

PTO Meeting Minutes: September 21, 2017

Present:

Marjorie Bequette, Becky Pedersen, Kerry Furtney, Heather Allison, Sarah Murphy, Tiffany Dreher, Candice Tonge, Jen Schlneter, Rahel Berhane, Adeel Ahmad, Sarah Zins, Tasha Sambs, Tracy VanNatta, Regan Fox, Neha Lang, Ben Lang, Erin Jude, Roopali Phadke, Karl Talcott, Elizabeth Lake, Heather Henneman, Kathryn Wegner, Kubrura Araya, Sarah Kalhorn, Kirsten Feroe, Hrithik Govardhan, Gabe Wiebenga, Brandy Norman-Wiebenga, Christine Melchert, Sarah Anderson, Shanna Sether-Clarksen, Robert Clarksen, Neela Nandyal, Titus Decker

Welcome and Introductions

a. Parents shared name and age of children. Everyone took post-it notes to record ideas, hopes, questions, suggestions for PTO this year.

b. PTO Meeting Guidelines and Meeting Pace

- We have PTO events and meeting scheduled throughout the year, but parent feedback is welcomed! Please contact PTO leadership if you have ideas.
- Meeting agendas are full and we will aim to follow the agenda and respect parents' time by starting and ending on time.
- If you have another topic that you would like to discuss, please let us know and we can add it to the next month's agenda.

c. FOG and PTO Merger

In the past, understanding/learning about school (PTO) was separate from fundraising meetings (known as Friends of Groveland or FOG). This led to legal differences and more meetings. Over the summer, work was done to legally merge these two organizations. The goal is transparency with fundraising and making it easier for families to get involved. The merger created a new executive board, composed of Pres, VP, Treasurer, Fundraising Chair. Questions about merger? Please bring in future if they occur.

PTO meetings are now following Democratic Rules of Order.

Explanation of democratic rules, should be easier to follow, more inclusive than Robert's Rules, also makes process more transparent, making it clear when we are making a decision or when discussion is ending on a topic.

d. Vote to Approve May Meeting Minutes and Today's Meeting Agenda

Sarah Murphy--motion to approve May minutes, 2nd--Kathryn Wegner, approved.
Neha Lang-- motion to approve Agenda, 2nd--Heather Allison, approved.

May meeting minutes are available at

<https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/4154/GrovelandPTOMinutes51517.pdf>

Overview of PTO

a. How does PTO support Groveland?

Events funded by PTO, community building, residencies for students, art, music, STEM, also things that students do such as student leadership team and safety patrol. The following list was shared on the back of the meeting agenda.

Events and Programs Sponsored by Groveland PTO

- ❖ Kindergarten/Pre-K Back-to-School Coffee Hour
- ❖ New Family/Kindergarten Pizza Party and Orientation
- ❖ Movie Nights
- ❖ Enrichments (Residencies) for All Classrooms Pre-K-5th Grade
- ❖ Author Visit
- ❖ 5th Grade Picnic
- ❖ Classroom Villages/Room Parents (Community-building events and communication network for all classrooms)
- ❖ Open Houses
- ❖ Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID)
- ❖ Safety Patrol
- ❖ Artists and Writers/Science Fair
- ❖ Student Leadership Team
- ❖ Year-End All-School Picnic
- ❖ Classroom Teacher Grants
- ❖ Specialist Teacher Grants
- ❖ School Library Fund
- ❖ Groveland Garden
- ❖ Midwest Food Connection Residency

b. Classroom Villages - Neha Lang and Kathryn Wegner

1-2 parents for each classroom are needed to send emails and organize events. This role is similar to a room parent. This is a great way to get to know kids, families, engage community. It is also a communication role, sharing information from the teacher with parents and communicating among families in a classroom. If you would like to learn more or volunteer to be your child's Classroom Villages parent, please email Neha Lang and Kathryn Wegner at groveland.pto.cv@gmail.com.

c. Volunteering at Groveland

Please get involved in whatever capacity works for you!

Descriptions of volunteer opportunities are available on the website:

<https://www.spps.org/Page/28506> or please feel free to email any of us for info about duties, time commitment, etc.

Yearbook is a new opportunity, parents going to lead yearbook effort this year. List of volunteer opportunities is below.

Volunteer Opportunities

- ❖ Spring Fundraiser- Carnival/Festival - Chairs - 4 Positions
- ❖ Direct Drive Fundraiser Co-Chair
- ❖ Groveland Gathering Coordinator Chairs - 2 Positions
- ❖ Apex Fun Run - Co-Chair
- ❖ Yearbook - 2- 5 Co-chairs
- ❖ Fundraising Co-Chair
- ❖ Revenue Treasurer (Deposits)
- ❖ Volunteer Coordinator/Online Volunteer Sign-up
- ❖ Garden Committee ~ Co-Chair
- ❖ National African American Family Involvement Day Coordinator
- ❖ Lost and Found
- ❖ Teacher Appreciation Week
- ❖ Equity and Inclusion -Co-Chairs

PTO Treasurer Report - Kerry Furtney

a. Shared proposed PTO budget for 2017-18.

Raising funds this year, to spend next year. Started the year with just under \$53,000 in bank, shows enrichments per grade level, totalling \$21,500. Projections for fundraisers, tweaked because we're not sure what to expect from spring fundraiser.

Hoping to raise \$41,310 as net profit. PTO expenses (PTO meetings, garden maintenance, etc.) total \$12,345. PTO sponsored events and groups put money towards Classroom Villages, open houses, student leadership team, \$4,750. Teacher Grants \$7,850. Expecting to spend a bit more than we raised this year, as it is a transition year with fundraisers, comfortable dipping into amount we've saved up.

b. Questions from PTO members:

- Who is given teacher grants and how much do they receive?

Full-time teachers given \$150 to spend in classroom, part time teachers given \$75.

- What is involved in the school directory cost?

\$ used to pay for online directory service and primarily for printing the paper directory copy.

- What are residencies for?

Tracy VanNatta, 1st grade teacher, shared about residencies. Each grade level picks a different enrichment each year, try to have something as a culminating activity, may be art show, performance, so kids can show parents what they've done.

1st grade had residency from an organization called Compass, gave kids instruction in drumming, storytelling, dance, performance. Kindergarten teachers had drumming residency.

c. Vote to approve new budget

Move to approve budget--Heather Allison, 2nd --Christine Melchert, approved

Fundraising Chair Report - Heather Allison

a. Overview of Fundraising at Groveland

Primary fundraisers are the Direct Drive, Apex Fun Run, Groveland Gatherings, and Carnival. Surplus in budget comes in part from transitions in fundraising (e.g. Apex), don't know if we will continue to make as much \$, we have cushion to experiment with fundraisers, want to have events that raise community as well as money.

b. Current Fundraising Events

- Direct Drive is coming up for the month of October

Question about direct drive, what is it? This is a straight donation to the school, which goes into the general fund, 100% goes to PTO. Do we ask for a specific amount? other schools suggest \$100 per student, letter says \$92 per student. Can it go directly to a program? No, money goes into PTO general fund. Goal overall is to give as many people a way to contribute in whatever way then can, we are a Title 1 school. Parent comment that she is happy to have direct drive because it is easy and all funds go to school.

- **Davanni's Pizza Night Fundraiser: Tuesday October 24th**

This is a night where families can eat at Davanni's and a percentage of the proceeds is given to Groveland. It's also a fun way to connect with other families at the school!

- **Apex Fun Run (February/March)**

Students collect pledges per lap or flat donations. But the Apex Fun Run is not just seeing how many laps kids can run in the gym, it's a series of lessons over two weeks, leadership, anti-bullying, all kids participate in fun run whether they raise money or not. In the past two years this fundraiser was a large source of PTO revenue.

- **Groveland Gatherings (throughout year)**

Groveland Gatherings are hosted by a volunteer who arranges an event and covers cost of the event (e.g. bowling night, ice skating party with cocoa, mini golf, fossil hunt, museum visit, learn to knit party, margaritas for moms). These events don't have to be big or expensive! The volunteer donor chooses the dates, location, activities, and size of the gathering. Events can be for families, just for kids, or just for grownups. Attendees pay a nominal fee, all money goes to Groveland PTO.

Please be thinking of ideas to host/sponsor a Groveland Gathering this year! A sign-up will be coming out soon. You will be able to browse available Gatherings and sign up at the Movie Night/Book Fair on November 3rd.

Parent commented that she would like to see some more social nights for parents to get together and build community.

c. Changes to Fundraising at Groveland

In previous years Celebrate Groveland (a parents'-night-out event) was a major fundraiser in the fall, and Groveland Gatherings were part of this. This year we will not be having Celebrate Groveland. We are going to have a carnival in the Spring. We will need lots of volunteers, goal is to reach out to groveland as a whole, create a fun event

that everyone can participate in, and build school community. Please contact Heather Allison at groveland.pto.fundraising@gmail.com to get involved!

Principal's Report - Becky Pedersen

a. Student Enrollment

At 465 students now. Each year district gives us a projection (471) and we are pretty close this year. Parent question: how does this compare to other years? We are down a couple of classes this year. Reason for drop is we had 4 Kgn sections last year, we were running a little low in our Kgn #s, with 3 Kgns we have 23-24 (Max for district Kgn is 26), total is down, it was planned that way by the district.

b. Update on Test Scores

Can go on state website to see scores. 64.5% in math grades 3-5, reading 61.7%, science 55% This is the % of students who were proficient.

Scores down a little bit from previous year, when working with a relatively small group of students <200, we work really hard to make sure students on grade level, if they're not, we're working to get everyone to grade level, look at small groups of students, always asking what are we doing and how we can meet students' needs better.

Ranked 6,7, or 8th elementary school in St. Paul, there are 40-50 elementary schools in SPPS.

c. Parent Questions for Mrs. Pedersen

Question about opportunity gap. Mrs. Pedersen--we are using staff development time to look at that, Professional Learning Community, teachers looking at students who are scoring a bit below and way below, looking to see how we can meet needs, also have plan for students when they are exceeding grade level.

Question: What is our plan for Gifted and Talented at school? Mrs. Pedersen--please come in and talk about individual student, and what needs are, if student is scoring way above, want to make sure student is enriched and excelling.

Question about reading curriculum--use letters--range of reading levels--want to get students at top of level by next grade, have several tests to make sure they're at grade level.

Teachers answered questions about reading--Ms. Sambs (3rd grade) and Ms. VanNatta (1st grade):

3rd grade level range M,N,O,P--on grade level means they're at where they need to be, also comprehension, fluency, etc.

Ms. VanNatta: this is why we went to goal-setting conferences, so parents can see earlier where kids are starting at, and where need to be, if you have concerns, ask teachers what you can do at home.

Ms. Sambs: from teacher's perspective when parents are asking whether child is at grade level, students may be above grade level, but don't want to tell parents a specific letter because content may not be appropriate. Teacher can help child choose a book at correct level and content.

Question from a parent who works for Vastbridge--universal screening tool for reading and math, also used for kids who need interventions. Is Groveland using this program? Mrs. Pedersen--we are just getting it, and we are using it for reading. It's a quick assessment of where skills are in reading, in past used Mondo reading, takes quite a bit of teacher time to give test.

Parent question: Is there a list of different levels for different grade levels? Ms. VanNatta--ask teacher to show you, or can go online and look for reading correlation chart

d. Extended Day Learning (E.D.L.) Gilbert Hale

- Mr. Hale-runs EDL program--Grades 3-5 at Groveland, Tues/Thurs 3:45-5:45, hour and 30 min, come to cafeteria, get snack, Oct 10-May 15
Reading/math enrichment, helps with skill set, different curriculum, Ms. Sidney, teacher for last 3 years, is excellent, students have grown 4-5 points in math, students who ride the bus still get the bus home, pickup get picked up.
- Band/Orchestra, Mr. Mechuta (sp) for 4th/5th grade, kids get 25min lessons, he did great job with kids.
- Lego League-4th/5th STEM program, put together miniature robots, compete, placed well last year.
Looking for volunteer parents for Lego League program.
- There is also community education offered on Mondays for grades K-5, goes only 6-8 weeks.

e. Title I Information- Becky Pedersen and Regan Fox, Title I Teacher

We have had title 1 for a little over a year, called Targeted Assist program. Title 1 funding is determined by % of students in the school who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch. We don't have funding to fund a lot of grades, look at test scores and determine which grade levels need most assistance and provide intervention there. Regan Fox, Title 1 teacher and also hired two 14-hr/week people, licensed teachers. Going to send home a letter about how families and schools can work together to boost children.

Title 1 is fluid system, meant to get students in and out, progress monitoring/testing, exit program when meet goals.

Question: what is our percentage of free and reduced lunch? 51-52%

Question-how many students does Title 1 program support?

Ms. Fox-last year 68 students throughout year by main teacher, additional students will be seen by two part-time teachers

We're looking at specific grade levels (targeted assist), focus on families of students receiving services

News and Events - Tiffany Dreher

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

- Tiffany Dreher-our representative who attends school board meetings, tries to attend one each month
- 2 meetings per month, 1 public, with public comment prior to meeting
Committee of board meeting smaller, presentations occurring from various groups. Lots of parent advocacy groups coming and presenting to board, expressing needs to board
- Both meetings open to public, great to learn what's going on in meetings and perspective of different board members.

Watch regular meetings online <https://www.spps.org/Page/31941>

- Tiffany wants to put in plug for Teamsters (they have been coming all summer, asking for living wage, contracts and budget)
- School start times recent hot topic

October 17th public comment 5:30, starts at 6, next month's 3rd Tues meeting, board will vote on school start time change, most recent proposal, Groveland times would not change. If change in times does go through it won't be in effect til '19-'20
Next committee of board meeting Oct 3

b. Upcoming School Board Elections November 7th

- 3 school board positions up for election. Jeannie Foster and John Broderick up for reelection.
- Oct 26-Highland Park High School students leading forum with panel 7-8:30, hear from all candidates
- PTO meetings aren't on Tuesdays so people can make it to school board meetings. Thank you to Tiffany for attending board meetings and reporting to us. Possibility of impacting board, they are our elected officials and should be listening to us.

Review of Past Events

- a. Kindergarten/Pre-K Coffee Hour
- b. New Family/Kindergarten Pizza Party and Orientation

Both events were a big success! Many new families attended and we are already building community.

Parent Comments

We welcome agenda items, please email them to pres or vp, give us a week of notice if possible.

How are we going to supplement with music, since we do not have a music specialist this year?

Are any Groveland Gatherings already planned? Not yet

12. Please join us for the next PTO Meeting on Monday, October 16th, 6:00-7:30