

PTO Meeting Minutes: October 16, 2017

Present:

Marjorie Bequette, Heather Allison, Becky Pedersen, Sarah Murphy, Erin Jude, Jennifer Dobson, Tracy vanNatta, Charlotte Hanley-Jacobson, Tobie Vickers-Lee, Hrithik Guardhan, Regan Fox, Sue Tomczak, Karl Talcott, Lisa Talcott, Tiffany Dreher, Neha Lang, Robert Clarksen, Shanna Sether-Clarksen, Malik Rahkem, Adeel Ahmad

Welcome and Introductions

1. Vote to Approve September Meeting Minutes and Today's Meeting Agenda.

September 21 meeting minutes are available at:

<https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/4154/PTO%20Meeting%20Minutes%209-21-17.pdf>

Tiffany Dreher-motion to approve agenda, Second-Hrithik Guardhan

Motion to approve minutes from Sept. meeting-Sue Tomczak, Second-Erin Jude

Discussion About Music at Groveland

Goal of discussion is to understand what resources we have at Groveland and the MN State Arts Standards. We wanted to have a better understanding of what is available to students now, so that we can think about what the gaps are and what we would like to advocate for next year at the district level. Goal is information gathering and sharing. Special guests were invited to share about music at Groveland. Parent question: Can you add some history about music at Groveland. Parent: Can we also talk about Well-rounded education concept.

1. Ms. Pedersen: History of Music at Groveland

Until last year, had a full-time music teacher, students would rotate between Art, Phy. Ed., and music for specialists. Last year, music teacher left and budget was cut, were able to afford .4 music teacher, each grade K-5 had music for 12 weeks for 30 min. twice/week. This was funded by a special fund that was cut for this year.

We went with Art, Phy. Ed., and Science. This has also changed over the years based on school numbers, district level funding decisions, staffing decisions made here, some decisions have included parent discussions at PTO meetings, hopefully we learn more and can advocate to the district for the things we think are important for all kids to have at Groveland.

2. Music in the Classrooms - Tracy vanNatta, 1st grade teacher

- This is the first year we have a different ball game due to not having music at all. Students get a good amount of music instruction from St. Paul Chamber Orchestra program. Students learn about instruments, composers, go to performance, also getting a bit of theater. They also provide CDs, music, books that the classroom can use.

- Ms. vanNatta shared about music enrichments funded by PTO.

Last year, Kgn and 2nd grade music enrichments with Brother Ghana, included drumming, dance, singing, history of Ghana, performance. 1st grade had an enrichment through COMPASS, one full week an hour each day, storytelling, culture/information about Africa, call and response singing, drumming, dance. 5th grade does Northern Clay, and they have been doing this for many years, half of cost covered by a grant. Last year 5th graders got guitar lessons from music teacher. This year 5th grade is examining music genres through culture packets, each week artist, musician, studied, put together i-movie, both traditional and non-traditional music that gets into culture. In 4th grade Mr. Lish also did something similar to 5th grade.

- Ms. Pedersen added: elementary teachers are trained to teach music. There is a curriculum available in St. Paul (old).

3. Extended Day Learning- After school music instruction for 4th and 5th grade - Chris Mashuda, music instructor

- This is an instrumental music program. Robin Lorenza is coordinator of instrumental music for district.
- Provides music books and instruments at no cost to students. Levels playing field, don't have to be able to buy an instrument or rent one to participate. Last year had 22 students. This year 37 students are signed up. All instruments belong to SPPS. At this time, it is matching kids to instruments and figuring out what they are going to play. Part is learning to read notes, counting, rhythm, also do some math and reading, 2 performances, January and May. The kids are eager to learn and it is a successful program from Mr. Mashuda's viewpoint. Kids learn the notes as they learn to play the instrument.
- Program is hour and 45 min., two days/week. Usually group kids according to instrument and beginner/more advanced. There was confusion about whether they can be in lego league and music, they can do both.

4. St. Paul Chamber Orchestra CONNECT program -Erin Jude: Director of Education and Community Engagement at SPCO and Groveland parent

- St. Paul Chamber Orchestra has a long-term partnerships with SPPS, 1st-5th grades, different curriculum each year. It is a great opportunity, but it is supplemental, not a substitute for a holistic music education program.
- <https://www.thespco.org/about-us/education-programs/connect/>
- Now have 4 schools that don't have music at all, and also partner with schools that have music every week. Very dependent on to what extent teachers use the curriculum and to what extent they integrate into their classroom.
- Since this is chamber music based, focus has historically been Western classical music. Slowly moving towards including more cultural traditions (e.g. looking at rhythm). This year focus is on identity and how personal experiences shape music. Themes vary from year to year, annual thematic curriculum.
- Resources provided for teachers: CONNECT newsletter, teachers can use it in classroom and integrating it into what they're doing. There is also a teacher supplement which cites the national and state standards in the arts. References activities that connect to standards that teachers can use if they have little music background. Books and CDs provided.
- Experiential component: 3rd week of February, field trip to Ted Mann concert hall, full orchestra concert specifically designed with this theme in mind. Teachers receive learning packets to teach with the kids ahead of time to learn about the music, composer, etc. Preparation makes experience better for kids. SPCO musicians come in and do presentation at the school, answer questions, play instruments, conceptual preparation for concert. Virtual visits with Liquid Music program, pushes boundaries of what classical music is, diverse music. Also Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony visit.
- There are opportunities for kids at home. Kids are always free at SPCO concerts, through CONNECT program parents can get \$5 tickets.

5. MN State Arts Standards

The MN Arts standards are being revised this year. This link provides the current standards, as well as information about the revision process.

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/stds/Arts/>

- This is what is legally required to be provided to our kids. Website is place to look at existing standards to get familiarity. Standards for visual arts, theater, music, dance. They are not required to have all, 2/4 required. Having this knowledge can help us advocate for our school. Standards revision process: there are teachers on committee, public can comment on standards on website. Marjorie-was on the board for revision of Science standards, they do listen to and consider parent comments, especially well-reasoned and specific. This won't

impact music at Groveland this year, but it is important looking to the future. This is how policy gets set.

Question: Is the revision process addressing scope of curriculum or budget? Marjorie: It is only addressing scope of curriculum. But the more knowledge we have we are better advocates.

Question: How long between standards revisions? Marjorie: They are required to be revised every 7 years. Ms. Vickers-Lee (art teacher): our curriculum is very outdated. Change standards and change how it is brought to the kids through curriculum. Visual art teachers very excited about revisions and updates.

6. What can parents do to support Music at Groveland?

- Tiffany Dreher shared about Well-Rounded Education group. Parents advocating for this to the district. Asking what are the content areas being offered, how many minutes, what's being offered in different buildings throughout the district. These standards are legally expected to be taught. This group of parents is looking at what is the actual expectation and where is the accountability. Parents in this group are using the Freedom of Information Act to ask buildings to show what they are doing to meet standards.
- We can't change this year's budget, but we can fundraise, do a great job with direct drive, open up additional funds for enrichments. Focus our PTO-funded enrichments on music.
- Are there other ideas that we can try? Parents brainstormed ideas....

Artist in residencies in music.

Keeping in mind that we need the hands-on piece.

Bringing in cultural diversity in music through residencies.

Question: was the EDL program ever open to more grades for music? Ms. Pedersen: It is only open to 4th/5th district wide for instrumental music.

Parent comment: This situation is not unique to our school. All schools in SPPS struggle with having these experiences and how to juggle budget challenges.

Parent comment: Can we see the list of music enrichment ideas that some parents created? Maybe have connections and could add to it. Marjorie: Yes, we will share this list.

If there is interest in getting a group of parents together to focus on music...group working together and collaborating would be better. Please email if you are interested in being part of this group, to look at advocacy and support.

Erin Jude--Shared 2 resources:

MacPhail--very skill-based <http://www.macphail.org/>

Music Makes Us Whole-<http://www.musicmakesuswhole.org/> group of music educators, non-profit and for-profit organization that supports music education across the state.

Gearing up for if/when there is lobbying to do at the capitol.

What does a strong music program look like in schools?

Parent comment: are there other schools who have dealt with budget cuts and we could learn from them

Parent comment: look at programs in New Orleans, some people to talk to about music program

Chris Mashuda: MPR Class Notes Program, could look into this

<https://www.classicalmpr.org/topic/education>

PTO Treasurer Update

Next budget report will be at November meeting. If you have questions in the meantime, please email our Treasurer, Kerry Furtney at groveland.pto.treasurer@gmail.com.

Principal's Report- Ms. Pedersen

1. Goal-setting conferences

Going on right now for Grades 1-5. Teachers have veered off from usual district calendar of November conferences. They felt it would be better to meet parents and set goals with students earlier in the year. This does set us off from regular district calendar. Pre-K and K families had conferences before school started, so they will conference again in November.

Would like to do a survey of parents to see how they liked goal-setting conferences. In Spring conferences, back on regular district schedule with conferences for Pre-K-5th grade.

2. Staffing updates

The part-time office clerk, Kazoua Moua, is leaving Groveland. She will be missed! We only have one person in the office now, so please bear with us.

Were able to hire a DCD teacher now.

Elizabeth Lake is part-time T.A. for the library, she started last week. The library is now open and kids are happy to be able to check books out.

Upcoming Events

1. Davanni's Night - Tuesday, October 24th

Fundraiser for the school. Bring the coupon that was sent home.

2. Scholastic Book Fair November 2nd and 3rd

Groveland's Scholastic Book Fair is November 2nd - 3rd. Special events include Breakfast with Books and a book raffle during Groveland Movie Night! All proceeds go towards great books for Groveland.

Book Fair @ Groveland Park Library

Thursday, November 2nd 8:30-9:25AM ** Breakfast with Books **

4-6:15PM

Friday, November 3rd

8:30-9:25AM

4-8PM

6-8PM ** Groveland Movie Night **

Online book fair is October 26-Nov 8th:

<https://bookfairs.scholastic.com/bookfairs/cptoolkit/homepage.do?method=homepage&url=grovelandparkelemschool>

Please sign up to volunteer at the Book Fair at the following link. Thank you!

<https://bookfairs.scholastic.com/bookfairs/cptoolkit/homepage.do?method=homepage&url=grovelandparkelemschool>

3. Movie Night November 3rd- Doors at 5:30, Movie "Moana" at 6-8:00 (Come in costumes); Flu Shot Clinic 5-7

4. Fall Festival--Classroom Villages event for Pre-K-2nd grade. All families welcome, if you want to help out on that night, arrive at 4:15. Wednesday Oct 18, 4:30-6:30. Fall games and fun. Kathryn Wegner and Neha Lang will be there organizing.

5. Groveland Gatherings

Submit an idea, Heather will be in touch with how to send an evite. At movie night, there will be sheets describing the event. People can sign up at movie night and pay then or later. Volunteer donor pays for the event, people pay to attend the event and this money goes to school as a fundraiser. Examples: bowling night, walk through the woods, BBQ, adults-only drinks night, host sets the # of people who can attend the event. First opportunity to sign up will be at movie night, another opportunity at the Book Fair in the spring.

6. Direct Drive throughout October

This is one of our biggest ways to raise funds for our school. Goes to general fund and supports enrichments, classrooms, etc. Direct drive ends Nov. 1st but you can turn in later.

7. Volunteer Opportunities

Spring Carnival: Date: Friday, May 4th 5:30-7:30

We need volunteer help. Yes, we want to make money but would really like to build community. We need people who have ideas--email Heather at groveland.pto.fundraising@gmail.com or join the committee. This is the first year of the carnival, trying to create a fun, inclusive event. Ideally, in future it will be a fall carnival. **Carnival Committee meeting November 8th at 7pm in the Library--please join us!**

8. St. Paul Federation of Teachers TIGER presentation: Monday, October 23rd 7pm in the Library

TIGER= Teaching and Inquiring on Greed, Equity, and Racism. Working on trying to get funding through PILOT programs (that is payments in lieu of taxes) for very large nonprofits. 45-minute presentation about how TIGER Team is trying to get funding for our schools.

9. Jump rope for Heart Fundraiser (Ms. Dobson)

Ms. Dobson is the new P.E. teacher at Groveland this year. She has done Jump Rope for Heart at her previous school. Occurs during classroom time, they will jump rope for that class period. Learn about being heart healthy, importance of taking care of themselves, sharing that info with family to encourage them to be active. It is a fundraiser for equipment for gym, it is like a service project. Kids can collect donations, get thank you gifts through Amer. Heart Association. Important for kids to step outside themselves and say who they are doing it for. Event would happen on the last day before winter break. Ms. Dobson loves doing this!

Question: is there a competitive aspect? Ms. Dobson: there are different games and things depending on the grade.

PTO voted "Yes" for the Jump Rope for Heart event

10. School Board Update- Tiffany Dreher

School Board Meetings <https://www.spps.org/boe>

- School Start times are hot topic right now. Latest plan-all elementary schools now at 9:30 will stay at that time. Big concerns are childcare, students waiting outside early in the dark, athletics. Motion drafted to approve school start time changes for 2019-2020 school year. This motion will be voted on tomorrow. It

seems that school start times will change, what is unclear is how this will look. One year from now they will finalize what this plan will be, nothing is set in stone now. Lots of discussion.

- Board meetings always open to all, public comment period is at 5:30-6.
- A. Upcoming School Board Elections November 7th
- B. School Board Candidate Panel--Thursday, October 26th 7pm at Highland Park High School

Motion to end meeting, vote to end meeting

Second-Tobie Vickers-Lee

. Please join us for the next PTO Meeting on Monday, November 13th, 6:00-7:30