



Rutherford Elementary PTA Meeting

Dec. 19, 2023 6:30 pm

Recorded by: Julie Harman

A. Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm. There were 16 attendees in person and 5 via the virtual Zoom link.

(Heather Nelson°, Micki Sievwright*, Kate Berg*, Dawn Oppelt*, Julie Harman*, Ashley Hennig*, Nicole Heggernes*, Katie Papke°, Morgan Spooner*, Bethany Cox*, Holly Kranz, Jamie Jansen°, Stacy Maddux°, Jason Taverna°, Ann Kindler°, Sacha Kelly. Attendees via Zoom: Emily Waller, Sara Bonneville, Netzer family, Bethany Falch, Jocelyn Gohdes. * = PTA member ° = faculty/staff)

B. State of the School (Heather Nelson)

- This week, the 5th grade band and orchestra held their winter concerts. The 3rd and 4th grade students attended, and many family and friends came. Last week, the 1st and 2nd grades held their winter music concerts, and these were very well attended too.
- As previously announced, Emily Young (Rutherford's social worker) is on short term disability. Heather has begun interviewing for someone to fill in for Emily. Lake Elmo will need a social worker to fill in starting end of February, so the candidate might cover both schools. In the meantime, Heather and Mackenzie Welch are doing their best to fill in for Emily.
- It will be announced soon that our art teacher, Mr. Davis, accepted a position at Oak-Land Middle School. Interviews have begun for a new art teacher. This won't have an impact on Rutherford until 4th quarter, when the RU students have art class again.
- Audrey Putnam will be retiring. Her last day is Jan. 12. Heather has started interviewing and hopes to have the position filled soon enough for the new hire to shadow Audrey before she leaves. Heather said that Audrey requested no party, but Kate Berg noted that the PTA will give her something as a thanks for all her help over the years.

C. Treasurer Update (Kate Berg/Micki Sievwright for Emily Siegel)

- Kate gave an overview of the expenditures that were in the most recent PTA newsletter: \$4,930 total spent in November, with the largest categories being Wishes (\$1,500), classroom funds (\$1,126), and grade level support (\$731).
- Thank you to students, families, and friends for a very successful Scholastic Book Fair! We had almost \$19,000 in sales (up almost \$2,000 from last year)! We earned \$9,441 in Scholastic dollars (we earn 50% of our sales). The "spin the wheel" game raised \$220 to purchase Scholastic books and items to donate to Community Thread.

D. Playground Committee Update (Kate Berg)

- All equipment order selections are finalized, and Kate will be submitting the orders. (It may not go through until January, but the 2023 prices will be honored).
- Only about 25 bricks have been sold, so please spread the word that brick sales will be due on March 1st. Clip art is free until Jan. 1. Teachers can buy a brick for the discounted price of \$50. The bricks will be incorporated into the outdoor learning space where the current playground is located.

- We need to talk more about outdoor classroom plans. Lindsay Cremona is getting the numbers for some outdoor classroom options and will be reaching out to Heather. Per Heather, she and Lindsay will coordinate to survey the staff on how they would like to use the outdoor classroom area.
- We will break ground in July for the new playgrounds and finish early- to mid-August.

E. Book Swap Committee Update (Kate Berg)

- The PTA board decided not to hold Readathon as a fundraiser this year, to help keep the focus on Wishes as the only spring fundraiser. Instead, we will hold the Book Swap (February 7 through 9) and incorporate some of the fun reading activities that have been part of Readathon, such as the bookworm search. This also coincides with I Love to Read month.
- We will collect books for three weeks leading up to the Book Swap, with the goal of collecting 3,000 books. Start setting aside any books around the house that you're done reading, and students: look forward to picking out some new-to-you books in February!
- The multi-purpose room is already reserved for the 1st week in February.

F. Grants Committee Update (Jocelyn Gohdes/Kate Berg)

- Kate will be leading the Grants Committee next year, possibly along with another interested parent. Right after the holidays, the committee will begin receiving requests for spring grants. There is \$3,000 available. More communication to come about the 2nd semester grants.

G. Grounds Committee Update (Nicole Heggernes)

- It's winter; no updates!

H. Staff Appreciation Committee Update (Morgan Spooner)

- The appreciation committee hosted a hot cocoa bar in the staff lounge last Friday. On Jan. 17, the committee will host a wellness bar.
- Bethany is coordinating Heritage apparel orders. The apparel is in and will be distributed to the teachers tomorrow.

I. Wishes Committee Update (Ashley Hennig and Nicole Heggernes)

- Wishes will be on Saturday, April 13, at the Lake Elmo Inn Event Center. The planning is well underway, getting an earlier start than last year so they can wrap up plans by spring break.
- \$2,000 in sponsorships have been sold. They will be collecting sponsorships through the end of January. The committee is working on live auction packages and silent auction baskets. The website is in progress. Save the date flyers will be sent home with students after winter break.
- The next meeting is Jan. 7. Meetings will always be held the second Sunday of each month. All are welcome! Contact Nicole at heggernesn@gmail.com if you are interested.

J. Featuring: Fourth Grade!

- The fourth grade teachers (Ann Kindler, Jason Taverna, Katie Papke, and Stacy Maddux) talked about exciting things happening this year in fourth grade. Some highlights:
 - Shout-out to Mr. Spain for all his work with all the fourth grade classes!
 - The 4th grade teachers received a \$500 grant to purchase flexible seating. They used Scholastic dollars to purchase 40 to 50 historical fiction books to use for the historical fiction unit at the end of the year.

- In November, the 4th graders hosted a Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. They incorporated multiple subjects in the preparation: in literacy, they studied the history of the parade; in math, they calculated distances, converted between cm and in, and coded their robots; in science, they used engineering and design concepts to design and connect floats to the bots. The unit ended with a big parade in the gym!
 - Fourth grade is in their first year of using the Smithsonian science curriculum. (Mr. Taverna piloted it last year.) The curriculum uses lots of hands-on lessons, models, and claims statements, and the lessons build upon each other throughout the year.
 - Some 4th graders are participating in book clubs with parent volunteers (2 times per week) and Continental Math League with Mrs. Maddux (1 time per week), both during WINN time. The book clubs have incorporated an extension activity with Yellow House classes. The math league challenges students to deeper levels of problem solving, with a goal of developing perseverance and stamina when faced with difficult challenges.
 - The 4th graders have 1st grade buddies. They meet every other Friday, 2 times per month, for 20 minutes. The 4th graders and their buddies have been working together on a thankful book. They've enjoyed reading together and sitting together for school concerts.
 - After reading the book *Multiplying a Good Deed* in math classes, the students decided to host a food drive. They are using their multiplication skills to calculate how many items will be collected if each student brings in 2 items, 3 items, etc. Tomorrow, Mrs. Maddux will bring 1,029 items to Valley Outreach!
 - 4th graders also learned how to play cribbage—practicing mental math and developing a lifelong skill. On the 2nd Wednesday of each month 9:00-10:00, students play cribbage with adult volunteers, 5th graders, and senior friends at The Lakes. Ask Mrs. Maddux for the sign-up link if you're interested!
(madduxs@stillwaterschools.org)
 - Comment from Kate B.: We really appreciate the weekly newsletter to follow along with class activities and start conversations with our kids!
 - Question from Holly Kranz about how many students participate in the book clubs and math league: There are 20 total in the book club and 14 or 15 in the math league (chosen based on test scores as well as ability to handle the extra time involved). Mrs. Maddux also offers math challenges of the week for any student interested in extra math challenges.
 - Question from Micki: How can the PTA help? The room parents have been very helpful. They coordinated a fun October field trip for the students.
- Thank you, fourth grade teachers!!

K. Additional Updates (Micki Sievwright)

- Micki is working with Celeste Nelson from Mathnasium for Math Night on February 23. (Mathnasium runs and pays for the event.) We had originally reserved the space for a potential dance/movie night. We might move that back toward the end of the school year. There will be more communication about Math Night after winter break.

L. Minutes from the November meeting were approved by Dawn Oppelt.

Meeting adjourned at approx. 7:15. **See you at the next PTA meeting: January 16 at 3:30 in the Multi-Purpose Room—with a focus on Fifth Grade!** There will be a Zoom option for those who cannot attend in person.