

Notes for 1/12/2021 PTO Board Meeting Via Zoom

Present: Mike Redmon, Matt Kuklantz, Pam Schnatterly, Hongmei Xu, Alana Marino, Rebecca Wasynczuk, Karen Rao, Dawnmarie Shu, Alix Stuart, Mary Mulkeen, Jackie Keaveney, Kelly Anderson, Maya Plotkin

Committee Updates

Social Media Thank you to Hongmei and Jamy who worked together to launch a social media presence for Thurston Middle School. The Thurston Middle School Facebook page is up and running. All middle school families are encouraged to join.

Site Council Mike Redmon hopes to have the first meeting of the site council by the end of January or beginning of February.

METCO The METCO-initiated Welcome Club was met with strong interest. 30 new families and 40 “not new” families expressed interest. They were matched with each other to provide a resource for new families entering Thurston. The first event was a well-attended virtual game night, with a second event, an art night, tentatively planned for March. Additionally, METCO will host an MLK speaker who is the president of the local NAACP chapter on Monday 1/18 from 1:00-3:00. And, on February 1 at 6:00PM, Lateefah will be hosting the author of the book “Don’t Ask Me Where I am From” for a book talk. Registration for this event is required. Flyers for these events can be found on the Facebook page and on A to Z Connect.

SEPAC Kelly and Mike Redmon are looking to bring unified sports to Thurston Middle School. This program is sponsored by the Special Olympics and seeks to make sports available to kids with physical impairments.

SEPAC is holding two sessions (1/26/21, 2/2/21) in its “Transitions Planning Series”. This series focuses on the 18-22 year old age group of students who are aging out of services provided by SEPAC. The January 26 session is sponsored by the Federation for People with Special Needs and will explain basic rights. The session on February 2, is sponsored by the Westwood Schools guidance department and focuses on life skills needed for independent living such as laundry, paying bills, and getting/keeping jobs. Information on these events will be posted on the Facebook page.

Teacher Appreciation Jackie and Mary are thinking ahead to the Teacher Appreciation week in May. They are currently generating ideas for this extraordinary year such as a shared food truck with WHS. We have asked Mike and Matt to let us know what teachers really want and need. In the meantime, Maya suggested setting up a crowd source method of fundraising for this. We will invite parents to donate to this event, and in turn, we plan to support the middle school teachers and support small businesses in Westwood by purchasing teacher meals, treats, and gift cards locally.

Unity Club The newly formed 6th grade Unity Club led by Jaelithe Brodeur has identified its focus as assisting homeless teens, and they have identified “Bridge Over Troubled Water” as the organization they would like to support. They have already collected and distributed supplies to BOTW, and collaborated with WHS for a separate BOTW event.

Community Enrichment Ideas Karen has created a proposal for after school clubs on Zoom that are led by high school students, while still being monitored by an adult on Zoom. Currently, she is seeking high school students to lead, and adults to monitor the Zoom rooms. Pam, Karen, and Matt will meet this week to coordinate these potential clubs with currently existing middle school clubs.

Sixth Grade Scavenger Hunt This yearly event is being reimagined due to current restrictions. If conditions allow, it could become an outdoor event this spring, or, it will be an outdoor event scheduled next fall. Matt will find out if this event would be compatible with current guidelines of outdoor group gatherings. We are seeking a volunteer to take this event on. Hongmei has two potential leaders she will ask.

Seventh Grade Writers/Authors Workshop This workshop is planned and funded by the school, but the PTO would like to contribute a gift of a book, or writer's notebook for each seventh grader.

8th grade festivities. Dawnmarie and Alana have planned a kick-off meeting this Thursday to address the end of the year plans for 8th graders. Since the 8th grade semi-formal will not occur this year, another fundraiser will be needed to help cover the cost of graduation festivities. The Thursday meeting will consider ideas such as an outdoor movie for eighth graders, lawn signs at graduation time, and the feasibility of using the WHS graduation set-up for eighth grade graduation.

Treasurer Updates We currently have 43% participation of families who paid ***PTO dues*** this year. It's not too late to pay dues!

Thank you to Liz Williamson who oversaw the ***apparel sale*** which raised \$3000 for the PTO! The PTO is currently looking for someone to take the apparel sale over for next year. There was some discussion that we could have an apparel sale in the spring that could act as a fundraiser for the eighth grade festivities.

Our ***snow man contest*** currently has 5 entrants; future snowstorms should bring in more submissions.

Amazon Smile is a good source of passive income for the PTO but it is being underutilized. Alana and Hongmei will work on a flyer to generate interest in the program and post it on A to Z.

Open PTO positions for next school year The positions of both Secretary and Treasurer will be open for next year's PTO. Each position has a two year commitment and provides a great opportunity to participate in the life of the school. Contact thurstonmiddleschoolpto@gmail.com if interested.