

# Roberts Elementary PTO Board Meeting

Friday, Sep 5, 2014

8:10 a.m. Roberts Cafe

In attendance: Ali Pilcher, Aliya Walji, Angela Adams, Amy McCallum, Anna Kaplan, Aparna Jotwani, Christine Robins, Denise Metry, Elizabeth Grandich, Elizabeth Singleton, Eman El Sharif, Emanuela Corradino, Jaque Corman, Jennifer Thornton, , Kara Niles, Kelly Wehrer, Kirsty McCormack, Lara Frazier, Laura Weiss, Lauren Bloomquist, Meredith Beebe, Paige Castaneda, Renae Holman Murti, Samantha Madero, Vanessa Engel Irby, Vera Peneva and others

<b>Meeting Called to Order</b>	Kelly Wehrer
<b>School Report</b>	Rita Graves
<b>Approval of Minutes</b>	Kara Niles
<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	Lara Frazier
<b>Box Tops/Rewards</b>	Amy McCallum, Vanessa Engel
<b>Culture of Giving Campaign Kickoff</b>	David Heikkinen
<b>International Festival</b>	Helen Belgrove
<b>AOB</b>	Kelly Wehrer
<b>Adjourn</b>	Kelly Wehrer

**Meeting Called to Order** Kelly Wehrer

8:12

**School Report** Rita Graves

Great to see so many people. Updates:

Our enrollment is up this year. It's a trend in the area schools, including Twain and West University. It had not really hit us until this year. We're around 812, it's a bigger number than we are used to. Classrooms not impacted, but how we organize cafeteria and drop off pick up has been modified.

We are in process of hiring two teaching assistants for kindergarten to help with reading support. This is what the teachers requested. We have 3 strong candidates. Doing reference checks, they are all certified teachers but not certified in this state.

Enrollment – we are heavily pursuing proof of residency. We are identifying and assisting proper school placement.

There was the question as to whether or not we have space for one more building. We do have space for one more. We will not uproot kids this year, so the building will most likely go in next year. There is one more place in kindergarten, after that is filled and we need to cap. I don't like to do this but we are at maximum capacity. Our hub school is Gregory Lincoln at Dallas and Montrose.

We will monitor if we continue to maintain high numbers. Our enrollment fluctuates due to what's going on in the Medical Center. This might be a temporary trend based on medical center influences – a surfeit of research money in one year can bring in a lot of researchers and their families. If the trend persists over several years, we may be in danger of losing our magnet program. I think this trend might be temporary.

Dismissal – I want there to be clarity around this issue. Dismissal last week was dangerous for children. Last week there were 190 adults who walked up. Adults were pushing to get their child, children were knocked down. This is about kids being safe. Staff members complained that they did not feel safe.

3:15 is dismissal, but we are bringing kinder kids out early to help facilitate their dismissal. Other classrooms leave classrooms when bell rings at 3:15. We are clocking it every single day. All adults in and out by 3:27 on foot by 3:35 in the car line.

We need to share our limited resources and take turns. These are growing pains. For every person that has complained, other person has come up to thank me for implementing safe procedures

Musicals – this magnet enrichment program started last year. The fourth graders began last week – Jungle Book. Third grade will do 101 Dalmations. These shows will be on campus on our stage. We haven't chosen the Fifth grade show yet. Girls are pushing for Little Mermaid. We hope to be back on Rice Campus for the Fifth grade show.

Student Coalition will start in next couple of weeks.

Talk with your kids about building stamina when they are reading alone. "How many minutes?" "What's your stamina?" Focused, independent reading – one second grade class is at 18 minutes.

It's been a smooth start to the school year – the inside of the building is fabulous.

Q – Pick up: Is there a reason why kids who are always picked up on foot aren't separated out?

A – We've looked at a lot of options. Problem with hardtop is that there is no perimeter. Parents walk up and grab kids, without notifying teachers. Teachers are then not able to be sure about who picked the kid up. That's also why we've moved extended day into the cafeteria for pick up. It's hard because kids are not sure if on any given day their parent will pick them up on foot or by car, for example if it rains.

By the way, you are absolutely welcome to stay on the school grounds after pick up. There does need to be adult supervision, however.

Q – Why is there such an increase in kindergarten students?

A– The increase in enrollment happened two weeks before school started. We were enrolling 15 kids per day. If there was an additional room, we could have gotten another teacher, but there is not an additional room.

Q– Can I sign my child up to be an independent walker?

A – An independent walker means your child physically exits the school on their own and walks home. We have had parents of first and kinder who want to walk home alone. I do not recommend that. Your child needs to walk home alone, unlock the door, and stay at home on their own.

Q – Can you use the separate exit gate?

A – That gate does not have a crosswalk and is in front of the car rider line. Both situations are not safe. And, having more people around makes it risky to load cars.

Q – Was there any work done on school grounds over the summer?

A – Three cheers to Dan Easley. He was a leader this summer, worked with grounds crew to grass muddy areas, it is living still! The area with big oak tree deck – a crushed granite was added. They worked on our gardens.

We had a team review our A/C they have a report with recommendations for humidity. I hope to have us on the list to have our air conditioners replaced this summer.

The entire faculty attended IB training in August. Concept-based learning or written curriculum. We were encouraged to have all science and social studies work in a planner. We redeveloped the planners in a transdisciplinary concept-based way. They worked very hard and are developing a strong IB curriculum.

Two teachers went to Writers Workshop training.

Then, we had a PADRES work day. More than 20 dads came. They took care of three lists we had. They've been so consistent in helping twice a year, that we don't have big jobs any more – for example, there are fewer shelves to be hung, etc because of this consistency.

Q – I feel very concerned about my child's handwriting.

A – Our SDMC has addressed this. It is done in the work of reading and writing. The teachers have committed to putting an emphasis on it. Please ask at Curriculum Night next week how this is happening in your child's grade.

Parent comment – Please note that the IB training for the teachers was paid for by the PTO.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Kara Niles

Kara Niles, Recording Secretary, presented the minutes from the May meeting for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Alyson Rooney and seconded by Denise Metry. A vote was taken and motion passed. All in favor – Aye.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Lara Frazier

This is a two-year position, I am learning the ropes. All committee chairs who have a budget to spend or a fundraising target to meet, I sent you an email over the past week with your budget or target. If you have not received an email from me, please let me know. I have placed the Budget on the tables – It's what we've spent and brought in this year.

Comment – we have streamlined our fundraising on two main activities: 100% PTO and Auction ,and moved away from small fundraisers. However, we also have these two initiatives:

### **Box Tops/Rewards**

Amy McCallum, Vanessa Engel

There are great ways to earn money for Roberts by what you do every day. Box tops are the little perforated tabs on food products. If you see them clip them, or have your kids clip them. We have two collection days each year. We have a contest for classes for which class brings in the most box tops. They are 10 cents each, last year we raised over \$xx.

Rewards – there are some stores that participate – Pottery Barn (for lunch sacks and duffel bags) – put our code. If you have a Target red card you can link to Roberts and we get a .5 percentage of your purchase. Randall’s and Office Depot also have programs. Go online and find out our Roberts code so you can earn money for us. Kroger also has it – but you will need to re-enroll each year online. If you do this once, the money comes in. Shoparoo.com– it’s an app. Take a picture of your receipt and Roberts somehow gets money. I will put more about this on the website once I learn more how it works. We will have this information on the Roberts Front Page (our school newsletter) so everyone can see how to do it.

Comment – Berripop gives back to Roberts on University.

Yes, this is part of our affinity program.

Comment – look for Oran Roberts, not just Roberts. Oran Roberts was a former governor of Texas.

### **Culture of Giving Campaign Kickoff**

David Heikkinen

We have a great team of volunteers. This is my second year. When we get to tax letters, you will see how much I really need you.

Last year we exceeded our amount. Hopefully this year we will receive xx. We have 178 forms, it’s a really good start. We will not have a long letter, just a donation form and simple request. Once class gets to full enrollment, they get a t-shirt and \$xx for school supplies.

It’s the best fundraising for the best purpose. We get money into the school quickly so that Rita has a budget she can spend throughout the year.

### **International Festival**

Helen Belgrove

We had our first meeting yesterday, good turnout. Come to the next meeting or talk to us afterwards about how you can be part. We will be changing a few things up this year.

**AOB**

Kelly Wehrer

Curriculum night will be held here next week in Cafeteria. After the meeting in the cafeteria you can go to your child's classroom and learn how we can support your children's learning.

**Adjourn**

Kelly Wehrer

We are adjourned at 8:55 am.

**NEXT MEETING THURSDAY OCT 2 – See you then!**