

Groveland Park PTO Meeting Minutes: May 17th, 2018

Present: Tiffany Dreher, Diane Johnston, Dan Sheehan, Tracy vanNatta, Jennifer Dobson, Becky Pedersen, Susan Tomczak, Regan Fox, Elizabeth Lake, Adeel Ahmad, Sarah Zins, Jen Schlueter, Christine Melchert, Kathryn Wegner, Charlotte Hanley-Jacobson, Shanna Sether-Clarksen, Robert Clarksen, Kristen Sherman, Sarah Anderson, Sarah Murphy, Marjorie Bequette, Kerry Furtney, Heather Allison, Talia Sheldon-Desjardins

1. Welcome and Introductions

Thank you for coming! Please join us after the meeting at Groveland Tap for a social time celebrating a great year working together in the PTO. We want to recognize Mr. Gunsten (4th grade), Ms. Lee (Art), and Ms. John (DCD Teacher) who will be leaving Groveland. We appreciate their many valuable contributions to the school. They will be greatly missed!

Vote to Approve April Meeting Minutes and Today's Meeting Agenda. April minutes are available at:

<https://www.spps.org/Page/11286>

Motion: Sue Tomczak Second: Heather Allison Vote: Approved

2. Review of Past Events and Sharing of Upcoming Events

A. Pandamonium! *First-ever Groveland Carnival*

It was a big success and a great turnout! Big thank you to all the volunteers, parents, Ms. Pedersen, teachers. It was a huge success in community building. Saw lots of Groveland families and families who don't always come to school events.

B. Field Days - First day last week was great, more fun tomorrow!

C. Open Mic Night- Friday, May 18th in the Cafeteria. Signup: 6:15 Show: 6:30-8

If you've never been it's an amazing event, please come!

D. Groveland Family Picnic - Tuesday, June 5th. Volunteers are needed for half-hour shifts supervising the bouncy houses. Please visit the link to volunteer. <http://signup.com/go/zXkJESW>

It's a great event, see your friends, meet new friends. Kids have a great time.

E. Vote for Groveland Basketball Court refurbishment

Groveland Rec center is up for refurbishment by the Timberwolves. We need to vote to win the refurbishment. You can vote once every day through Sunday.

3. Multiage Classroom Idea Sharing - Ms. vanNatta and Ms. Johnston

Teachers shared a handout (attached at end of minutes). When we heard budget sharing this year, it came up that at least one classroom will be a split (two grades combined) due to numbers. Staff member suggested that if this is a trend that keeps happening (last 4 years) in our building, maybe we should embrace it and make it a positive thing about our school. Could make us unique and bring in more families to Groveland.

Staff have gotten together and done research into positives and negatives, how would it happen, what grade levels, how would it be. Surveyed teachers. Overwhelming amount of staff were in support of doing multiage. Concern of taking it on with all classrooms, that would be a huge step, idea to start with just some grade levels. Pre-K and K would stay same. Talked at first about having 1st and 2nd multiage and 3rd and 4th. We scaled it back to thinking about having a pilot program in 1st and 2nd. 3 teachers in that grade level really want to see it happen. Proposing giving families somewhat of an option. Proposal is having 3 multiage 1st/2nd classrooms, one 1st only, one 2nd only.

Benefits

Teaching child developmentally where they're at, not based on age. If it's a child who needs a little extra support, or extra time to learn a skills, they are given that time to do that.

Ms. Pedersen: We're bringing it to you to share, but may take a year to get ready for it and try the following year.

Ms. vanNatta: Upper grades felt more strongly they wanted to take another year to figure out a plan. Multiage classes have been at Groveland in younger grades for years, feel confident.

Ms. Johnston: Instead of having 1 and 2 class as an island, we would be able to be more planful about two years you have a child. Student would stay with the teacher for 2 years. It would be 3 teachers: Ms. vanNatta, Ms. Johnston, Ms. Hyatt. With so many splits happening year after year, we see this as a positive way to address this and grow our school. We have more room for a creating sense family and community.

Question: Would you loop with your class? Yes, in future, you would have same teacher for 1st and 2nd grade.

Less time spent teaching routines of classroom because half the class already knows routines.

Parent: My daughter had Ms. Van for Kindergarten, then she changed to First, we had a really positive experience with having her two years in a row.

Parent: I see opportunities for students to form strong relationships too, multiage connections as well.

Ms. vanNatta: Students motivated by wanting to do what older students doing. Going for 2nd grade standards, if first graders don't hit those standards, that's OK.

Parent: I like that you've come up with a plan to address the budget challenges we keep having.

Ms. vanNatta: This could help us sell our school as a unique option.

As a parent, how would you want us to present to you? How would you see getting to choose?

Parent: It would be nice if you sent an email asking parents for their preference.

Parent: I would want to hear from other parents, what had your experience been with a multiage? Sharing those stories.

Ms. Pedersen: There are some schools that have done this and then pulled back.

Parent: Why?

Ms. Pedersen: It can be hard to get the standards for both grades accomplished. Some parents aren't comfortable with the wider age range.

Ms. Johnston: I think you do have to have a really dedicated staff. The majority of the staff really want to do this and see the benefits. Staff want to do what benefits the children. My youngest was in a 1-2-3 split. Students in first grade tested as gifted after being in that enriching environment.

Ms. Van: Staff have a desire right now to do something positive, get our school going again. Want to be proactive rather than reactive. We have a wonderful staff, pieces are in place to make it a success and make it happen.

Question: I don't know how students are assigned to classrooms. I agree that there might be some parent input based on whether you'd like multiage or one grade.

Ms. vanNatta: When deciding classes, there's a huge team of people who sit down and look at the mix, ESL, specialists, principal. For multiage, think about knowing kids and choosing best environment for each student. Obviously can't meet every need, but do try.

Ms. Pedersen: It's been hard in past few years, can't take parent requests for teachers.

Parent: Can we formalize that in some fashion? Include that component of the multiage or traditional choice? Have parents put down their choices?

Ms. Johnston: Other thing we do in 1st is mix up the kids and see how they interact. When we place for 2nd grade it's not just random, do our best to put kids in best spot.

Marjorie:

2 questions: 1 does this sound exciting to you? (Whole room raised hands)

2. Do you have some concerns that could be answered at a later date? (a few hands)

Please contact the teachers here and Ms. Pedersen to ask questions.

Ms. Johnston: diane.m.johnston@spps.org

Ms. vanNatta: tracy.van.natta@spps.org

Ms. Pedersen: rebecca.pedersen@spps.org

4. PTO Budget Report - Kerry Furtney, Treasurer

Want to remind everyone that this was a transitional year with moving from Friends of Groveland to PTO. We do have money in the bank saved from previous year's fundraising, this year goal to experiment with new ideas and community building.

A. Budget actual for '17-'18

PTO Fundraising '17-'18

Category	Budget	Actual	Difference
Apex	\$19,000	\$14,701.14	(\$4298.86)
Box Tops	\$1160.00	\$733.04	(\$426.96)
Direct Drive	\$7600.00	\$8032.67	\$432.67
Pandamonium	\$7,500.00	\$2,000.00	(\$5,500.00)
Other	\$1160.00	\$733.04	(\$426.96)
TOTAL	\$36,420.00	\$26,199.89	(\$10,220.11)

NB: Budget for Pandamonium was a guess as we had never done a carnival before. After doing research into what other carnivals bring in, it turns out that \$1-3,000 is a reasonable expectation, not the \$7,500 in last year's budget.

Pie chart showing what PTO funded.

Biggest chunk is classroom enrichments (\$15,000, this year primarily music enrichments)

Big piece didn't have in past was field trips. \$7,000 went to field trip funding (otherwise trips would have been cut) hoping to raise a little more money next year towards that.

Teacher classroom grants \$6,285

Other PTO Funded Events \$3070

Unpaid school lunches \$1,000

PTO Expenses \$1,000

What is included in "Other PTO Funded Events"?

*Other PTO Funded Events K Orientation \$175.00 Open house \$175.00 Marketing \$700.00 Student Leadership \$460.00 Food for Teachers and Family Events \$560.00 Garden Maintenance \$200.00 Directory \$350.00 5th Grade Picnic \$150.00 Volunteer Breakfast \$300.00 TOTAL \$3070.00

B. Sharing and vote to approve budget for '18-'19

Passed around proposed budget for next year. Kind of same as this year. We have included field trip fund anticipating paying for this. This budget is planned to run about \$4000 negative, using money in the bank.

Understanding full well that running \$4k over budget isn't a good longterm plan. We're in a shift demographically in the school, fundraising is tied to parents' income. We are still learning and not setting unrealistic expectations. Trying to always be inclusive and keep our community in mind. Goal is to spend what you've brought in and have a little in reserve as emergency fund.

Parent: I just wanted to say how awesome the carnival was! Thank you Heather.

Question: I know we've hired a science teacher. If we had art and music specialists and integrated science in the classroom, could you eliminate the need to fund \$11K in enrichments?

Marjorie: There are great Science enrichments too, if we didn't have a science teacher we would probably want to have science enrichments.

Parent: As the library staff, that \$500 we get from PTO is all we have for replacing materials and getting new materials. I understand both as a parent and as a staff, what these dollars mean. When you look at library books that will last, they're \$30 a book. We also benefit from Scholastic book fair. This is the only experience some of our kiddos have at a library.

Biggest picture on the budget--it's really important for parents to know that those dollars are being spent in a really positive important way. As we're all looking at ways to be involved and support the school. If you were a person who thought the carnival was amazing and I know how it could be even better, please join the carnival committee. We've had a grant writing position that has been underutilized. This could be a way to gain more \$. The money was very very well spent but we could use twice as much!

Parent question: How can we spread this word to the wider community?

Important to have positive talk. Adeel's been helping a lot with having an online presence. Really comes down to parent to parent conversations. Spread the word and encourage people to ask us questions. These enrichments are really important and are essential for a well-rounded education. Maybe we can do some infographics of what was raised this year and how it got spent.

Ms. Pedersen: How can we get more parents, spread the word, maybe have speakers from district?

If you want to see enrichments in action, 4th grade is doing a residency with a DJ.! They are presenting tomorrow.

Need to vote to approve next year's budget.

Question: What do we have in the bank? \$48k

Next year planning on going \$4k over what we think we will raise.

Can I get a motion to approve the budget for next year?

Motion: Sue Tomczak Second: Christine Melchert Vote: Approved

5. PTO Executive Position Elections '18-'19

Vote to elect President, Vice President, Fundraising Chair and Co-Chair, Treasurer and Co-Treasurer

Nominations:

President: Sarah Murphy

Vice President: Karl Talcott

Treasurer: Kerry Furtney Co-Treasurer: Talia Sheldon-Desjardins

Fundraising Chairs: Jen Schlueter, Heather Allison, Charlotte Hanley-Jacobson

All approved! Excited for this new group!

6. Principal's Report - Ms. Pedersen

A. Budget Update

Projected enrollment is down from the numbers I gave you before. District made a mistake .With pre-K we're projected at 438, this year 470. That's why they cut a teacher.

Grade	Projected	class size range	fte
K	78	22-26	3
1	68	22-27	2.5
2	68	22-27	2.5
3	54	22-27	2
4	58	25-29	2
5	72	25-29	3

Question: What happens if we have too many for 3rd and 4th?

Ms. Pedersen: That would be great, they'd have to give us another teacher. This is based on projections of how many kids stay. In past years, we had more flexibility. Placement keeps a lid on class sizes to class size max, but if we all of a sudden had a lot of our own kids returning, they can't tell them to go to a different school. They would staff us for more people if more kids stayed.

Question: If they go one student over, will they give another teacher?

Ms. Johnston: There isn't a range anymore, it's a hard cap. Can't go over.

Question: Are there any grades that are closed at the placement office? Yes, 3rd, 4th

It really depends how many kids walk in the door in September.

Question: If they are wrong with your numbers, and more 3rd/4th grade kids stayed, what would happen?

Ms. Pedersen: We would have to hire a teacher in September.

Groveland's proposed budget

General fund: \$1,703,317

I went back to the district and told them we didn't have enough money. They didn't give me another teacher, they gave me an extra \$30,000 with the intention of using it towards our behavior intervention specialist.

\$2,607,380

\$2,556,523 salaries

31,878 materials/instructional

6,315 ipad/accessories

2,000 substitutes

10,664 extra curricular (lunchroom, testing coordinator)

All in all we lost one classroom teacher, but we were able to retain the other positions we had in the school.

Question: Our enrollment this year is 470. What did they project a year ago?

Ms. Pedersen: They are very close, last year projected 471.

B. School Continuous Improvement Plan approval (SCIP)

It's on the web at scip.spps.org.

We had an area on reading, math, and behavioral. A lot of this is written for staff development for teachers, written for Title 1 for government purposes. It looks complicated, but plan is for staff development and guides what we do with the children.

This next school year we're going to work on Guided Reading, small group instruction in reading. District will provide workshops for the whole district, we will get training. To help students read in depth, work on comprehension.

Math review, will work on in depth. 15 minutes in math class to review and remember things learned.

PBIS- school behavior plan. We have worked on zones of regulation within our behavioral plan. How are they feeling, what can they do to adjust their thinking in a specific situation? Want to be a trauma informed staff, have had training in that and will continue to have more.

If you would like to see it written out, go to SCIP.spps.org, choose Groveland, can look at different categories for it. Has to be signed off by parents and PTO.

C. Specialist Planning - Art or Music Teacher for next year?

Lucky to have 3 specialists here, children have specialist every day for 50 minutes a day. They have had Art, Science, and P.E. this year. In the past, we have had music. Ms. Lee, our present art teacher, wanted to get back into teaching high school. Quickly changed the landscape here at Groveland, which is why I'm bringing it back tonight. We don't have a large time period, this is when people are interviewing and choosing teachers. You lose people quickly. For Science I was able to have parents on the interview team. I can't guarantee that this time because of time frame. Wanted to ask you, are you interested in having Art or Music as the speciality?

I have put it out to the staff.

What has Marjorie heard?

Many people advocating for music. Mixed bag. Some very strong voices for Music, tipping a balance towards music, but not an overwhelming majority.

Ms. Pedersen: We have SPCO Connect program. We used to have band in school, but now it's in EDL program after school, not as big. SPCO CONNECT program really wants a music teacher in the building. If we don't have a music teacher it makes it more difficult, might lose CONNECT Program.

Parent: While some people might be able to take outside music lessons, many can't afford it. Easier to find art opportunities (cheaper) or do at home.

Parent: Music builds school community because families come to the school to see performances.

Parent: The impact of music on the brain, key to expose at young age.

Parent: Do we still have instruments in music classroom? Yes.

Parent: My husband is a music teacher in the district, he knows a lot and I think he would be willing to help with interviewing.

Parent: Students deserve a well-rounded education

Parent: It's important to have a quality person no matter which we end up with.

Marjorie: Encourage you to contact Becky with your preferences SOON, as she has to hire soon. Please know that we will focus residencies into area we don't have a specialist.

7. Summer Program Information - Koami DaCruz, Groveland Recreation Center

Ms. Pedersen introduced: Koami works hard to connect Rec Center, handles scheduling school events at the rec center.
Thank you!

Koami: I really enjoyed the Groveland carnival! This is my second year here, working to get program rolling. Finally have a full staff. Passed out upcoming activity map. If you have ideas of things you'd like the rec center to have, please contact Koami.

Parent: my boys love the open gym, we are grateful for that time for them to run around in winter.

Ms. Pedersen: Are you planning to be at the picnic? Koami will be running games at end of year picnic.

Ice breaker house, after school program in the warming house, games, board games, foosball, ping pong, place for kids to hang out after school, all ages.

8. Motion to end meeting, vote to end meeting. Thank you for a great year!

Email questions about Multiage Classroom to Ms. Pedersen, Ms. vanNatta, Ms. Johnston.

Groveland PTO Executive Committee

Marjorie Bequette, President groveland.pto.pres@gmail.com

Sarah Murphy, Vice President groveland.pto.vicepres@gmail.com

Heather Allison, Fundraising Chair groveland.pto.fundraising@gmail.com

Kerry Furtney, Treasurer groveland.pto.treasurer@gmail.com

Please contact us with questions or if you would like to get involved with Groveland PTO!

Multiage Classroom Hand-out Shared at PTO Meeting

What is a Multiage Classroom?

Multiage classrooms are composed of students who are more than one year apart. Students remain with the same teacher for more than one year. Multiage classrooms are made up of a mix of abilities and ages.

Will my child benefit from a multiage experience?

Research strongly suggests that children benefit in many ways from multiage classrooms (Miller 1990) – academically, socially and emotionally.

Students in a multiage classroom often have a greater sense of belonging (Sherman, 1984) and more positive social relationships. Anderson and Pavan's (1993) review of research from 1977-1990 found that multiage children consistently like school more. Multiage children have more positive attitudes towards school than same-age children. The attendance rate in multiage classrooms is also significantly better than in same-age classrooms. Competition among students is replaced with a sense of community.

“Students in multi-age classes tend to grow at least one academic year in the first year and about a year-and-a-half in the second. Higher achieving students always show

growth, according to Terri Peterson,” a retired multi-grade teacher in Thompson (Colorado) School District.

Second year students know the expectations coming in to the school year, which cuts down on the time needed to create a community from scratch. This, in turn, gives the students more learning time.

How are children selected for multiage classrooms?

As often as possible, children will spend 2 years with the same teacher. Parent and teacher recommendations will be honored as often as possible. We will work to maintain balanced classrooms.

Do older children benefit from a multiage classroom?

In multiage classrooms, all children gain confidence and increase their self-esteem. Without the strong competitions of same-age classrooms, older children are free to cooperate and help others.

Benefits to older students include:

- self-initiated learning, self-management
- self-confidence, self-advocacy
- collaboration skills

How are art, PE, music and special-education accommodated in the multiage classroom?

Multiage classes are considered one class. When students attend Specialist classes, they go

as one class, and they are not separated out by grade level. Special Education teachers and classroom teachers collaborate for the benefit of the children. Sometimes special-education services can be provided within the multiage classroom, and sometimes it is provided via pull-out sessions.

What happens if my child goes from a multiage classroom to a traditional graded classroom as a transfer?

Experience has shown that children who are in multiage classrooms are more confident learners and quickly adapt to same-age classrooms. One positive aspect is that they have had time to enjoy seeing themselves as competent learners.