

Hall School PTO Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 11, 2017

6:30-7:30 PM, Hall School Library

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Mary opens discussion by talking about the goal for the year - trying to support the community through the transition to one school and one community

2. Updates from Dawn

- a. Teachers attend PTO meetings to offer teacher perspective at the meeting
- b. In process of combining Many Rivers and neighborhood programs into one community as we move into the new building
- c. The construction is on track and the contractors have been working really hard to create new outdoor spaces for the students this year
 - i. Really proud of this new creative playscape piece
- d. Had two day retreat for staff in the summer to figure out how to be most effective in the new format/community
 - i. Four pillars: small school in larger school, multi-age classrooms, community engagement and project based learning.
 - ii. Four pillars are displayed by the office for feedback
 - iii. Defined "project based learning" to ensure common understanding and definition
 1. Essential elements: kick off, driving question, investigation, product development, revision and feedback, exhibition
 2. Value statement: Project Based Learning at Hall is an authentic integrated experience for students connected to the community driven by student voice and choice
 3. Staff came together and had strong buy in at the end of the discussion
 - iv. Community involvement - Hall School is committed to recognizing and utilizing the strengths of our diverse community in an authentic way to make connections and enhance learning
 - v. Project based learning and community involvement are tightly linked to the school success plan
 - vi. Staff is focused on student engagement because outcomes for learning and community are stronger for engaged students
 1. Decided to put expectations around the school and have them be visible, so when asked what the school rules are, students talk about "Do" and not "Don't"
 2. Proactive framework posted throughout the school
 3. Discussed in class so students internalize and understand how to apply and what it means
 - vii. Growth mindset - people who have that mindset view challenges as an opportunity, mistakes as something you learn from. Fixed mindset would be someone who believes that you are born with the skills you have, etc -

no focus on growth, limiting. Growth mindset is an uncomfortable way to be.

1. Metaphor - baby learning to walk. No baby ever learned to walk without falling down
 2. Being socialized widely, using common language
- viii. Playground funding
1. Mix of pre-fab and natural playscape
 2. Have some city/state funding, but also have a 3rd area that needs to have private funding
 - a. Will be reaching out to businesses for funding, would also like to partner with PTO
 - i. Funding will need to be mostly in place this year at least in terms of funding sources since there are some requirements in place for the state to sign off
 - ii. Will be seeking information from the PTO in terms of what we are able to support
 - iii. Reading garden is one area they would need assistance with, also with labor as someone funded some materials
 - iv. Going to sell some of the furniture/doors etc that were recovered from the wing torn down as a fundraising opportunity. This will be a small pilot, if it goes well, will seek to do the same as the rest of the building comes down

3. Review and Vote on Budget

- a. Changes in Fundraising Events
 - i. 5K needed more time and support to happen, so was moved to the spring
 - ii. Walk-a-thon is now moved to early October to balance this out
 - iii. No catalog sale
 - iv. Currently have a budget surplus, our projected expenses are a couple of thousand more than our expected revenue
 - v. Walkthrough of budget
 1. Plug for assistance with the Book Fair - always in need of volunteers and an easy way to help out with little effort
 2. Introducing a read a thon vs. catalog sale - perhaps tying in with Read Across America day, more details TBD
 3. Calendar raffle was new last year, and quite successful, low effort; can begin soliciting donations now
- b. Changes to Mini Grants program
 - i. In the past, lots of funds were left on the table unspent, and we've spent time trying to sort out the barriers to accessing funds; for the past several months have spent time brainstorming how to make the funds more accessible to teachers

1. As a solution, we've opted to allow for a pocket of money for each grade level to support the project based units of work, which works out to about \$500 for each grade level roughly
2. Teacher input - the \$500 may not be enough to actually do a full project based unit
3. The goal is to get that funding into teachers' hands more easily than it has in the past - no specific restrictions on what the funds are to be used for, as long as they go toward the project unit
4. Concern that the shift may be inhibiting plans that are already in the works for the mini grant program as teachers have had access in the past
5. Discussion of whether to combine the mini grants with integrated arts enrichment funds - but want to maintain equity with the project based funding, as well as allow for flexibility with the enrichment funds
6. Suggestion that we should utilize the community more for projects and resources, talk about fundraising going directly toward a specific project or need in order to drum up engagement and take some effort off the teachers

ii. Motion to approve shift to project-based funding instead of mini grants by Katie Lamb, seconded by Audrey

1. Vote is to approve this change

iii. Motion by Mary to approve the budget as it is presented with this one change

1. Motion seconded by Melissa
2. Budget is approved for 2017/2018 year

4. New Topics/Upcoming Events

- a. Hall Community Potluck
 - i. Dishes assigned by last name (i.e. appetizers for A-F, etc.); sign up genius to be utilized for sign ups
 - ii. PTO will provide drinks
 - iii. Entertainment ideas being collected
- b. Happy Wheels
 - i. Upcoming, communications will come out
 - ii. Community event - people outside of hall can attend
- c. Walk a thon
- d. Communication Systems
- e. Room Parents
 - i. 8 people have responded so far
 - ii. 7 people willing to help with Thursday folders
 - iii. Several people willing to translate
 - iv. Room parents could be a point of communication for projects and needs within the classrooms

- v. Newsletter will communicate which rooms are still in need of room parents
- vi. Meeting minutes link to be distributed in the newsletter as they are posted