MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PTO COUNCIL FOR

GLENRIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Thursday, January 20, 2022

A meeting of the PTO Council for Glenridge Elementary School was held, as scheduled pursuant to due notice on January 20, at 9:30 am CST via zoom conference.

The following members of the Board were present at the meeting: Lynn Courter, Co-President; Lilly Scharff, Co-President; Sarah Boyce, Secretary; Jamie Beyer, Treasury; Joanna Dinsmore, Communications; Denise Stouffer, Teacher-Representative; Beth Scott, Principal; Jenny Abeles, PTO Council Rep.

 The following ex-Officio Advisors and members were present: Maureen Satorius, Angela Skurtu, Katerina

**Call to Order & Introductions:  Lynn Courter & Lilly Scharff**

**Principal’s Report: Beth Scott**

Mrs. Scott explained that while the weather has been cold, it was warm enough to have lunch outside this past Tuesday.  We will continue wearing masks in school to keep everyone healthy. Staffing has been tight yet manageable. Parents are keeping their children home with symptoms.  We are not at a breaking point in Clayton and everyone is pitching in.

The playbook has changed relative to quarantining in classrooms because many children are now vaccinated.  District Nurse Heather Christman continues to work on the reporting for contact tracing and she confers with healthcare professionals.  We send a school wide letter each time there is a positive case in the classroom.

The district has provided all faculty with N95 masks to use if they wish.

There are family cases where a fully vaccinated family had Covid earlier in 2020 or 2021 and are testing positive again.  We continue to take this very seriously.

Scharff asked if faculty has enough sick days, as there are 5 family sick days.  Is there anything more we need to do to support the teachers?  Are more sick days needed?  Scott answered that there’s a formula in HR that offers extended Covid leave pay.

Scharff asked about providing more context and information about cases in the email notifications that are sent to families. Beth encouraged those present in the meeting to tell others to contact her if they have questions.  It’s hard to be more transparent without providing too much personal health related info.  Beth feels confident if a student is out, we have contacted anyone exposed..  Beth is confident school is not where the cases are spreading.  She stated “We want kids in school in person, socializing is just as important as their academic progress.”  If parents are worried because of individual reasons, tell those families to call Beth.  She’ll work with the school counselor and teachers to make a plan.  We are hoping to get to go “mask optional” on the playground so kids can see each other while playing.  The risk remains lower outside.

Lynn Courter asked if there’s anything the parents can do as a community to support substitute teachers.  We could use more subs and Beth thinks the best thing we can do is spread the word in our networks vs sending out another email.  There’s a link on the Clayton website under HR to apply to substitute.

Courter inquired about communication regarding N95 masks and whether parents need assistance in purchasing sufficient masks. Beth said to encourage families to get the N95s at pharmacies where they’ll be free soon.

Dinsmore asked for clarification about families receiving a phone call for purposes of contact tracing vs the email.  Beth stated that parents of children in a class with a positive case get an email or phone call.  Initially they were calling everyone in a classroom if there was a positive case.  With the uptick in cases those phone calls were replaced with a direct email.  If a group of students sits in closer contact to the positive case we would call that group of parents.

Sarah stated that it would be helpful if everyone knows to get PCR tests not just rapids since we’re seeing false negatives in rapid tests with Omicron.

Clayton is still at 10 day quarantine for a positive case and probably will remain that length through this surge.

Joanna asked if the dashboard is cumulative for the school or are there possible Glenridge families that tested positive that aren’t showing up on the dashboard.  Beth will ask Chris T and follow up.

Scott discussed plans for Black History month, and noted that there are 3 African American parents who joined the teacher committee to forge a plan: Manika McKoy, Terri Walker, and Samantha March.  It started with a district hope to align plans for the 3 elementary schools.  The three building principals have worked with Cameron Poole, our Chief Officer for Diversity and Inclusion for the District,  to go forward with a plan. All three schools are using the same resources, there will be daily announcements, teachers will also connect students to research into black history month. Jamie confirmed that there’s $500 slated in the budget for BHM expenditures.

**Teacher Representative Report:  Denise Stouffer**

Thank you from Stephanie Fogarty, she is making her order for her free books from her Read-a-Thon prize.  She’s waiting because there’s a book pack she wants that wasn’t available.

Denise ordered the Clear Touch board that was approved at the last meeting.  TBD how long it’ll take to get the board.  The plan is to outfit a grade level at a time, we started with 3rd grade. Teachers are excited about the plan.

We’re having a headphone supply issue, they were on a purchase list at some point.  We don’t want students too share headphones.  Denise put a note out to teachers to remind parents to bring them back.

Glenridge give care fund has $2k in it, that we can tap. We can buy headphones for $3 or $4, Denise doesn’t anticipate that she needs a lot.  We can designate ~$75 out of the funds to tap for this, if needed Denise can ask for more.

**Presidents’ Report: Lynn Courter & Lilly Scharff**

Strawberry Festival (Glenridge carnival with games, rides, food) – Maureen Satorius, Festival co-chair with Justin Bruegenhemke,  joined to lead the conversation.  She will follow-up on the plans, what expenses we need to lock in now for various vendors, etc, and what deposits might we lose if we have to cancel.  Vendor payments have been postponed thus far, and vendors are antsy. The Festival is scheduled for May 7.  Based on current plans, $4,000k in deposits would need to be paid in the next two weeks.  PTO members expressed support for trying to have the event and modifying to make it safer – possibly eliminating or limiting food offerings, moving all events outside, etc.

The Bubble Bus would be a new event if approved by the PTO.  Games were typically in the cafeteria – do we want to move them outside this year. We have plenty of room on campus to make it all work outside but there’s always a weather risk, twice we moved everything inside due to rain.  Beth was hoping we could have this for a transition activity for the new principal, it was great when Beth took over 14 years and the prior principal was able to introduce her to so many families.  Is there flexibility in the budget to put up tents?  Tents could work for games but not rides.  We have budgeted $10k and it’s a break-even event.  Do we want to vote to cover a tent with extra funds?  No  We also have the read a thon money (spent some on the new board)  could the extra money cover some of it if we need to.  It’s possible attendance will be low because families aren’t as familiar with the event and some families might not be comfortable attending.  We could keep games inside and people can only come inside if they feel comfortable.

Joanna says let’s go for it.  It’s very possible we can pull this off.  We have the extra money in read a thon and reserves if needed and it’s worth taking the chance.  Lynn and Sarah agree.

Jenny asked if we charge for strawberries.  Could we have a few ways to make money, even if rains people could pay for the strawberries.  We don’t charge for admission to the festival, but we charge for tix, parents end up spending a lot of money.  Should we actually be looking at how we can get parents to spend less?  Should we charge for admittance instead?  At Meramec they charge for admittance and for all access to rides but they have more rides.  Meramec now makes a little profit on the event.  We’ve talked through the years if we should change the pricing which we decided against in the past.  There are arguments both ways.  Lilly thinks there should be an option of pay to go. Glenridge only has only 2 rides and plus the bounce house and jump thing and sand face painting.  We used to do a photo booth but maybe this year there’s a photo wall instead.  Let’s look into it more.  Maureen will send an email with more info.  Since it’s already budgeted we don’t have to vote on anything.  Maureen needs to run paying for anything by Lilly and Lynn.

We need to make it clear that email blast/PTO Tool kit is only to be used for PTO and school related business.  We want to put a reminder on the PTO website on the tool kit, there was a party invite that was used by this.  In the past if you were inviting an entire class Stacy would provide the email lists.  Sometimes teachers are willing to send email invites when it’s the entire class.  Joanna just put something on the site ‘use for PTO events only’  next to the link.

We’re all interested if we need to tap funds for masks.

**Vice-President’s Report: Kathryn Yorg was absent**

**No update**

**Treasurer’s Report: Jamie Beyer**

Statement of activity, very little has happened since the holiday break. $2355 for gift card purchase paid $154 bill towards t-shirts.   There was a mishap with writing a check between the wrong accounts.  It was immediately fixed and the right people were contacted but it’ll show under uncategorized revenue/expense.  Jamie researched if we should put a 2nd signature option on the checks, it’s probably not necessary since those signatures are hardly checked.  Our bank doesn’t offer a 2nd signature option.  Do we want to switch banks?  All were in agreement that it wasn’t necessary.

It was discussed if the presidents should get copies of the paper statements.  The issue was caught before the statements went out so that wouldn’t have prevented anything.  Jamie will ask if we can put holds on check which could be an issue if a vendor needs to get paid, maybe we put a hold if it’s over a certain amount of money.  Jamie will ask the bank if they have suggestions on any safe guards and what the electronic/P2P and online bill pay options they have.  It was suggested that the PTO checks should be personalized with a design to identify that they’re obvious PTO checks.

For the holiday gift cards Jamie had to go to Walmart and Target multiple times to get the gift cards because the stores and banks have limits on what you can spend.  We need a better plan/committee for this for next year.  Jamie wasn’t able to make the purchases online.

**PTO Council Update: Jenny Abeles**

Next meeting is Feb 10 and we’ll provide the updated bylaws they made for PTO Council that we can accommodate for Glenridge.  It’s an easy one pager.

Encourage the PTO to think about positions for next year.  We have jumpstart and want to make sure the boards are lined up.

**Other Business:**

Valentine’s Day: some classes already know their volunteers; we’ll reach out to the grade liaisons to plan the parties.  V day is on a Monday.  We’ll work with Chartwells on the smart snacks.  We can still have 2 volunteers per class, volunteers show their vaccination card at entry.  Will need to be flexible if something changes due to Covid.  Less is best, don’t need big huge parties.  The students can still exchange valentines, the teachers determine when that’ll happen (during the party or not).  The parties would probably be from 2:30-3:30.

Gift wrapping went well, great feedback from the teachers

**Conclusion**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:51am.  Next meeting is February 17.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Sarah Boyce, PTO Secretary