. Gary is going to investigate that with next year's fund drive. Eight parents were interested in a paypal option, six for a credit card option.

Math and Science Night, Lara Fuchs

- Everyone is invited on November 19, from 6-8. The theme is Up, Up, and Away and there are many fun activities planned. We also need about 40 volunteers.

Book Fair Proceeds, Melissa Von Rohr and Tiffany Tibbs

- The board decided to take the profits in cash, except for fulfilling the teacher wishlists with the Scholastic incentive dollars.

Green Team Updates, Amy Breuer

- We are participating in a Green Schools Quest to help us do sustainability projects here at Kennard. Six or seven other SLPS schools are also participating and all have similar waste reduction goals. We have a lot of support from students and teachers for our Green Team. Some projects will be student-led.
- Melissa Von Rohr: How were students selected to be on the Green Team? Amy Breuer: Two hundred students submitted essays to be on the green team, so the teachers and parents made the selections. Our kids have come up with the cafeteria as a focus.
- Tiffany: Ms. Meyer and Ms. Spitznagel have been tremendously helpful. The students have done a waste audit already and are coming up with great ideas.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mr. Clement: Mr. Droste was elected vice-president of GAM (Gifted Association of Missouri) and both Ms. Decker and Ms. Beffa have just renewed their national board certification. Ms. Recke was chosen as reading teacher of the year for SLPS.
- Amy Breuer: Fifth grade trivia night is November 21st. Tricia Moyer is in charge of the room parent basket.
- Mr. Clement: Mr. Droste has a contact in Illinois to get all the pumpkins, so thank him for all the pumpkins.
- Lena: Dismissal question—is that monitored who signs out which child? In third grade only one teacher comes out.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Gary Siddens seconded by Grace Kivindyo
Meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Granich-Kovarik
PTO Secretary, 2014-15