

PTO Beyond the Board Meeting 3/9/2021

Present: Pam Schnatterly, Alana Marino, Rebecca Wasynczuk, Mike Redmon, Matt Kuklantz, Stacey Theofilou, Karen Rao, Kelly Welch Anderson, Sarah Herlihy, Mary Mulkeen, Jackie K,

Social Media Hongmei has been running the social media. We have grown to 46 families on Facebook page, and we conducted successful snow man building contest on Facebook page. The contest had a considerable number of entrants, and prizes have been judged, awarded and handed out.

Site Council Sarah Herlihy gave an update on the February site council meeting. Thurston has employed a consultant to look at middle school class schedules. In non-Covid times, there are 7 classes. Would students benefit from having fewer than 7 classes a day which are longer so than there would be more time for science labs etc.? In Covid times, classes are longer, and they will need to be shorter for when students return to school. Mike added that students involved in the site council gave him valuable feedback. Students noted that they liked having fewer classes that are slightly longer in length. Students said fewer (but longer) classes made for fewer transitions, and less stress due to less homework to keep track of. The consultant will give feedback on how to utilize time and reduce transitions. In addition to this, the middle school will explore the possibility of aligning middle school schedules with Westwood High School schedules so that students may benefit from high school programs.

METCO Stacey summarized the 2 very successful recent METCO events. The February Book Club and Author Talk drew 120 families to this online event which included great discussion. Secondly, the Welcome Club families had a small group (12 people) deep and personal discussion about race and communication about their backgrounds. This event lead to a great connection among participants, deepening relationships and building rapport. For future events, Lateefah is planning a March online cooking event where kids will cook a culturally influenced meal, share some of their own favorite family recipes, and create a cook book of these recipes. In April, the METCO Welcome club is hoping to host a paint bar or painting event. METCO is also looking to plan an outreach event to help incoming middle schoolers and incoming high school students understand fully what METCO does. And, METCO is looking ahead to plan summer events. Stacey requested that the PTO consider if they are able to put money aside for the METCO program as they did this year in order to plan more events.

SEPAC is working in conjunction with Mike, Matt, Kelly, Mr. Chant and Mr. Hoffman to consider how to combine PE class with the special Olympics. They met in late January and they are currently in the planning phase, and hope to have a plan to implement in the fall. Kelly is pleased to have a lot of administrative support. There will be a SEPAC parent meet-and-greet on March 10, and in mid-April, there will be presentations for kids entering sixth grade in the fall.

Teacher Appreciation Alana, Mary and Jackie together planned and created the Kudos board which went out to faculty and staff. This digital thank you card allowed students and parents to submit videos, pictures and notes of appreciation for our teachers and staff. Coming up on May 3-7, teacher appreciation week will be celebrated by decorations, breakfast provided for teachers all week long, gift basket raffles, and other give-aways.

Community Enrichment Karen Rao continues to work on the creation of virtual clubs for middle schoolers led by high school students. Pam spearheaded a survey to determine club interest, and this information was pared down to a few clubs. Starting with 3 virtual clubs determined by available leaders, this will soon be underway.

Alana has taken the initiative to implement the very useful “Family Tech Talk, Virtual Edition, Inspiring Digital Responsibility” via zoom on 3/9 at 7:00 PM. Presenter Lynette Owens is the founder of Trend Micro Internet Safety for kids. She gave useful information about ways we can limit, monitor, and use technology in the life of our kids.

Sixth Grade Scavenger Hunt We continue to look for volunteers for this event which is a team building event helping 6th graders become familiar with the school building while meeting new classmates. This is typically a fall event, but will be bumped to the spring and will be divided into a red team hunt and a blue team hunt. In addition, Matt is hoping to provide sixth graders another 3 day team building event at Hale in early June. Matt and Rebecca will seek to write a grant to help cover the cost of this expensive endeavor.

7th grade event The staff continues to consider a fun team building events for the 7th grade as well. Additionally, the PTO plans to supplement the 7th grade writer’s workshop with a gift of some sort to enhance the workshop.

8th grade events The T-shirt fundraiser has already sold 100 T-shirts and closes on March 12. Other fundraising events are being explored such as a 50-50 raffle which would need to be online.

Dues and PTO membership has increased by 10 new families in the months of February and March.

Apparel sale Next apparel sale will be in the fall.

PTO board position available The PTO is looking for a treasurer to start in the fall. Thank you Alana for your years of service!

Virtual Author visit Jerry Kraft, the author of *New Kid*, will be visiting Thurston virtually. More details will be announced, and this visit will be available to all students.