

Westowne Elementary PTA Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2015

Present: China Williams, Jessica Brown, Stacie Lauer, Justine Stull, Shandra Patrick, Amanda McBride, Judy Robey, Nicole Bittinger, Janine Kucik, Margaret Westrick, Noel Smith, Amy Houghton, Sara Muempfer, Joe Riggieri, Monica Laskaris, Sarah Fondelier, Becky Bass, Jenny Zwarich, Maura Hill, Sam Thompson, Caitlin Bittinger, Amanda Ferragamo, Jeremy Ferregamo, Emily Shaw, Willie Milnor, Emily Milnor, Katie Vogel, Martha Montgomery, Jodi Michael, Josh Willig, Hope Riley, Carey Berlin, Gina Godleski, Becky Brush, Jennifer Bemister, Heather Ashbrook, Tom Pritchard, Maryann Kolarek, Chrissy Heiland, Kecia Johnson, Amy Houghton, Leslie Morris, Naseem Skaarenborg, Rebecca Prince, Melody Higgins, Tracy Horch, Debra Wright, Dannielle Neral, Melissa Pound

Meeting called to order by China Williams at 7:06 pm

February minutes approved as written.

Staffing Discussion

1. Mrs. Patrick's feedback
 - a. Not currently prepared to make staffing statements
 - b. Will disclose staffing information later in school year
 - c. Lower, "dinosaur" playground and "Wacky Water Games" ball court is going to remain open throughout new building construction
 - d. Voluntary transfer—submitted by teachers early in school year with list of preferred schools
 - e. Priority transfer—identified by administration based on criteria: tenured, 3 years at current school, positive evaluations, etc. (AKA "surplussing" or "excessing")
 - f. Receptive to parent questions and suggestions for PE and recess space issues
2. Parent feedback
 - a. Want two gym days for students given the necessary and proven benefit of exercise for learning and behavior
 - b. Gym space has not changed from when two gym classes were instituted to now
 - c. Want to keep veteran, respected teachers:
 - i. gym teacher, Mr. Prem
 - ii. 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Meyers
 - d. Want to prioritize teacher/staff retention
 - e. Want to follow "last in/first out" with Priority Transfers of teachers
 - f. Want parent opinions to be heard prior to decisions being made by administration
 - g. PE, vocal music, art share same budget line item and are allocated at principal's discretion
 - h. Want clear answer about possible "safety" concern for running two gym classes concurrently
 - i. Want clear communication and transparency from administration
 - j. Want administration to fight on parent-student-teacher Westowne team
 - k. Believe Mr. Prem is fully competent for safety and scheduling
 - l. Suggests PE department to step in to address scheduling concerns for running concurrent classes
 - m. Will use PTA as advocating avenue for parent concerns
 - n. Request an ongoing precedent for communication and feedback with Westowne administration

- o. Request updates and answered questions from Mrs. Patrick at tentative April 24th meeting
3. Outstanding parent questions to be shared with Mrs. Patrick:
 - a. Why has second gym been discontinued?
 - b. Why is Mr. Prem being transferred?
 - c. Where are we in the process of making the decision about the number of gym periods?
 - d. If space is an issue, how does cutting gym and replacing it with another special resolve the concern?
 - e. If safety is an issue, how does cutting gym and replacing it with another special resolve the concern?
 - f. Staff for next year's 3rd grade?
 - g. STAT becomes full position
 - h. Parents see shortages, so why are there excesses?
 - i. What classifies students as "special ed"?
 - j. Did our number of students with special needs increase this year over the prior?
 - k. Did Westowne acquire extra special educators to accommodate for dissolution of ALS programs in Baltimore County and greater intensity of need?
 4. Parents encouraged to share questions and concerns in writing with Dr. Dance, Superintendent and Heidi Miller, Assistant Superintendent
 5. Parents encouraged to advocate for identification and meeting of special needs. Special education is a general education issue given the educational and safety impacts on all students when needs are not proactively met.

President's Report: China Williams

1. Book Fair begins next week
2. Removing My Coke Rewards due to poor return for large time investment
3. Up to date with state Charitable Registration with no mention of fines
4. eScrip/Safeway program down to \$20 last month instead of the usual \$90
 - a. Sign up on eScrip.com
 - b. Supporters need to renew Safeway Bonus Cards for Westowne
 - c. Use any form of payment except credit at Safeway

Secretary's Report: Justine Stull

1. Membership
 - a. 183 members

Vice President's Report: Jessica

1. \$1000 Box Tops
2. \$1600 Giant
 - a. Runs through March 19th

5th Grade: Naseem

1. Needs tents for Recognition Ceremony
2. Needs parents to return forms for t-shirts and memory book
3. Philly Fieldtrip scheduled for May 21

Claire's Gourmet: Becky Bass & Jen Zwarich

1. Now processing orders

2. Delivery on March 26

Literature Night: Maura Hill

1. 14 rooms for activities—meaning little hall crowding and no waiting

Movie Night: Maura Hill

1. “Big Hero 6” on Friday, April 17th
2. Concessions benefit 5th grade

Book Fair: Melody Higgins

1. Teacher Preview on Monday with baked goods from families

Treasurer’s Report: Stacie Lauer

1. Record high \$305.69 PJ Day revenue

Principal’s Report: Mrs. Patrick

1. PARCC testing extended through 17th due to inclement weather closures
2. Upcoming fieldtrips 3rd grade, 5th (April 13th and May 21st) grade, 1st grade
3. Thanks for field trip subsidies (\$4 per student)
4. Picture Day April 21
5. Tentative School Schedule Adjustment: April 2nd, 3 hour early day, full teacher day going to Board of Education approval
6. 2nd grade fieldtrip not yet announced; unclear on the status of planning

Teacher Liaison: Judy Robey

1. Jeans Drive was great success
2. Martha volunteered to take last three bags to donate

Meeting adjourned at 8:55