

## **Birch Lake Elementary PTA Meeting**

### **November 21, 2023**

**Members in Attendance:** Davin Mickelson, Krista Mickelson, Tracy Kelly, Beth Schickert, Brian Griebenow, Mindy Thorson, Eric Thorson, Julian Stanke, Michelle Gratz, Melissa Altringer, Kelly Taucher, Ben Ferin

**Guests in Attendance:** - Jessica Ellison, Hunter Mickelson

**Meeting Called to Order:** 6:03 PM by Mindy

**Review of Last Meeting's Minutes:** Approved as submitted

#### **School Board Report:** *(Jessica Ellison)*

- Updates on construction projects around the district
  - All bond referendum projects on track for completion by 1H 2025
  - North Campus: unified HS to open in Fall 2024. First time unified 9/10 and 11/12 in 40 years. Unified campus enables new courses, such as Percussion Ensemble, which has been approved
  - South Campus: "Mariner Middle School"
  - Sunrise Park: district center, early ed, senior center
  - Normandy Park: new food shelf
- School board election next year
  - Changed to even year elections – greater turnout
  - 3 seats open
  - Need to live in district boundary

#### **Principal's Report:** *(Julian Stanke)*

- Student Council has been really active this year! Continuing weekly morning announcements via Live Google Meet and it's going great!
- Winter Clothing Drive – Dec 14 deadline. Contact Julian with any questions
- Kelly Rivers has been updating live spreadsheet for daily updates to teachers. There's now a section for PTA updates. Contact Kelly with any content for the daily updates.
- Requested feedback from PTA members, contact Julian with additional thoughts:
  - Weekly newsletter: declining views (started 400-500, now ~150). Any feedback for improvement or to increase viewership? Too frequent? How do we make it a more effective communication channel?
    - Can we add "headlines" to email body vs. having to click on the link?
    - Lots of different communication channels: SchoolMessenger, SeeSaw, ParentVue, general emails. Can we consolidate?
  - Pickup/dropoff improvements: general safety issues, need improved flow as cars

getting backed up or cut off, primarily due to cars stopping

- Only 2 gen ed buses for the school
- Otter had good flow: if cars wanted to stop/get out, use parking lot; otherwise couldn't exit car in dropoff line.
- Julian to connect with church to ask if any options to utilize their lot and/or driveway
- Right turn only out of parking lot?
- Initial discussions: for spring conferences, will PTA sponsor food / beverages for teachers, who are taking additional time/evenings from their schedules. Will revisit in later meeting

**Teacher's Report:** (*Brian Griebenow*)

- Mr. G going on parental leave for 6 weeks, likely late January to early March
- PTA substitute / coverage TBD
- Color Run: no update
- Sky Zone: end of year activity for all 5<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Last year: ~35 participants, \$17 per student, covered by grant money, bus was also covered
  - Would like to ask for grant money, maybe not grant money
  - Should reach out to other elementary schools feeding into Mariner (Sunrise)
  - Will revisit in January
- Skate Time:
  - Collecting permission slips and money. Still working on reporting to see how much has been brought in. Will report out at Dec PTA meeting
- "1 School 1 Book" (*Michelle Gratz*)
  - Feb: "I Love to Read" month. More to come on plans
  - May: Math night. May request PTA funding to sponsor food

**Treasurer's Report:** (*Krista Mickelson*)

- 42 PTA members!
- **Expenses:** Farewell flowers for Laura \$68, Membership dues to MN PTA \$263, Classroom Support check to Mr. G \$250, Holiday store inventory – apx \$1700
- **Income:** Impacks (School Supplies) \$55, District-wide Bounce House event \$310, donation from Christ the King \$950 (PTA members signed thank you card), Theatre Night Out for Addams Family \$9
- Request for donation for staff holiday party – will pledge \$500
- Vote to use donations to raise Staff Appreciation budget from \$800 to \$1500. Motion made by Tracy, passed unanimously.

**Past Events:**

- Heggies: great feedback from the event and the distribution, using the “store” style vs. pre-pack. More efficient and accurate
- Open Gym: went great with the pre-set schedule. 30-40 participants, which seemed to work better than when we get 50+. Mr. G planning for next session, contact him for feedback/suggestions/if you want to volunteer. Will likely shorten event to 90min (5:30-7PM)

**Ongoing Fundraisers:**

- [Box Tops for Education](#)
  - Scan grocery receipts with your phone, we get credit for General Mills products
- [Give with Bing for Birch Lake Elementary PTA](#)
  - Search with Bing to earn points that turn into cash for our PTA
- Groceries for Good Causes – Kowalski’s in White Bear Lake
  - Put receipts in the box at the front of the store, donations issued twice a year

**Upcoming Events:**

- Yearbook:
  - Need minimum order quantity for our pricing. Will add yearbook info to the newsletter. Request out to families to send in photos outside of school.
- Children’s Performing Arts: “Elf Jr.” The Musical. Dec 8-17, use code BIRCHLAKE and \$1 of each sale goes to PTA
- Holiday Store – now on Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Mindy sent out email with proposed language for distribution. Need email to families, would also be nice to have 1 page PowerPoint for teachers to talk through with their classes due to new format
  - Julian will send out email to families
  - Instead of vouchers/dollars, will just check off names once each student’s shopping is completed

**New Business:**

- Little Free Library – tentatively looking like spring timing. Mrs. Theissen has three carpenter dad volunteers willing to build it
- Grant request presented by Hunter Mickelson, on behalf of the Student Council, for material to make tie blankets for the Anew program: \$160-300
  - Grant approved
- Ben Ferin volunteered for the Secretary position
- Code of Ethics & Standing Rules

**Meeting Adjourned by Mindy at 7:30 PM**