



Rutherford Elementary PTA Meeting

Apr. 16, 2024 6:30 pm

Recorded by: Julie Harman

A. Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. There were 12 attendees in person.

(Micki Sievwright*, Kate Berg*, Emily Siegel*, Julie Harman*, Dawn Oppelt*, Ashley Hennig*, Nicole Heggernes*, Heather Nelson°, Melanie McNulty°, Mary Anderson°, Amy Skaj°, Andrea Weland. * = PTA member ° = faculty/staff)

B. State of the School (Heather Nelson)

- The MCA tests started this morning.
- Class list preparation is starting soon.
- Next Friday (Apr. 25-26) is Kindergarten Orientation. Rutherford will be adding a 5th kindergarten section for the 2024-2025 school year. They will be looking at classroom space and deciding where classes will be. A couple of grade levels went down a section due to student numbers in the upcoming classes.
- Staffing changes – they were required to release probationary teachers, and due to district budget reduction, they will not have own instructional coaches. Molly O’Shea will be moving to teach 3rd grade. The spring job posting is in progress and hires will not be finalized/announced until the end of the year.

C. Wishes for Rutherford Update (Ashley and Nicole)

- A HUGE thank you to co-leads, Ashley and Nicole, who put on an excellent event. It was great to see staff present as well! There were 95 people in attendance. This is down from the 200 people who bought tickets for last year’s Wishes event. But this year’s event raised over \$58,000! (Including raffle ticket sales leading up to the event date.) There was good raffle participation, about the same amount received in sponsorship dollars this year, and generous donations from families and community.
- All funds have been received, and the Wishes committee will meet one last time this week to write thank-yous.

D. 5th Grade Celebration and Community Send-Off

- May 29 (the evening before the last day of school). From 5:00 to 5:30, 5th graders and families gather in the gym for a 5th grade send-off. Then from 5:30 to 7:00, all Rutherford families are invited to the end-of-year party!
- This event is being modeled after the Back to School Bash that Rutherford has hosted at the beginning of the school year.
- Activities will include inflatables, food trucks, and Bingo for Books.
- The planning committee is working with the 5th grade teaching team and Heather to make it a special event for our graduating 5th graders. Communication will go out soon to 5th grade families.

E. Grant Committee Update

- Kate Berg and Emily Siegel are in the process of discussing how to handle grants for 2024-25. Thanks to Jocelyn for her past leadership of this committee!

F. Grounds Committee Update

- The committee will be looking for volunteers to help with the gardens.
- Heather noted that an Eagle Scout candidate in the area contacted her about a potential Eagle project at Rutherford. Nicole and Kary Thelander will be in touch with the scout's family to discuss.

G. Outdoor Classroom Committee Update

- Kelly Taverna will send survey to staff next week. Kate built the survey to gather information about how teachers and staff would use the outdoor space and what features would be valuable to them.
- The next step: Kate will discuss the survey results with Chris to develop some possible sample ideas.
- Brick sales are still open.

H. Watch for PTA Survey

- Kate Berg created a survey to get as much feedback as possible from the Rutherford families to see where needs and interests lie for the upcoming year. The hope is to have open lines of communication to cater PTA efforts to what the community wants and will participate in – open to starting new things or keeping old things that families and staff want to keep!
- Melanie McNulty noted that with lots of changes in Rutherford and welcoming many new families after the boundary changes, it's a great idea to seek feedback from all the families and to find ways to bring the community together.

I. Staff Appreciation Committee Update

- April's staff appreciation event was a "flower bar" so all staff members could assemble their own flower bouquet to take home. "So creative!" The staff loved it. It was noted that all the staff appreciation themes this year were great and felt so inclusive – even repeating all the themes for next year would be great!
- Next event will be on May 5th: a trail mix surprise.

J. Fundraising Committee Update

- Next year, it is the hope to have one person oversee all the fundraising efforts.

K. Yearbook Committee Update

- Thank you to staff for your photo submissions and help! The yearbook has been submitted for printing. We received good feedback this year that it would be helpful for teachers if the committee started a google photo folder at the beginning of the year for teachers to drop photos in as events happened.

L. PTA Board 2024-2025

- Reminder that we are looking for volunteers to serve as a VP co-chair and as a secretary next year. No experience is necessary!

M. Treasurer Update (Emily Siegel)

- Teachers are using their funds remaining for the year, and Emily is processing reimbursements.
- Most Wishes bills have been paid.
- Teachers requested that Emily send another update of how much money is left for this school year out of the house funds.

N. Featuring: Third Grade!

- Amy Skaj and Mary Anderson were present to talk about the exciting things happening in Kindergarten. Some highlights:
 - The third grade teachers purchased a Scholastic SuperSTEM magazine subscription with PTA money. The kids get really excited when new issues arrive. The teachers are able to share with Kris in the library so she can help students learn more about topics of interest.
 - The Dulcimer unit was really fun. Many volunteers helped while Ross Sutter taught the 3rd grade students how to build their own dulcimer. The kids were very proud and put in a lot of work! The concert at The Lakes was very special—the 3rd graders were excited to perform for the audience there!
 - Mrs. Skaj received a grant to buy student mailboxes to replace the cardboard ones that were collapsing—very appreciated! The teachers noted that we're very fortunate with our PTA and the funds and time families invest in the school and the spirit that our efforts should benefit every kid.
 - Discussed plastic totes that some grades need to store daily school supplies. Many students do not have them—or have the wrong size—when school starts. Could this be a future grant?
 - Discussed using Amazon wish lists and adding some school supplies that students often need.

O. Minutes from the March meeting were approved by Dawn.

Meeting adjourned at 7:27 pm. **See you at the last PTA meeting of this year: May 21 at 3:30 in the Multi-Purpose Room!** There will be a Zoom option for those who cannot attend in person.