

September 7th, 2017

MLS PTO Board Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Stacey Carden, Beth McCarthy, Amylynn Johnson, Carrington Grossman, Carleen Kupcis, Sarah Kelsey, Amanda Beresford, Mike Irani, Meg Franco.

Members-at-large Present: Nicole Group, Holly Stancil.

I. Welcome

- a. Beth welcomes and passed- out agendas.

II. PTO Member-at-large Report

- a. Nicole Group: Introduction as special education advisory rep. She'd like to be involved in the PTO to know what the PTO is facing and to keep up with any issues in the special needs community at MLS. She attends parent council meetings and is happy to be a touchpoint for any questions from the PTO. Asked about getting the minutes for the PTO board meetings. Christina informed the board that after minutes are approved, the minutes are on the website.
- b. Holly Stancil: Thank you to the board.

III. Principal's Report: Mike Irani

- a. From the school: they've had the best start of the school year yet. Hopes parents feel the same. Discussed change of school rhythm- the Tuesday after Labor Day tends to be when the kids settle in and parents may notice the difference
- b. Reminders: Get-to-know-you conference and extended open house are happening this year in lieu of back-to-school night. They sent it out in one mass communication regarding this change, and will send another reminder. There will be a virtual state-of-the-school address.
 - i. Amelia Q for Mike: asks if the change in back-to-school-night is county-wide. A: We are the first school to try it (the county allowed it). Feedback we've heard is that people liked the extended open house. He hasn't heard anything on missing the back to school night, though various PTO members have heard some people missing it or haven't yet received message about it.
 - ii. Meg Franco: Kindergarten will do a Kindergarten back to school night.
 - iii. Discussion that it's nice to have one-on-one time with teachers and parents. New families able to connect with administration at popsicle playdate, welcome coffee, other early in the year events.

- iv. Amylynn: requested putting pictures of teachers and TA's on website. Idea received enthusiastically.
- c. Hand-outs for High School 2022. The VA dept of education will be adjusting education requirements. Parents are encouraged to attend community meetings since MLS kids will be impacted by changes.
 - i. Q from Christina: are they modeling it after another system? A: Irani: doesn't know for sure. Often bigger school systems do get things going. Fairfax and VA Beach do something get things going
 - ii. Q Carleen: Will all three high schools reconfigure? A: That's part of the question they will be discussing.
 - iii. Are they geared towards feeder patterns? A: it's a division-wide movement. So you can attend any forum.
 - iv. Nicole: Parent council has been talking about it off and on all year. Once the details are ironed out, we can figure out what it means for MLS.
 - v. Every Student Succeeds Act focuses on growth with all children. For Elementary school, that can present certain challenges.

IV. **Faculty Representative Report: Meg Franco**

- a. Thank you for welcome back breakfast. Re-energized the staff.
- b. Popsicle playdate—thank you. Great opportunity for new families, and it's let Kindergarten families to do a "soft" open house. She's gotten good positive feedback.
- c. Classroom funds—big thank you. They're appreciated and used well.
- d. Question about movie night and she'll send it to Sarah Parrish Gray.

V. **Round Robin of Board Members/Updates**

- a. **Volunteer Report: Amelia:** Blue sheets went out and are coming back. They're all being added to the drive as she gets them. She'd like to do a semi-regular backpack mail as a way to highlight the variety of volunteer opportunities (so people understand that volunteering isn't only about "body in the building" hours). Also planning to use it as a way to thank groups or people. Will try to stay focused on stewardship. Also will blast committee chairs and board on things going on. A lot of enthusiasm so far from volunteers! Amelia and Carleen are also talking about website and putting up all sign-up genius links for committees, etc so it's not in many different places. Stream-lining efforts and making it more of a presence. Remind people that money, box tops, cookies for teacher, etc are all volunteerism.
- b. **Co-VPs: Carrie/Amylynn:** worked on T-shirt project over summer. Have almost covered costs. Amylynn: shouldn't do IOU's for t-shirts. Sarah: will we need

change in the cash box for the movie night t shirts? Yes, lots of little change. Sarah will get appropriate cash tonight. Need \$100 with a bit of everything and lots of small bills and change, including pennies. People asked about hoodies or socks. Beth: Kate Shegda has said she will keep the online store going, and will work with someone on the designs. Keep in mind, we can do requests that way too. It's popular but we should limit items we order. We can push things along to online store where there is freedom to do whatever we want in terms of design. Discussion about having something specific to sell at the silent auction, and kids market for Christmas gifts. Carrie: we'll get farther with the T-shirts and then it's simple and we can order more. They're relatively easy to order.

- c. **Treasurer's Report: Sarah Kelsey:** there is no line-item for popsicle playdate. The VPs should put it in for next year. It's often not more than \$25, depending on how many people put in for a reimbursement.
- d. **Movie Night Update: Stacey:** Preparation is well under way by Sarah and Robin. They classes voted today and chose between Sing, Boss Baby and Smurfs. There's no rain date. After that is fun fair and Peggy and crew have it all under control.
 - i. Q from Amylynn: She saw a reminder for popcorn donation in Meriwether Matters, but did not see an initial ask. Sarah: that's very important. We needed more popcorn last year. Second other option, have someone come and pop lots of popcorn very early because the popper is slow. Too expensive to rent second machine.
 - ii. Beth and Stacey meet next week with Laura Ege about annual fund to kick it off. We will meet parents who are in development and will ask for help outlining a plan, so we might follow their recommendations. There's a lot of room to grow.
 - iii. Ezone is up and going. Thank Helen for the work she's doing.
- e. **Communications Report: Christina:** Trying to get the word out for PTO and committee chairs to use the email communications@mlspto.org so that both Carleen and Christina receive emails. This is the case for all the positions (such as treasurer). The emails are forwarded. Also working with people (asked VPs for support) to make sure they submit their own wording as communications will provide edits but not content.
 - i. Question from Christina: is there a website guru this year? Communications may not have technical expertise needed for being-the-scenes website work. Floated the names of asking Scott Stolz and Chad Schnell who may be able to help in a pinch.

- f. **Treasurer's report: Sarah:** Thanks to Meg for distributing forms. Not one old form has come back yet from parent or teacher. Reimbursement forms are a little more homogenous to make them easier. People are using classroom funds (including new teachers).
 - i. Ezone (would technically be in report from Helen): next meeting will have more info but registration has been brisk. Administrative costs are rising (nearly \$20000 so far) but interest has been high. Down side is that we switched from QuickBooks desktop to online. Stripe is not compatible with online. So we can't import stripe data. Sarah is individually inputting all of the data. A little easier with two treasurers but there may be a delay in reporting. Talked to the company and it's a bug in the program. If the company can't figure out the bug, we may have to go back to desktop. We chose stripe because it was the cheapest thing that worked on the website. Seems like we should make good money for ezone. Will re-open registration for Fall II.

VI. **Discussion Items**

- a. Budget: process of approval will change because there is no back to school night this year.
 - i. Add popsicle playdate to budget.
 - ii. Difference from last year: it's 10,000 more than last year. Because professional development was never a line item. It was with end of year funding requests.
 - iii. Beth proposes to add \$13,000 line item for prof. development in order to make the budget balance. (It is an earmark for next year)
 - iv. Raised annual fund as we'll do a bigger push this year than last. Other areas that increased are grocery rewards (already off to good start). We will share monthly report from Amazon, grocery rewards, etc to communicate with other parents.
 - v. School spirit products added also to budget.
 - vi. Lowered auction to take pressure off committee chairs and so we can change the event, if need be or desired.
 - vii. An idea for the board to consider: make the profit from the silent auction a tie directly into professional development so we earmark that money.
 - viii. We can think about this for a few days, get vote from us electronically
 - ix. Amylynn: checking-in on the line-item for color ink. The printers are still working and we committed to funding the ink as long as they're working.
 - x. Summer library update from Mike—Andrea Atkinson approximated about 60 children total.

1. Discussion of summer library hours: Benefit that rising kindergarteners and new families came. There a was article in the newspaper and local news about it also.
 - xi. Holly: advocate for book fair—it is in the support column and not the money maker column of the budget but does make money.
 - xii. Mike’s opinion: the Professional Development fund is welcomed and appreciated by teachers, and helps to attract good teacher candidates.
 1. Discussion regarding how to continue funding Professional Development.
 - xiii. Q from Carrie: Regarding how the community will vote on this budget: the budget we pass will go out to the community via a link.
 - xiv. We will comment in next few days to Pres and Treasurers
- b. Fundraising Campaign – “Take it Outside”
- i. Co-Presidents and Mike met to discuss how PTO can support school needs and discussed the possibility of creating more performance space and space for grade-level activities, specifically outdoors, as children are always in need of more outdoor time.
 1. Ashley Kovach’s husband works for design firm and did some mark-ups on outdoor space.
 - ii. It would be a 2-year campaign
 - iii. Board needs to decide if we’d like to launch something like this.
 - iv. Mike discusses benefits:
 1. We’re are lucky to have a lot of technology and we need to balance that with being a natural school as well.
 2. Getting kids outside helps to regulate them. It helps with anxiety and helps them deliberate in their thinking.
 3. It could provide performance space.
 4. As a teacher it’s nice to not clean anything up.
 5. Best place to have a grade-level meeting is currently the library.
 - v. Went through designs to integrate outdoor design into what we already have. Could tie in with garden and/or nature path through end of school.
 - vi. Mike discussed idea with the teacher leadership team and they were highly interested. (They chose this idea over others.)
 - vii. The Big Questions are: Where? What would it look like?
 - viii. We want more than one outdoor space so that both the little and big kids can both have access.
 - ix. Board viewed at slides
 1. Includes shade with trees or canopies.
 2. Path to garden in back
 3. On sledding hill and corner of k-2 playground

4. Terraces are roughly 40-60ft wide. Depth of about 18 inches, and wide enough for lawn mower (in terms of maintenance).
- x. Cost:
 1. we have an excavator donation
 2. Concrete estimate: \$30,000 for small and \$100,000 for big and it can go up to \$200,000 to \$250,000 once you add detailing.
 - a. County would be unable to help with funding.
 - b. There are grants we can look into.
 - xi. Next steps:
 1. We create a Plan A, Plan B and Plan C (the full project being Plan A and the smallest cost being Plan C.)
 2. Will discuss over the next few months, as this would be a separate campaign from the annual fund and likely to kick off in the spring.
 - xii. Discussion:
 1. Meg Franco: kindergarten did outdoor learning last year and it was a great chance to be able to be outside and do lessons out there. The kids were able to be loud, and they could incorporate more movement.
 2. Irani met with building services and they are fine with both sites. Any difference for stone v. earth? Environmental impact study? Building services suggested a 'just earth' project but it seems either is fine.
 3. Nicole: does school board have to sign off on this? Irani: Building services has to okay structure of site plan. But it may have to go through planning commission, etc. It will be a process.
 - xiii. Motion made to continue discussion and pursue project by Amelia. Christina seconded. Passed unanimously.

VII. **Beth adjourns meeting**