

Rensselaer Park PTA

October Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2020 via Google Meet

Present via Google Meet:

Jill Manupella, Sarah Huls, Elaine Garrett, Terri Sanderson, Danielle Jobin, Peter Allen, Julie Allen, Adam Gregoire, Robert White, David Hamilton, Melissa Santacangelo, Jason Blackmur, Sara Brandenburg, Jamie Cavanaugh, Deborah Smarro, and phone attendees.

**Meeting called to order 6:03 PM by Jill Manupella**

**Treasurer's Report—Terri Sanderson**

Terri presented the first overall proposed budget for the 2020-2021 school year. It is a streamlined, basic budget reflecting overall anticipated annual costs. As we are now remote for the foreseeable future, normal fundraising and most in-person events will be suspended, but we have still allocated funds for annual essential expenses and to support school needs during remote learning. This fall we are planning both for the upcoming Harvest History Knight and a virtual STEAM event. We will still promote annual memberships to the PTA, which are \$6. The budget will be updated and revised as circumstances change.

*Motion to approve proposed budget by P. Allen, seconded by Gregoire.*

**Secretary's Report—Elaine Garrett**

Elaine presented the end of year minutes from May's meeting, which were sent over the summer and again prior to this meeting. Like last year, after approval, minutes will be posted to the RPES PTA web page on the school website.

*Motion to approve May minutes by P. Allen, seconded by White.*

**Principal's Report—Mrs. Santacangelo**

The PTA and RPES welcome Mrs. Melissa Santacangelo to our school as our new Assistant Principal. It is also National PTA Principal's month, and we recognize Mr. Hopkins' and Mrs. Santacangelo's work for our school, especially under these circumstances. "Mrs. S" has begun visiting classes for observation via Google Meet as everyone adjusts to the online learning format. The virtual Open House will be Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Report —Mr. Hamilton**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are getting connected online and to each other throughout the first few weeks of school.

In Math, we are looking at number sets, place value and exponential notation. We will begin word problems and learning how to use exit tickets and breakout rooms within the Google Meets.

In Science, we are learning what investigation means and encouraging curiosity and confidence to ask questions. We are learning what a scientist is, and what they do.

In reading, third graders have been learning how to create their best reading lives to set themselves up for success. We are learning how to get to know ourselves as readers, choose "just right" books, talk about the books we read, and read books as if they are gold! We continue to build our stamina for staying engaged in our reading and strategies to help us if we begin to lose focus. Mr. Hamilton's class welcomed Mrs. Santacarangelo as a guest reader.

In writing third graders are working on "Small Moments", or personal narrative writing. Students are learning how to "zoom in" on one small seed topic and to stretch out these moments writing by adding details. We have learned how to hook our readers into our stories by writing a catchy lead. We will continue to write, edit, and revise our drafts to make them stronger.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade Report—Mr. Allen and Mr. Blackmur**

In ELA, students are setting up their Writer's Notebooks and learning how to create a reading environment at home with fewer distractions.

In Math, we are working on place value, rounding, and reviewing addition and subtraction strategies.

Science is focused on an introduction to phenomena, and developing scientific questioning. The current unit focuses on earth changes, weather and erosion, as well as the effect of human impact.

In Social studies, we have begun learning about NYS Geography, with landscape and landforms.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Report—Mr. Gregoire and Mr. White**

The students have been acclimating to and learning how to navigate Google classroom. It is important they learn note taking skills for all subjects. The faculty is busy learning how to set up teacher sites and create videos with Chrome extensions.

In Math, we are reviewing decimals to the thousandths and reviewing 4<sup>th</sup> grade materials to get up to speed. Teachers are using Explore learning, brain pop and other activity based programs, as well as their own created google docs, to engage students in learning.

In Science, we are also using Brain Pop and virtual science labs to approach inquiry based questions throughout the units of structure and property of matter, forces and motion, and phenomena. We are making it work online, without materials on hand.

The students are doing well with their demeanor and reflection time in this remote learning setting.

Welcome Mr. White to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade ELA team! Community building is also underway in these classes, with attention to social and emotional wellbeing. Students are reviewing genre differences between non-fiction and fiction. Curriculum planning, using Lucy Calkin's "Up the Ladder" model, is underway.

The students are getting started with reading books through Epic and in writing will work on short story responses. There will also be a feelings paper focused on quarantine/ the covid pandemic. Mrs. Santacarangelo also visited Mr. White's class.

### **Old Business—Jill Manupella**

We still have Original Artworks and yearbooks to deliver from the spring. We have many Yearbooks available for purchase as well. Normally we would have more opportunities for yearbook sales, but that was not possible in the spring. As the principals are generally in the buildings, they can perhaps aid in dispersal of the items for pickup.

### **New Business—Jill Manupella**

We will still promote PTA membership—only \$6 to join! We are shooting for 100% participation, but for now our goal is 50 members. We currently have about 15. Last Spring we were one of 3 local districts to win the NYS PTA Golden Apple Award for PTA membership and it would be wonderful to reach that goal again. Another email will go out to the teachers encouraging them to join.

Harvest History Knight approaches! It will be Friday 10/16 from 4:30-6:30 PM. So far 125 families have registered, which totals 100 children. The RSVP deadline is this Friday, Oct 9th. 28 teachers are signed up to participate, which will include sharing historical facts about the cemetery residents, and handing out candy, books and other items. Parents will enter through the Oakwood Ave entrance, and teachers will check in with the PTA for supplies and proceed to their stations from the 114<sup>th</sup> entrance. Mr Gregoire noted his class is very excited for the event and hopes it is a success. Sarah Huls noted we have donors who have contributed pumpkins and other items and we are all committed to making this a wonderful event for the students.

Parents have asked about Fall Pictures. The PTA will talk to Lifetouch to reach out to Supt. Abitabile and discuss logistics to make this possible. We hope it will be possible to do.

We have Spirit wear in limited quantities and will have on hand at a discount. Once that supply is finished we will discuss when to place a future order.

Sara Brandenburg, a parent representative, asked if it is possible to print classwork from the Chromebooks. It is not possible for school email addresses to correspond with outside addresses to send items for outside printing. While it is known the Chromebooks are not print compatible, it's unclear whether that is a controllable function by district IT. It is a question to ask of that department.

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:27 pm by Jill Manupella**