

MINUTES

Towanda Elementary

11/14/2022

In Attendance

Lyndsay Sellitto	Heather Fermon	Brandi Rockwell	Andi Sarff	Stacie Lange
Marlys Bennington	Hailey Morey	Brian Brennan	Kristine Koerner	Naomi Arndt
Megan Weber	Penny Brandt	Sarah Nix	Michelle Panizzi	

Update from Mrs. Bennington

- Thank you for the bagels and cream cheese breakfast/lunch! We appreciate you thinking of us! Thanks, also, to those who joined us for our costume parade and parties on October 28th! It was great to see so many families! The parties were a huge success because of all of you!
 - o November 14th-18th - Unstoppable Week - Healthy Living/Safe Medication - 3 Lessons in each grade.
 - o November 14th - Happy Camper Day - Wear Flannel
 - o November 15th - Power Napper Day - Wear Your Pajamas
 - o November 16th - No Couch Potato Day - Wear Workout Gear
 - o November 17th - Bookworm Day - Dress Like a Book Character Who Makes You Happy
 - o November 18th - Dancing Fiend Day - Wear Spirit Wear & Dance
- November 23rd-25th - No School - Thanksgiving Break
- Young Authors - Information and guidelines were sent home to families. We are looking forward to reading our students' books!
- Be sure to check out our Towanda Times newsletter each month. Some of the highlights are:
 - o Important Dates
 - o Math Vocabulary Word for each week - Be sure to quiz your child on these words!
 - o School Improvement information
- At conferences, you should have received information about your child's reading level, as well as information about the level they should be reading at by the end of the school year. Keep reading at home! We appreciate all you are doing to help your child(ren) become better readers!

Staff Appreciation/Xmas Gifts

- Thanks to those that volunteered to coordinate a month. September was fall themed. October was bagels. Penny to handle November. Remember to submit receipts for reimbursement but please reach out to Naomi for copy of tax-exempt letter before making purchases
- Debated giving staff one bigger gift card vs smaller gifts everyday the week before Xmas break Teachers don't appear to have a preference. Michelle, Andi, Sarah and possibly Naomi to handle

- Andi had suggestion of providing teachers with quota of tickets and letting them bid on buckets that represent a certain prize/gift card. Maybe idea for teacher appreciation

Character Gram Store

- Sign up genius went out for additional December volunteer, and we have enough volunteers now
- Heather will work with Mrs. Bennington on coordinating an email to go out letting parents know about Amazon wish list items for December store. Goal is for each student to be able to purchase 2 items. All items will be 10 character grams. Mrs. Lange thinks all students should have enough character grams to shop at that price point. There was no November store.

Budget

- Approved 3 teacher grants (Scholastic News Magazine, chair pockets & mini lesson books)
- Dine to Donate 11/15 at Chipotle. Earned \$303.80 with Chuckie Cheese fundraiser.
- \$1503.47 deposited so far for Un-Raiser. Will also receive \$350 in matching gifts from State Farm and Country.
- Sam's Club. Membership was purchased. There are 2 cards we can use. Naomi & Heather volunteered to keep the cards for now.
- Heather mentioned a possible increase needed in budget for Character Gram Store.
- Budget Balance:
 - Beginning Balance 10/3/2022 \$8,933.52
 - Spent: (1,914.49)
 - Received: 3,787.27
 - Ending Balance 11/14/2022 10,806.30

Deck the Halls November 29th 6-8:00 PM

- Michelle/Lyndsay coordinating. Will be held in gym.
- Working to get cookies donated. If not, we will purchase from Sam's Club. Need 100 cookies and need ingredient list for parents to look over that night if there are concerns.
- Betsy & Darcy will take cards to nursing homes.
- 10 volunteers from fraternity will help on the 29th.
- During event a few parents usually hang the paper chain.
- Penny volunteered to help with cleanup. Others are welcome to help with setup/clean-up, but we are probably ok with current volunteers.
- Sarah & Heather will work together to have Xmas playlist playing in the gym.

Mike Thomas – Towanda Lions Club

- Former Unit 5 teacher and now retiree Mike Thomas from the Towanda Lions Club attended the meeting to discuss the Lions Club need for new members. Currently only 18 members and the average age of the members is in the mid 70's. The Lions Club was formed 100 years ago and was started to help people who need eyeglasses. The Club has expanded to include assistance with providing hearing aids and in bigger cities vaccines are provided.
 - Bloomington lost their Lions Club a few years ago due to lack of members. There is concern that the Towanda Club will also dissolve if new members don't join soon. Locally the Club provides

Holiday Meals for families in need. They volunteer to clean a portion of a local highway. They provide snow cones at Towanda Elementary to students each year. They support the Towanda Library and provide scholarships to local students. Mike shared a story where Mr. Vogel (former Towanda principal) reached out to him on a Monday about a student who needed glasses and by Thursday she had a pair.

- The group fundraisers throughout the year. They typically have a ham & bean dinner and do candy sales, but Covid has cancelled both in recent years. Hope is to have the dinner this year & restart candy sales next year. They also have spare change containers located in various spots around Towanda and usually get a nice return.
- Mike is encouraging anyone 21 and over who is interested in the Lions Club to please attend a meeting and just see what being a member is like. The Club meets the 2nd Thursday of the month. A meal is provided by Club members each month. Some members join virtually due to mobility issues so that option is available. \$60 fee to join the club. Please reach out to Mrs. Bennington or Mike at 309-838-7628 for more information.

General

- Accessible Playground: Darcy researching but not in attendance. Can discuss at later meeting.
- Family Volunteer Day is still being looked at. Midwest Food Bank will probably be location.
- Michelle attended the PTO president lunch. Key takeaways: Unit 5 has a contract with Pepsi. Pepsi products or water can be served at Unit 5 or school events. Other brands of pop/soda may not be used. No inflatables are allowed at events if a child goes inside the inflatable.
- Winter Activity Day will be 12/16. Theme is Winter Wonderland. Look for an email requesting parent volunteers from 8:15-11:00. 8 stations with crafts, reading and other activities will be offered. If requested PTO will provide a snack. Students can wear pajamas and will have movies in the afternoon.
- Discussed forming a Gofer List for teachers to utilize. Will provide teachers with a “runner” to bring items to school as needed since teachers don’t always have the time to pick up items (think donuts, dilly bars, etc.) during the day. Hailey will be the point person for staff to reach out to when something needs picked up. Volunteers will be requested. Initial idea is to have a group text where Hailey will send out date/time of runner needed.
- Book Fair will be December 5th-9th. Students will shop during IMC. Family Night is 12/6 from 5-7:00.

Next Meeting

December 5th at 6:00 pm
