



R.M. Captain PTO

Captain PTO Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 3, 2025 Meeting
– 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
In Person and Online: Zoom

1. Welcome / Introductions – started at 7:05pm
 - a. Attendees: Mary Jane Ruff, Deanna Palagallo, Kevin Peck, Jennifer Tillstrom, Jenny Wand, Karin Schute, Jamie Mangels, Clare Higgins Siegel, Katherine Clifton, Rosalyn Luna, Cristina Malone, Deniz Aksoy, Allie Price, Lisa Sell, Erin Knight
2. Urgent Business
 - a. Approve minutes – motion by Jamie, second by Jenny, approved
3. Principal's Update
 - a. Character Strong
 - i. There is an all-building push for Character Strong. It occurs from 8:40-9am during the morning circle meetings, except one class does it later in the day. They are using a common language to have a better understanding of the curriculum. The teachers are paired with specialists, but the teacher is main lead and provides the main instruction.
 - ii. The curriculum ties into Community Teams. For example, the last topic was "Courage."
 - iii. The Character Strong curriculum has allowed Crystal Taylor and Katie Burkard to provide more interventional focuses on Tier 2-3 intervention for social/emotional issues. It will make significant differences.
 - iv. Next year, the counselor will use it to support conflict resolution and for dealing with bullying.
 - v. Last year, 5 people in building were trained for Character Strong. Over the summer, 11 more people were trained (both specialists and teachers).
 - vi. The 20 minutes for Character Strong were taken from the teachers and staff. They used to do other things during that time, but every teacher/staff member has embraced it.
 - vii. Seeing a lot of positivity, even though we're not through the first cycle
 - viii. It may become more of a team-teaching experience in the future.
 - ix. Teachers took a survey to identify the students that may need additional support in Tier 2 and 3. The teachers looked at the data and

had powerful conversations about the data in Professional Learning Communities. In the past, those kinds of conversations have occurred related to academics, but this was the first time the conversations related to social-emotional issues.

- x. The Counselor and Social Worker will do an 8 to 10-week session with small groups. This will give the students strategies to practice and train. They will also have mentors.
- xi. When the kids are identified, Ms. Taylor will contact the parents to let them know and will keep them updated about the progress.
- xii. The Panorama data in the spring will show how the students are feeling about it.

b. Student Testing and End of Year Surveys

i. Parent Input Survey due by April 18

- 1 It was sent out this week.
- 2 The survey asks for input from the parents because parents know their kids best.
- 3 Kids will provide input about who their best thinking partners are and who they gravitate toward on the playground, not necessarily their best friends.
- 4 The input from parents and kids will be used for class placement.
- 5 Per Ms. Sell, this school is more intentional than anywhere she has ever been.

ii. April 24 for incoming parent meeting

c. Read your Captain's Log!

- i. Read the log; there is a lot of information coming out from now until the end of the year.
- ii. Please know that parent feedback is seen. Ms. Sell received and reviewed all the feedback related to the teacher surveys recently.
- iii. Dr. Knight is getting all the emails that Ms. Sell is getting now.

4. Fundraising & Event Report

- a. Garden Day (4/26) – The event will be held from 9-11am. Everyone is encouraged to come out and beautify the outdoor space. Nick Renz is the chairperson and is working with Ms. Hwande. Everyone can participate. There will be early morning snacks. The co-fundraising chairs will reach out to the grade-level parent reps to send out a reminder text on the grade level text threads. There will be things for kids to do. The event is somewhat weather dependent.
- b. Captain Night @ STL City 2 (5/4) – The link to purchase tickets was sent out this week. PTO reps will try to get there early to reserve a whole section. We will use grade level texts to notify everyone of the reserved section location. In the past, everyone has gathered by the supporter section. Last year it rained, and you can't bring in umbrellas into the stadium. Also, clear bags are required.

- c. Family Picnic (5/30) – This is the last day of school. It's bring your own food, but the PTO will plan to have a sweet treat available for everyone.
 - d. Fifth Grade Promotion (5/30) and Farewell Party (6/1) – Abby Goldstein is hosting a party at her house. The link is still open to purchase tickets. It is \$25 per family.
- 5. Teacher Appreciation
 - a. Parent Teacher Conference Meal – The PTO provided a meal for teacher conferences in March. The meal was from Crazy Bowls and Wraps, which worked out great because they open early and have lots of options.
 - b. Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5-9) – Dr. Martin used to provide a theme. The week can have a theme, but the same signature events have been the same. Monday is flower day. Families bring in flowers and volunteers put them into vases. The PTO will send an email in advance about it. Students can bring one flower without water. Tuesday is bagels and fill the fridge. Diet Coke is not popular, but Mountain Dew is popular with the teachers/staff. Families can also bring chocolate and candy. Wednesday is massage day. There will be a sign-up based on when the teachers have their conferences. Last year, the massage place provided the sign-up beforehand. Thursday is lunch for everyone. Ms. Sell would also like to do something. Last year, Dr. Martin had a grant for food that was used on Thursday and clarity is needed on how lunch will be funded (whether from PTO or a grant). Last year, the students wrote thank you cards to the teachers during Spanish class. Friday is the punch board with \$10 gift cards. Last year, the PTO had to have a special vote for the gift cards. We have a standing meeting to approve additional money and will have to add money to the budget for next year. The massages and punch board were very popular with everyone.
 - c. Rosalyn needs clarification on the total number of staff/teachers to make sure everyone can participate.
 - d. Co-communication chairs will send out a call for volunteers to assemble the flowers and a reminder about what families should bring.
 - e. Also, please take pictures throughout the week and share the pictures with co-communication chairs so they can post the pictures on social media.
- 6. Treasurer's Report
 - a. The Full treasurer's report is on the PTO website.
 - b. Income for the month = auction and monthly interest
 - c. Expenses for the month = auction (venue, auctioneer, supplies); 5th grade pavilion rental; class parties; teacher wish list items; teacher appreciation lunch; printing fliers for auction; and federal taxes.
 - d. The teacher wish list purchases go through the District, which is easier for the co-treasurers. The purchases seem to happen on a rolling basis.
 - e. The teachers prefer to keep the wish list planning for the fall.
- 7. President's Report
 - a. School Supplies Kits
 - b. Field Day Budget Increase

- i. Current budget for Field Day is \$400. The last couple years, the PTO did not spend any money on Field Day.
 - ii. This year Mr. Baker asked for money for an inflatable obstacle course.
 - iii. Standing approval by Allyson, Clare, and Mary Jane.
 - c. Teacher Breakfast and Fill the Fridge
 - i. Kindergarten and Third Grade Parent Reps (4/4)
 - ii. Parents will also be asked to bring chocolates in addition to drinks.
 - d. 2025-2026 PTO Board Members
 - i. Proposal of new board members: Mary Jane Ruff (co-president); Nick Alt (co-treasurer), Allie Price (co-secretary), Deanna Palagallo (co-communications), Stephanie Pasch (co-fundraising).
- 8. Comments/Questions
 - a. None
- 1. Next meeting: Thursday, May 1 at 7pm on Zoom
- 9. Adjourn – motion by Rosalyn, second by Jamie, adjourned at 7:50pm

The PTO is organized for the purpose of supporting and enhancing the education of children at Ralph M. Captain Elementary through volunteer service, fundraising and fostering relationships among members of the school community.