PTO Meeting

9-24-20

Via Zoom

Called to order 7:06pm

In attendance:

Beth Herlihy, Barbara Mauger, Sue Johnston, Lori Zinner, Renuka Raghava, Kerry Prasad, Jess Lourie, Steven Telio, Nick Jathar, Shion Walsh, Jen Behr, Gat Rauner, Sandy Cerruti, Xiaodan Xie, Sangeeta Jathar

Introductions

Principal Herlihy overview

Gave a general update on the start of school. Smooth start. Strong attendance for Hybrid and DLA. Kids happy. Teachers doing incredible work – they worked hard over summer.

One COVID case, recommended protocols followed. After announcement, additional checkins with staff, custodial workers. Visit from Ruth Hoshino to check in yesterday. Principal H is talking with parents personally and remains available if additional questions.

Kids are doing an incredible job of wearing masks. In the routine of handwashing. Outside as much as possible. Maintaining 6 feet, and teaching students. Seating charts. Schedules for leaving room. Mask breaks schedule – at least 2/day, and additional breaks if needed.

Communications and messaging reviewed. Promoting community of safety is important. Need to educate and ecourage parents and kids to keep masks on while on the property. Communications in Update on safety pillars.

If any families need help, staff is available

Action items:

Principal H needs to be added to Update. Need to make sure teachers are receiving Update too.

PTO Goals – Sue Johnston

PTO Goal of the year. Want to promote community among cohorts, hybrid, and DLA. There is DLA coalition, to make sure there is equity for the DLA and Hybrid kids. Their concerns are class size, and making sure they remain part of the CS community.

Mostly CS students, some grades are combined. Goal is to have 1 CS community, and keep DLA and Hybrid united.

Room parents – 2 parents per cohort per class as well as for DLA. Role of room parent will be to continue help communicate with PTO, translate PTO messages, work with teachers, but this year, even more to create community, playdates etc. Will try to have 5th grade room parents too. Blurb will go out in this week’s Update. Kerry suggested Pen Pals between Hybrid & DLA. Would be nice for room parents to promote some of the same things we did last year in the classroom, like Halloween crafts etc.

Once parents give permissions in Aspen, then we can share class lists. Maybe roughly 470 parents on membership toolkit.

Should try to translate Room parent document – Xiaodan can help with this.

Action items:

Room Parent signups

DLA reach-out

Volunteers – Sue Johnston

A number of open positions.

* MCF is a priority. 3 parent leaders are 5th grade parents – goal is to recruit volunteers for this year, to allow overlap and training with the current team. Even if we don’t hold the MCF in the usual fashion this year, we can probably have a modified MCF, as this is important event.
* Fundraising. Probably will have the Annual Fund as the primary fundraiser for this year.
* Food Service Advisory group – important once we go full-day.
* Update editor – have positions scheduled for the year.
* Japanese and Mandarin translators

CAS Report – Kerry Prasad and Steve Telio

CAS has a director, who is NPS employee. CAS leaderhip met with her. The Asst Superintendent of Elementary Education requests schools delay CAS programs until Jan 2021. Wants to give time for students to settle in. And to make sure there is equity between Hybrid and DLA.

1200 DLA students, who don’t have PTO, and are mixed classes – not clear who funds CAS for these. Maybe have 1 CAS program per grade? CAS is usually 70% of PTO budget. Programs are available on-line, and need to find programs that translate well into on-line program. Do we want to have more Zoom programs? We can spend $80/student, and where to spend this money? Additional supplies being sent to DLA kids. Equity guidelines may change again next year. If there is single program that is city-wide, there may be many classrooms, so might be presented over time which could be challenging. Someone pointed out that there are a lot of other programs offered online in the era of COVID, that we could potentially use and fill in with, like museum tours, doodles, concerts etc. We reviewed other activities. Could try to do some outdoor activities, to bring people together. Would DLA families be interested in joining if outdoors? Could try to have more online activities like bingo night etc.

Board should consider and update Kerry and Steven. Sue requested list of program options.

Activities – Lori Zinner

* Picture Day – individual photos will be taken. Cohort A 10/20, B 10/15. DLA 10/17 (Sat). Coffee Pond has safe protocol. Plan to do additional photos, and then class photo will be composites. Discussed doing drone for 5th grade photo.
* Understanding our differences – for 3rd, 4th, 5th graders. All online platform. No longer need parent volunteers to run stations.
* Annual Fund – some costs may be less, such as no CAS for first half of year, but still have a lot of fixed costs. Some other fundraiser may not happen - raffle may not be an option depending on state of the pandemic. Other gatherings where there is some fundraising will not happen.
* Halloween pumpkin decorating contest (see below)

What are we fundraising for – Lori Zinner

CAS is usually major item, but won’t have for first half of year.

Equity items - Teacher mini grants, library

Non equity items – teacher appreciation items. Community building events like Springfest. Playground and garden maintenance. Some technology which has aged out.

Should have activities to foster community and connections - PTO rising to the challenge in a crisis, and bringing our community together. Maybe PTO should try to focus on community events. But would have to be smaller size and more frequent, to maintain size restraints.

It was discussed that although this year is different, we don’t want to stop fundraising, as it’s easier to just maintain, then start and stop. And also is important to keep people involved.

Could ask people to invest their time, not money; provide experiences and memories; ask parents to invest in your child’s community and future.

This year, focus on investing time, not money.

School wide PTO brainstorming meetings – our Co-Ps will attend. Organized via Facebook connections. Will brainstorm, and pool ideas, and update us.

Ideas:

Activities to foster connections – like small groups or cohorts, to meet distantly.

Chalk the walk.

Appalachian trail challenge or similar – interest picked up near the end and could foster community this year.

Art festival or art auction. Ms. Movilia might have some ideas. Could have spring outdoor art gallery under a tent, and schedule entries. Kids could send in artwork.

Halloween Pumpkin contest – maybe on a weekend when it’s less crowded. Could let DLA kids submit pictures of pumpkins.

Tree stumps for additional outdoor spaces – for kids to sit on. Julie will ask Marc Welsh about tree stumps.

Reading buddies.

Penpals. DLA and Hybrid pen pals. Different classes.

Principal H suggesting seeing what traditions students want to do, and what they feel is important.

Miscellaneous:

Election Day - school is closed that day – switched Tues and Wed. It was discussed this is great, as has always felt less than ideal having a bunch of strange adults in the building on a school day – hopefully this can be considered post-covid.

SEPAC updates – Renuka. Dec 7 – 11.

New treasurer – Nick Jathar was introduced and welcomed.

Room parents are priority!

Commemorative swag – zooming logo designed by Raquel last year. Could consider ordering/selling items for this year

Further outreach planned for DLA

Meeting adjourned at 9:13pm

Next meeting: Wed 10/14