

Roberts Elementary PTO Board Meeting

Friday, November 7, 2014

8:10 a.m. Roberts Cafe

In attendance: Alberto Montesi, Ali Pilcher, , Angela Adams, Ann Heikkinen, Anna Kaplan, Arghavan Banan, Aparna Jotwani, Aubrey Pettit, Christine Robins, Donna Scudder, Elan Ghovan Krishnan, Eman El Sharif, Elizabeth Singleton, Emanuela Corradino, Emily Raley, Jana Wang, Jennifer Thornton , Jocelyn Williams, June Williams, Julie McFarland, Kara Niles, Kelly Bui, Kelly, Wehrer, Kirsty McCormack, Lara Frazier, Lauren Montesi, Lauren Bloomquist, Lori Bullwinkle, Lucie Fredemick, Megan Stewart, Meiyee Ku, Melunaz Molari, Meredith Beebe, Paige Castaneda, Pia Weyandt, Qiao Xue, Renae Holman Murti, Rocio Suayfeta, Tom Fowler, Vanessa Engel Irby, Vanessa Wegner, Vera Peneva, Virginia Camerlo, Yoko Ninomiya, Yue Luo and others

Meeting Called to Order	Kelly Wehrer
School Report	Rita Graves
Approval of Minutes	Kara Niles
Treasurer's Report	Lara Frazier
Book Fair	Denise Metry
Auction	Liz Singleton
AOB	Kelly Wehrer
Adjourn	Kelly Wehrer

Meeting Called to Order Kelly Wehrer

8:10

School Report Rita Graves

There's a lot going on! Our fifth graders are knee deep in Exhibition – they are doing research on natural resources, impacts on natural resources due to human intervention. Asking limited resource questions like “Would you rather this or this?” It's that simple.

4th graders are into their project – project showcase is coming up.

5th graders are in the process of applying to middle schools. As long as you are enrolled, they should have everything they require. Last Day of school is Dec 19th, so if you need your records, come well before then. We can't accommodate everyone on the last day.

Kindergarten and 5th graders will do GT qualification this year. The CogAT nonverbal test will be one tool used in the matrix to identify GT students. It looks at logic and problem solving. The CogAT will be held on November 18th.

5th graders must re-qualify for vanguard middle school programs. The CogAT will be part of that qualification. This is not required for neighborhood programs.

Teachers are doing recommendation forms for GT Vanguard. That's automatic. If you need a letter for a private school, please ask early and don't wait for last minute.

Other GT windows will open up for kids 1st through 4th grades - if your kids are not in K or 5th and you want to apply to GT.

Jungle Book – there will be a show Wednesday during school time for a few classes, the actual show will be held Wednesday evening. For this event, for big productions, we do sound checks and prep so we don't open doors until 6:15. It will be a full house.

Q - Can anyone come?

A - We want seats for 4th grade parents but all are welcome

Q – What's our Magnet designation situation?

A – We have been notified we are officially on probation because 20% of our kids must come from out of zone. We are at 16% due to the massive increase in enrollment. To meet the qualification, we'd need to take in another 45 kids.

There will be a demographic study – what is expected over the next ten years. I think some of our enrollment is due to temporary increase in Med Center funding. This is cyclical, so we are not sure of the long term implications. It might be that the neighborhood is just turning over to young families. If that's the case, then we don't have an argument.

More students we have, the more money we get. If zone enrollment stays high, it gives us additional funding.

Comment - PTO can't raise money for employees. That's why we use PTO funds in a strategic way.

We will still be a fully funded Magnet program next year. Then half funding, then no funding of the magnet program. It's about \$350,000 a year. As long as our enrollment stays high I think I can keep the programming even without the Magnet funding.

Q – What will be the impact of no magnet funding?

A – We have a diverse zone, but some of our diversity comes from Magnet.

Beginning of year is crunch time of unknown enrollment. We have to commit to the magnet before we know what our enrollment is. We never want to turn away zoned kids, but this year we had to turn away zoned kindergartners. We can always get kids a week or two before school starts – we have a wait list of 800 applicants.

Comment – This is happening at all the schools in this area.

It's been happening at Twain for several years. West U too but they have already lost their magnet. Both Roberts and Twain are on probation for magnet programs.

Q- Medical scholarships are for 2-3 years. So if those people leave – we'll have space again. Can we roll back into the magnet program?

A - We could apply but it seems unlikely. The magnet funding pool is kept pretty stable.

I have options for filling seats. Right now, all our transfers are magnet. So we will have the possibility to fill seats with other types of transfers.

Four years ago we had to cut \$200,000 and we did that. We'll figure it out this time, too.

Q – Do we want to change the building?

A- We have not been slated on a bond for work. I've been working to get us on a bond. Our building is beautiful and is well maintained. Other buildings are in much worse shape.

Q - Can we rezone?

A - I think people are pushing for it, but I don't know that the Board is moving forward with that.

Q – What happens to the zoned people turned away?

A - Next year they will roll back to us.

Q- How can we know what is happening to demographics?

A – The District has hired a demographer to complete a full study. We also work close with Dr Klineberg at Rice – they do studies on demographic trends in Houston.

Q - What other kinds of transfers exist?

A - IB transfer, principal discretion transfers.

Approval of Minutes

Kara Niles

Kara Niles, Recording Secretary, presented the minutes from the October meeting for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ali Pilcher and seconded by Kirsty McCormack. A vote was taken and motion passed. All in favor – Aye.

Treasurer's Report

Lara Frazier

We are xxK in the black. Those who have reimbursement checks, please cash them so that we can keep up to date records.

Many thanks to 100% PTO team – it was a great year and money is still coming in!

Comment – Don't forget to apply for matching funds.

Book Fair

Denise Metry

Tues 18 – Thurs 20

There will be classroom visits, each class will come in and have opportunity to purchase for themselves or for the library.

Rita Graves will read a special bedtime story at 7pm.

Doing great with volunteers – just need a few slots Tues morning and Thurs after school. We need people to help put the books on the tables. The PADRES will move the books from the library to the cafeteria.

Auction

Liz Singleton

Liz, plus Valerie and Meredith!

Liz – It's the biggest fundraiser for PTO, it's adults only. It's at night, dinner, dancing, lots of fun. Theme this year is Kentucky Derby – a party based around the horse race. You will get a lot of info on theme and on auction over next months.

Right now we are planning for this big event. We are looking for a committee to help.

Invitation to kick-off party for auction will be held at Julie's house. Sneak peek at theme, drinks and desserts.

There's a list being passed around for volunteer possibilities. Examples of volunteer jobs - Can be Day Of – helping to set up.

Or helping to obtain donations - things like purses, bicycles, restaurant gift cards. We are in the process of getting these donations. You can send letters, and/or pick stuff up.

If you sign up we'll send emails about different opportunities.

Final note – we auction Big Ticket items- a house in Costa Rica, weekend getaways, beach houses in Galveston, apartments in Rome. If you have access to something like that, please do come to us – it can be a specific weekend, week or specific dates. We get a lot of money for these big ticket items.

If you work for a business, like wine, or beer distributor, or if they would like to get advertising for underwriting please come talk to me.

Last year we made \$xx. We want your money, or your time, or both.

There will be class baskets. The class baskets are a big hit. Each class responsible for a basket. Food, lemonade stand, 'cook with mom' basket. Each class needs a person in charge. It falls to the room parent if there are no parent volunteers.

We sell tickets to attend parties.

It's inclusive, we want you all.

AOB

Kelly Wehrer

Directory is ready and printed, you'll get it on Tues thanks Camille Jenman and Virginia Camerlo. If anyone can come help Monday morning to help us out that would be great.

Community Night – Sat Nov 15th. The movie will be Nanny McPhee, I hope you can attend. Pasta salad and lemonade are free. Fifth graders are selling items to raise funds for their class trip.

Traffic committee - I want to form a committee to look at traffic and parking in the neighborhood. I want to collect hard data, specific, constructive suggestions. If anyone has any background on that, please come see me or email me. We will count for two weeks how many cars go through Montclair and Swift. And then think about best way to get some solutions implemented. The idea is to present this info to RACs and COH.

Comment – people need to be more courteous.

Comment – people are disregarding the rule of law. We need to get a cop out there. I called the COH every day for two weeks.

Rita – We’ve talked to COH and RACS. We ask them to ticket on the fire lane on circle drive and any illegally parked car in the immediate area. The more they hear from us, maybe the more will come.

Today at 3:15 – polar party stay and play. Come meet us on the stage after pick up today.

Q - My daughter is in kinder – I noticed there were no African booths at international day. And I heard we don’t do anything on black history.

Rita – That’s a curriculum issue. You should come talk to me. Send me an email and we can schedule a time to talk.

Various comments – There are black history issues ongoing, in February, and also throughout the year.

Comment – I don’t know if there is a chess club, but if there isn’t one I would like to create one

Rita – let’s talk. There is an afterschool class, but let’s talk more about that.

Kelly - After this meeting there will be a speaker who will address the topic of anxiety.

Adjourn

Kelly Wehrer

We are adjourned at 8:55.

NEXT MEETING FRIDAY Dec 5th - See you then!