

## **Murray PTO Meeting**

**Date: Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024**

**Time: 6:00-7:15 PM**

**Location: Murray Middle School Library / Online**

Attendees: Nia Anderson, Becky Cline, Kim Klinge, Clayton Howatt, Jamie Proulx, Ellen Carter (teacher), Frannie Howatt, Jamin McKenzie (principal)

### **Principal update:** Principal McKenzie

- The recent National African American Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID) was great. Lots of student performers and voices. Highlight was a door decorating contest. Theme was those who are impacting history TODAY. Two classrooms chose to celebrate Murray members Mr. Little and Mr. Terrell.
- Murray has completed all its recruitment initiatives. All four feeder schools have come to tour Murray (Como, Chelsea, SAP, Hamline), which totals around 250 students. Ideally we'll enroll 200 or so of those students. Chelsea Heights has one remaining event, a principal Q&A with parents. Other schools hosted this as well earlier in the year. Everything went well.
- We are already 5 weeks away from the end of the 3rd quarter!
- Clayton Howatt let the principal know that there is a possible state arts grant that a staff member could apply for (from COMPASS, Julie Strand), and there is some arts-related money that can still be requested through the school district. Mr. McKenzie will look into it.

### **Student update:** Frannie Howatt

- Ski trip coming up for all kids.
- Frannie acknowledged that teachers should try to prioritize kids mental health more. It would be nice if there were ways to get breaks in the day or scheduled during the month. Could there be a collective day set for a class where kids get a breather.
- Junior Achievement field trip to Finance Town is coming up for the 8th graders.
- Musical is coming up! Contingency plans are underway in case there is a teacher strike. Play is set for now March 22-24.
- Another dance is on the horizon. More to come.

### **Teacher update:** Ms. Ellen Carter

- The teachers are entering into a new Planning/Learning/Growing cycle for professional development.
- The St. Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) union has voted on the first step of approving a strike. They had over 2/3 of its members vote, and 92.4% voted yes to strike.
- There's a lot of information coming out about the SPPS budget and how much money

they have. There was a lot of new funding from the state, many of which was meant for certain areas. The union believes many of its other requests can be funded.

- The union has been proposing lower ratio of mental health professionals to students in the district, along with chemical dependency counselors in our secondary schools.
- The districts proposed they can make our class sizes bigger, something the teachers oppose.
- There are also salary requests and insurance premium requests.
- There is more information on the SPFE website:  
<https://www.spfe28.org/bargaining/bargaining-updates/>. Parents can also sign up for updates.
- A link to Ellen Carter's presentation:  
<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1KEaHis6PdwrCVyyt7FDe6-1dPdJV3CnyCMk2vmScCd4/edit#slide=id.p>

#### **Discussion topic 1: Fundraising**

- Tabled until next meeting due to time constraints.

#### **Discussion topic 2: SPPS budget deficit - Clayton Howatt**

- SPPS has a projected \$150 million deficit.
- SPPS budget is roughly \$1bn, our current enrollment is roughly 32,000, That equates to roughly \$31,000 per student.
- Declining enrollment has somewhat plateaued this year.
- BIPOC students, by percentage and numbers, continue to decline.
- What are the strategies SPPS is using to increase enrollment, as most funding is attached to individual students? TBD.
- How will the deficit affect SPPS and Murray? Mr. McKenzie doesn't know yet but he is committed to transparency with our community. We could know more by late March.
- Video provided by SPPS:  
[https://resources.finalsite.net/videos/t\\_video\\_mp4\\_480/v1707847581/sppsorg/bgmdgsocegqxwqcc77b3/FY25BudgetProcessUpdateforSchoolStaff.mp4?fbclid=IwAR1ftNrpGj3jfEdjNvrhyqJdHcTFEEETc0kTE4GNkGpUgxLvNi7KQuOhv4](https://resources.finalsite.net/videos/t_video_mp4_480/v1707847581/sppsorg/bgmdgsocegqxwqcc77b3/FY25BudgetProcessUpdateforSchoolStaff.mp4?fbclid=IwAR1ftNrpGj3jfEdjNvrhyqJdHcTFEEETc0kTE4GNkGpUgxLvNi7KQuOhv4)

**Adjournment at 7:15 PM**

***Next PTO meeting: Tuesday, March 19, 2024***