

Meramec PTO Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 25, 2016
8:45 a.m.

Attendance: Dana Emmenegger, Dottie Silverman, Mary Powers, Patty Shuping Li, Elizabeth Shook, Jay Epstein, Beth Gracie, Alison Thomason, Jennifer Chan-Wong, Tanya Vendantham, Stephanie Gross, Emily Whitney, Allie Rossini, Willie Brandon, Bavani Raman, Glenn Taylor, Erin Joy, Annie Sloane, Laura Seelbach, Tahnee Whitlock, Kristen Bond, Bridget McAndrew, Jessica Lucas, Jessica Graetz, Amy Grebel, Leslie Wilson, Rita Kaikati, Sharnice Boyd, Cari Lowry, Tarita Rhimes, Lisa Jackson-Terry and Jenny Abeles.

Opening & Welcome: President Jenny Abeles

Dana Emmenegger: Funds For Excellence - In years past many schools had many fundraisers, so Meramec decided to streamline to a one-time donation. This money goes to fulfill teacher requests, fund events, etc. Our goal is 100% participation; at 25% right now. Everything is online at PTO web site 2016 dues link, you can use Pay Pal or write a check. On the Web, you can also pay for yearbook, PTO CARE fund and room party dues. If anyone has ideas on how to increase participation, see Dana. All contributions are tax deductible and you will receive a receipt at the end of the year

Jessica Graetz – Parent Connections/Back to School Coffee – Coffee last week was a success, next year people should bring their own mug. Parent Connections Parties are when each grade has a parent-only party during the year that one family hosts for the whole grade. BYO drinks and a dish. Parties are a great way for people to meet new families, reconnect with old friends. Email will go out asking for volunteers to host the parties soon. All grades currently open if you are interested in hosting, please contact Jessica Graetz or Kelli Farmer. Parties also can be hosted at a restaurant.

Jennifer Chan-Wong and Mary Powers: Room Parents – Room parents are those in charge of classroom parties. There are three parties each year – Halloween, Winter and Valentines. Need at least two RP for each classroom. Right now, parents are needed for 3rd and 4th grades. If you are interested, please contact Mary Powers or Jennifer Chan-Wong.. Orientation meeting is 9/15 at 7 p.m. in cafeteria. The meeting is optional for returning parents, Kindergarten/new parents need to attend. All dates/times for parties are on PTO web site. PTO takes care of food/drink, room parents plan crafts and activities. One class takes each holiday. RP can plan to spend \$50 on the party for 3 classrooms and will be reimbursed. Please submit receipts to Treasurer Jay for all of the expenses, use tax exempt letter on purchases.

Allie Rossini: Movie Night – Movie this year is Mega Mind. Movie starts when sun goes down on Sept. 30, please do not bring kids too early. Pizza will be served, but it does not get there until after 7, so plan to feed children before you arrive, use pizza as a snack. Organizers need volunteers for popcorn, nachos, clean up – sign up will be in 30 minute slots. As a reminder, parents must watch their kids – it's dark and the playground can be dangerous. Ms. Jackson-Terry will remind all of the students to follow rules that evening. If they don't listen, they will be asked to go home. Meramec staff will be the ones to discipline disorderly behavior.. Other concern is Middle Schoolers who come without their families – that is not OK. Administrators are sending a note to Wydown to publicize that. For liability, school/PTO needs to note that drugs and alcohol are prohibited on school grounds.

Jessica Graetz: Book Fair – New this year, we are taking the book fair to Barnes and Noble. The Book Fair will kick off at B&N on Nov. 19, online sales will continue for a week. Large portion of the proceeds go to Meramec, with includes purchases in the store, cafe and online. Teachers will be able to create wish lists at B&N, organizers will need to work out vouchers for teachers like we did last year. Also, there a freezer foods option that can be done online, committee needs to explore.

Beth Gracie: Yearbook – Yearbook comes out at the end of the year; biggest challenge is getting all of the pictures throughout the year. Picture Day is Sept. 1 – new procedure where kids will have cards that the teachers will give them with info, then kids will hand photographer the cards. Beth will need volunteers to help with picture day. Best way to get pictures to Beth is to email them to her at bethgracie@hotmail.com.

Jay Epstein: Treasurer's Report – Budget for 2016-2017 (attached to minutes) – the school district didn't send bills until after our Aug. 1 fiscal year, so that's why some things are in red. All chairs for this year will receive a budget; chairs need to submit anything over \$200 to Jay Epstein or Jenny Abeles for approval. Backside of page is revenue and expenses so far for this year. Goal is \$16,000 from Funds For Excellence. To date, 54 families have paid by PayPal, 9 families by check for a total of \$6,000.

Current policies and procedures – a receipt must be presented before anyone can be reimbursed. If you need any money in advance, see treasurer a week in advance to get the cash box. PTO does not reimburse for tax – please get the tax exempt paper from the office.

Vote on 2016-2017 treasurer's report was carried.

Jessica Lucas: Communications/FB/Website – The web site has been updated. Electronic volunteer sign up on the web site. If you would like to put something on Facebook, send photos, fliers and reminders to jessgsmith55@gmail.com. Photos need to be of your kids or must be approved with parent. Generic photos without kids' faces are preferred. Exec board emails have been removed from the web site due to phishing scams.

Nurse Caren – Needs screening volunteers Sept. 27 12:-3:30 for vision/height/weight; Oct. 4-5, all day (shifts), Oct. 11-12, time TBD. Email Jenny abeles @ jzabeles@gmail.com to volunteer.

Ms. Jackson-Terry: Parents need to get volunteer paperwork turned in by end of Sept., pick up badges in office if already submitted. Introductions for new families – welcome to all, thanks for joining us. District enrollment coordinator retired last year and the new person getting up to speed, so we are waiting on numbers for attendance in the first week. Meramec's total enrollment is down. Meramec educators see themselves as life-long learners, so part of journey this summer was Responsive Classroom training in Chicago for 10 teachers, which highlights supporting the Whole Child and their social-emotional needs. As a result of this training, the decision was made to push back schedule to hold morning meetings, this is why kids are being let out a new minutes later. At Morning Meetings the kids sit in circle to feel connected to each other and the teacher. Next Parent-Principal Coffee will discuss school improvement, success for 100% of children is goal.

Alison Thomason: Staff Appreciation - Team provided dinner at Open House for staff, boxed lunches from Café Manhattan so teachers can take in their rooms. Volunteers needed to hot meals, set-up and clean up throughout the year during conferences, training days.

Mrs. Palmer staff request: Library needs new stuffed animal/puppets purchased from the Missouri Botanical Gardens Gift Store. Motion approved for \$100.