



R.M. Captain PTO

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 4, 2025
7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
In Person: Captain Library & Online: Zoom

1. Welcome / Introductions
 - a. Began at 7:01pm
 - b. Attendees: Mary Jane Ruff, Jenny Wand, Julia Drafahl, Nick Alt, Eileen McGaughey, Susannah Scotino, Clare Higgins, Karin Schute, Jamie Mangels, Katelyn Long, Jennifer Tillstrom, Satya Kothapalli, Erika Bretscher, Dr. Erin Knight, Jamie Jordan, Val Toothman, Michael Viau, Fahzeela Mohamed, Allie Price, Katie Huffman, Jena Schaumburg, Deanna Pellagallo, Stephanie Pasch, Damien Owens, Cristina Malone
2. Urgent Business
 - a. Approve minutes – motion by Cristina M.; second by Eileen M., unanimously approved
 - b. Approve updated 2025-2026 PTO Budget – motion by Eileen M.; second by Jamie M., unanimously approved
 - i. Changes include increased budgeted income from auction and Parents Night Out
 - ii. Changes also include increased budgeted expenses from Family Picnic, apparel purchases, Fifth Grade reception, recess equipment (new expense), teacher appreciation event, and conference meals
 - iii. Will be a balanced budget
3. Principal's Update
 - a. Curriculum Night (9/11)
 - i. Begins in the gym with career fair style discussions with specialists
 - ii. Then parents can attend grade level presentations by the grade level teams with two offerings
 - b. Teacher Wish Lists (due 9/22)
 - i. Have wish lists from three teachers so far
 - ii. They have until 9/22/25 to request items for their wish list
 - iii. Dr. Knight will review the wish lists and determine whether the PTO or school budget should cover the items
 - c. Long Range Facilities Planning (9/10, 9/21, 11/18)
 - i. There is an all-day workshop on 9/10 for school personnel only

- ii. That evening is a community forum for parents and other community members
 - iii. The three priorities for the long-range planning are the elementary schools
 - d. Picture Day (10/3)
 - i. Advertised in school newsletter
 - e. School Improvement Plan Goals
 - i. Every year as a building the school submits three goals to Dr. Patel
 - ii. Captain's goals for this year are:
 - 1. Determining student identities based on student surveys
 - 2. Knowing learners and respond to their needs. This is based on academic data
 - 3. Promoting social emotional learning
 - f. Birthday Book Cart
 - i. Huge hit so far
 - ii. Includes a birthday book, pencil, sticker, bookmark for each kid
 - iii. Mr. Bober orders the books that each kid may want
 - iv. A benefit is that Dr. Knight gets to meet each kid on their birthday
 - g. Fill out PowerSchool Forms
 - i. Reminder to parents to please fill out these forms, if have not already done so
 - h. CharacterStrong - Sept. focus is Respect
 - i. Kindness kickoff during first two weeks
 - ii. Includes a daily lesson from the classroom teacher, once a month a lesson from the counselor
 - iii. This month the counselor is focusing on diversity
 - i. Better Together in Head and Heart- Monthly lessons with Dr. Knight
 - i. Focusing on personal safety, which includes identifying trusted adults
 - ii. Can also use this time to address grade-wide struggles, if needed
 - iii. Spread the word that Dr. Knight is open to feedback and would like to hear from parents
- 4. Fundraising & Event Report
 - a. Parent's Night Out (9/6)
 - i. First community event, can still buy tickets
 - ii. Parents only event
 - iii. Light food and drinks provided (alcohol and non-alcoholic)
 - b. Captain Night @ City II (9/12)
 - i. Fundraising event, \$5 from every ticket comes back to the PTO
 - ii. Try to sit together in section 109, will send out section info again in communications, no assigned seating
 - iii. 30 tickets sold, the link to purchase tickets is in the Captain's Log
 - c. International Night (9/27)
 - i. Community event, unique Captain event

- ii. Celebration of unique families at Captain with food, trinkets, etc. related to their ethnicity, culture, or home country
 - iii. In the past, the PTO has provided Schnucks gift cards to anyone that needs them to assist with the cost of buying food, email PTO board to request
 - iv. Opportunity for volunteers to assist with set up, clean up, and greeting attendees
 - v. The event falls over a long weekend this year with no school on Friday; it's also Homecoming for Clayton, that may affect attendance; Fifth grade will help with float for homecoming parade
- d. The co-presidents are part of a scheduling committee for the district
- e. Spring Auction Early Ideas (3/7)
 - i. The PTO is already beginning to plan for this event, which is the biggest fundraiser of the year
 - ii. Last year, the event included an auction with a band at a venue on Cherokee Street
 - iii. Looking for feedback about the event and what could be changed
 - iv. Suggested alternative ideas are trivia night or casino night
 - v. Looking for parents to co-chair this event
 - vi. Dr. Knight will add a Google form about preferences for the event into the chat in Zoom, it will also be in the newsletter
 - vii. Last year, the PTO raised more money at the auction than at trivia in the past
 - viii. Donated space or food helps to save money and allows for more money to be raised

5. Treasurer's Report

- a. All based on the budget that was approved tonight
- b. For grade level reps, the budget includes \$170 per grade, which covers the Halloween and Valentine's Day parties
- c. Money in the line items for Captain Cares is used to help students in need, needs are determined in connection with the counselor
- d. There is a separate line item for staff gifts for condolences and retirements
- e. For full details, see the August 2025 Treasurer's Report, which is posted on the PTO website

6. President's Report

- a. Staff Favorites
 - i. PTO worked with teachers to come up with staff favorites, it is updated by teachers and staff and is posted on the PTO webpage, also posted on Instagram links
 - ii. Per Eileen M., it was very touching to receive gifts that were on the list from students/parents
- b. Captain Buzz Book
 - i. Only as good as the information in it

- ii. If you log in, please verify your information so other parents can get in touch with you
 - iii. This can be accessed on the Captain webpage under the Parents tab, login info required to access, not public, there is also an app, which is not working now but should be working soon
 - iv. There are also What's App parent chat groups for each grade, not official means of communication, but people are very responsive, ask another parent to add you to the group if you're not a part
- c. Friday Breakfast & Fill the Fridge
 - i. PTO supports a monthly breakfast and fill the fridge, which are on the first Friday of the month
 - ii. Donation driven, no line item for purchasing
 - iii. Per Dr. Knight, the teachers also love candy
- d. Merchandise - Waitlist and New Items
 - i. Parent (Emily Duddy) created a new design, the t-shirt sold out in one week, there is a waitlist now
 - ii. There is a new logo coming to a sweatshirt, which will be live for purchase by the next meeting
- e. Community Teams T-Shirts (order by 9/19)
 - i. Required items for students to have, color coded teams for Community Teams Day, which occurs once a month where the students have a focused session
 - ii. First one is in October, letting 5th graders take charge of the planning
 - iii. If it is a hardship to purchase a shirt, email Dr. Knight or PTO Executive Board
- f. Homecoming Parade (9/27) - Float prepared by 5th grade
 - i. Mid-day activity, so could still attend International Night
 - ii. Grade level reps for Fifth Grade are in charge of float, Old Hollywood theme
 - iii. Last year, there was a good crowd of Captain families watching parade
- g. PTO Volunteers still needed:
 - i. Paced Representative – group of parents with kids that have different educational needs (IEP and 504), they have different events during the year, they are looking for 2 representatives from each PTO, may not need to attend all the Paced meetings
 - ii. Event Co-Chairs: Family Dance (October), Auction (Spring)
 - 1. Family Dance is a costume heavy dance party for kids, it was an hour, Allyson Lavender co-chaired it last year and will do it again this year, but is looking for a co-chair because this is her family's last year at Captain
 - 2. Auction is a big event, takes a lot of helping hands, looking for volunteers to assist with certain aspects (solicit auction items, buy decorations, etc.)

7. Comments/Questions
 - a. Dr. Knight still has yearbooks from last year if anyone wants to purchase them
 - b. Yearbooks for this year are available for purchase now, there is an early-bird price right now
8. Next meeting: *NEW DATE* Thursday, October 9
 - a. Zoom only meeting
9. Adjourn
 - a. Adjourned at 7:57pm

DRAFT

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.