PTO meeting 1/5/2022

Via Zoom

Called to order at 7:05pm

In attendance – Principal Herlihy, Sue Johnston, Lori Zinner, Anne Dixon, Julie Winsett, Mary Ann Garrity, Adam Bernstein, Liz Flaig, Barbara Mauger, Joris Gjata, Nick Jathar, Punam Sharma, Carolyn Virgilio, Shion (Shy) Walsh, Jess Lourie

Principal updates – Principal Herlihy

Testing – teachers were able to get testing, Pooled testing done yesterday. Will get school numbers at end of week.

Focusing on welcoming kids back, and having a fun week. Have planned fun things for kids and faculty every day. Faculty has been working together, supporting each other. The district has also been very helpful and supportive including with staffing needs and accommodating needs of all schools. Some positive cases, some inconclusive cases. Had team to help with the testing today. Identifying close contacts of positive cases - where do people sit, rug meeting longer than 15 minutes, cafeteria seating, who was in classroom etc. Different protocols for those who have opted to test and stay, who is vaccinated, etc. Monitoring closely during lunch, reminding kids of talking level/not yelling, eating outside if over 40 degrees. Was thankful for the staff recognition and gifts before December break.

Annual Fund update – Lori Zinner

$23,450 raised . Had 2% paypal fee on those transactions. Goal was $30,000, but enough to cover CAS and some other items.

Teacher gifts – Lori Zinner

All classes able to gift primary teacher $75. Reviewed this year’s new gift program, with pooled fund for all non-teacher staff ie aides, classroom and school support staff, specialists. We were able to give gifts to ~60 staff, raised $3065, which was $455 over goal – some classes were able to contribute extra. Specialists, Principal, Nurse, custodians, crossing guards, aides, specialists all gifted. Plan to survey room parents, to see how this worked in terms of raising funds. A few room parents expressed families were very generous and the new system worked well. Appreciated the transparency. Someone expressed there should be more detailed guidance for room parents, to make sure people are appropriately gifting, and that monies are being directed to teachers as appropriate; these concerns will be reviewed and addressed with classrooms as appropriate; those who feel passionately were encouraged to help as room parents as well. Overall the new program was felt to be positively received, and staff was tremendously grateful; will further review and adjust as needed for next year.

Big green jumpstart grant – Joris Gjata

12/13 survey and documentation submitted – talked about projection of what to spend. Have not finalized what to spend money on. Finalizing teacher survey. It turns out there is more flexibility on timing of spending, just projections, so can take time for more thoughtful spending of grant. So will have time to survey teachers and get feedback and make spending of money as thoughtful as possible. Joris was thanked for her efforts and dedication on this wonderful project.

Community engagement - Adam Bernstein

Parent who has 2nd, 3rd grader spoke. He reviewed that we are entering our 3rd year of COVID which has had challenges; if you’re a parent of k-2 grader, you have never had a normal experience, never been in the school. Used to be in classroom, read to kids in classroom etc but 50% of parents haven’t had this, despite excellent efforts to keep families and community engaged. People are leaving NPS schools, with rising private school enrollment, and how do we better engage the k-2 community.

Ideas reviewed – “adopt a family” – parents in 3-5 could be matched with a k-2 family. Adam will email group with a blueprint on how to approach this. Will also want to involve ELL.

As omicron passes, hopefully can have more in-person events.

Could do more zoom events, like trivia night, but people might be zoomed out. So might be better to wait until surge passes and can do more inperson events.

5th grade experience – Lori Zinner

Collecting dues, $3660. Raised $1587 from bakesale.

Kerry Prasad had shared remarks, that 5th grade committee will work with ELL committee to explain the usual 5th grade traditions, and explain some of the cultures. Working on yearbook pages – missing some pages, and there may have been some confusion about how to decorate these – will have yearbook team send another email to clarify.

Teacher luncheon –

Scheduled for 2/3. Carolyn Virgilio organizing. Needs dietary restrictions and budget. Buffet style will be fine.

Musical

Actively recruiting for Musical Director. Very challenging given COVID. Will continue to try to work on this but unclear if these challenges will preclude Musical for this year.

MCF

Planning in progress. Have 2 volunteer organizers. Looking into virtual vs outdoor option.

Pet Calendar.

Had many submissions, 39 pictures. Ordered 42 calendars. After printing expenses, raised $542. Thanks to Joris for organizing this.

Misc:

Spiritwear: Spiritwear store is open. Already have 26 items ordered in just the past day, so seems to be a success thus far.

Discussed if we could get spiritwear gifts for K-2 families. We had discussed in the past having items to foster community; did bookmark last year. Could look into bulk order, to see if cheaper, or different company. Some schools did this last year. One school had school tshirts with fun run.

Building project: Need parent rep for design review committee. ?Adam Bernstein.

CAS: April 12 authorfest – will find out which authors are soon

MCAS: MCAS dates will be sent out soon. Will be on computer.

Next meetings planning.

March meeting will be SC meeting, March 1 SC meeting with Dr. Fleishman and SC members on Zoom. Will have brief PTO meeting after this if needed, vs skip for month.

Adjourned 8:32pm

Next meeting - Feb 2, 2022