

Hall School PTO Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. New Business/ Upcoming Events
 - Vote for Officers for 2017-2018 School Year
 - i. Only change is our new Treasurer, Rita King, replacing Katie Lamb
 - ii. Need to vote in officers to continue next year
 - iii. All approved

 - Protect Our Neighborhood Schools
 - i. This group was instrumental in getting support for the new Hall
 1. When other schools could have come out and questioned “why Hall?” and helped us to get the things we need for our school
 - ii. We want to outline the two options for voting on the ballot and how selecting both options on the ballot can cancel out the votes, so it is important to be clear and definitive in the option you select
 1. District 3, where Hall is, is showing the least amount of support in polling at this point.
 2. Melissa will meet with the chair of the group on Friday and get more information

 - Family PTO survey
 - i. PTO will be sending out a survey to try to figure out how we can get more involvement in the PTO

 - Look at grant funding
 - i. Currently offer a grant program for staff to get funds for additional projects they would like to do, but we have not seen a lot of requests, or use of the budget line item
 - ii. We aren't sure why - could be issue of time it takes to apply or restrictions on the grant, but we would like to open a discussion about making the money more accessible to the staff.
 - iii. Currently give staff \$100 at the start of the year for discretionary spending, so we were discussing as an Exec. Committee whether to offer

the funds from the grant program to teachers as additional discretionary spending

1. Barriers have been strict requirements, tying to broader community, deadlines
2. Could the funds be allocated to field trips or special projects?
 - a. We do have the arts and enrichment budget which is a \$6,000 line item and is frequently used
3. Could be a grade level project-based allocation - this will be part of the organizational structure in the future in the new building, and everyone/all staff will be thinking about project-based learning
4. The application itself was not a big barrier, didn't take too much time
5. Options could be: relaxing requirements, distributing \$500 per grade level, or as an additional \$100 to each classroom teacher.
 - a. If we allot \$500 to each grade level, could we request a summary of what they did/provide some level of feedback about how they spent the money.
 - b. Dawn would like to get staff feedback on it, and they do have a two day workshop this summer, with a focus on project-based learning, so people will be thinking about this, and knowing they have funding available for these ideas would be helpful as they are thinking about these projects.
6. Next steps: Dawn to bring to the staff, this would likely be for 17/18 school year as we will likely need to reevaluate how to allocate funds for 18/19 as we expect to see higher costs for teacher needs.
7. There is value in having funds available for exceptional projects and it is exciting to think about as something the PTO provides rather than just the classroom supply level.
 - a. The challenge is balancing having that funding available with making it accessible and having it be used by teachers as a lot of money is left on the table annually.

- b. Perhaps time in the professional development work could be dedicated to writing applications for these types of projects.
- o Looking forward: goals for next year does our budget reflect this?
 - i. Walkathon just brought in about \$6500, in addition to the 5K and the Calendar raffle we have had great fundraising

3. Hall Updates from Dawn

- o Construction update:
 - i. Rolling along well
 - ii. Hiccups in initial couple of weeks because access to the site was different than what was expected so weren't able to get in front of that. But were able to meet with the contractors to talk about the importance of communication on this topic.
 1. Example of this was the issue with the water shutoff and not having enough notice. There will be a neighborhood impact, but they were able to push it off past the close of school to not disrupt school
 2. The new driveway is complete, hopefully paved and available to extend playspace in the fall
 3. Will also have some space in a natural playscape area to offset lost space
 4. Swingset was also at risk due to the water line under it, but the city has said they will make sure it happens
 5. The portable has been delivered. There will be a paved path to the school and a number lock with a security code changed daily for students to access the school.
 6. There have been packing parties so far.
 7. The school will lose water for several weeks so we will be updated on how to access Diane (secretary) and Dawn (principal) over the summer as the plans evolve.
 8. Question - any plans for younger children to learn from the construction/observation? At this time, there are very clear guidelines for whether kids are on site or off site, and so this is still being developed. The foreman of Gorham Sand and Gravel has come into school assemblies too.
 9. And the PTO has had discussions about ordering hard hats (and has) so we can try to work out having site visits.
 10. Groundbreaking is scheduled for next Thursday. Not open to public due to lack of space, though some instrumental community members will be in attendance. One student from each class will

scoop dirt into a frontloader. Speakers, songs, and a school wide BBQ following

- Assistant Principal Search
 - i. Currently a number of openings just in Portland right now, so we want to get in front of the recruiting
 - ii. Interviews happened yesterday - over 40 apps, interviewed 9 people
 - iii. Intermediate teacher, primary, teacher leader, specialist and ed tech interviewed. Mary (PTO) represented parents.
 - 1. 3-4 candidates were strong
 - 2. 1 they are looking at closely and checking references on, trying to move quickly

- 4. Open questions
 - Is there still funding available for 2nd grade swimming to continue next year? Yes
 - i. Will it be expanded? Not discussed yet, but we would like to see something happen for the other grade levels that do not get the larger scale events (like swimming, Augusta for 4th grade, 5th grade trip)
 - ii. Overview of other projects we fund- 6 weeks of swimming for each 2nd grade class, 4th grade trip to Augusta, 5th grade leadership trip
 - 1. PTO does fund a lot of enrichment activities, always happy to share where the funds are spent

- 5. Overview of New School Organization from Dawn
 - Overarching theme - how do we create one Hall community?
 - i. Sought to identify what was different and what was common between the two programs?
 - ii. Four pillars:
 - 1. Multi year relationships
 - 2. Project based learning
 - 3. Smaller community feel
 - 4. Strong community engagement
 - iii. 117 parents responded to the survey - top themes emerged
 - 1. Integrated project-based learning
 - 2. Community involvement
 - 3. Arts
 - 4. 2 year looping structure
 - 5. Shared students among two levels
 - 6. Departmentalized content
 - iv. Overview slide deck available on Hall website
 - v. New Hall will have looping, project and vertical team, Integrated project based curriculum
 - vi. What does it look like?
 - 1. K/Pre-K teams
 - 2. 3 ½ looping classes, one multiage

3. Same for $\frac{3}{4}$
4. Grade 5 would be its own grouping, with departmentalized content, so students will get used to different teachers as they prepare for middle school
5. First couple of years, focus will be on grade level teams for staff; the following two years focus will move to project teams, with a mix of smaller focus on vertical teams as well over time
6. Want to consider opportunity for shuffling between grade level teams as needed to address any unmet needs as needed
7. Questions:
 - a. What if there is more desire for multi-age classrooms?
 - i. Work in progress, have this structure as a starting point, and can adjust as preferences and needs emerge
 - b. Do Many Rivers parents get preference for multi-age classrooms?
 - i. This hasn't been decided yet, as it is a sensitive balance and many MR students/families are neighborhood families.
 - ii. There will be some type of multi-age relationship through each vertical
 - c. Is there an element of choice with which team, or is it more that the school will assess student needs and placement based on what is a good fit?
 - i. Can't have teacher choice because it can't be done in a fair and equitable way.
 - ii. Goal is to work so closely together that the teacher or pillar shouldn't have a significant difference on the student experience
 - iii. Goal is to create the best learning communities possible
 - d. But can parents opt in to multi-age?
 - i. TBD - if there is more demand than slots, then there may be a lottery, or if the demand is great, we could expand
 - e. What type of change will be happening next year?
 - i. None - no one has been moved out of Many Rivers for next year. Demand is down so some children have moved out of neighborhood into MR program.
 - ii. The district is giving teachers two paid development days this summer and they are trying to define one project for each grade level. Also want to discuss definition of community engagement at Hall School.

- f. Could the preference for placement be placed on the parent input form that goes home as classroom assignments are being filled out?
- g. Teacher comments - a lot of thought and collaboration has gone into the plan as it has been developed.
 - i. This plan has been based on survey feedback and enrollment trends.
 - ii. From a teacher perspective, two years vs. three years looping is easier to master
- h. Can current Many Rivers students out of district continue to attend Hall, and can their siblings as well?
 - i. Yes. But there may not be other out of district students coming in the way they have - will be treated as the typical districting happens currently.
- i. What does it look like for students currently in the program?
 - i. Need to discuss in the spring to see what that looks like
- j. Request for communications to parents about what Many Rivers is and how it is evolving
- k. Next year we will plan to combine the community meetings with the PTO meetings to bring about broader engagement across many topics
- l. Goal of the PTO this year has been to create one school community since we work for the whole school