

Rensselaer Park PTA

December Meeting Minutes

December 2, 2020 via Google Meet

6pm

Present via Google Meet:

Jill Manupella, Sarah Huls, Elaine Garrett, Terri Sanderson, Peter Allen, Adam Gregoire, David Hamilton, Melissa Santarcangelo, Sara Brandenburg, Jamie Cavanaugh, Thomas Hopkins, Leah Karn (Mr. Hamilton's student teacher), Mr. and Mrs. Breton, Rob White

Meeting called to order 6:02 PM by Jill Manupella

Treasurer's Report—Terri Sanderson

Our 50/50 and Spirit Wear sales in November at Hilltop Bowling brought in \$235. Our expenses for the Nov 21 Virtual STEM Night were only about \$120, because of supply donations from SUNY Polytechnic, Burger King, Newton Medical and the Sanderson Family. This made for a very cost effective (if labor intensive!) event. The sales of the Save Around books have started and we are hoping to prompt online sales through a flyer teachers can share with their students' families.

Motion to approve Treasurer's report by Allen, seconded by Hamilton.

Secretary's Report—Elaine Garrett

An addition to the October minutes was made post meeting by Elaine to include mention of RPES's extensive representation at the Knickerbacker Park Trick or Treat Street on Halloween.

Motion to Approve October minutes by Allen, seconded by Gregoire.

Principal's Report—Mr. Hopkins

Virtual STEM Night was a big success! Thank you to the PTA and the teachers for putting on a fantastic event. Special thanks to Mrs. Greene for her video production and voiceover work.

Unfortunately the hoped for December of RPES had to be postponed, due to continued decreased funding in November and rapidly rising covid cases in the area. While this is a major and stressful predicament for families, the students continue to adapt to the circumstances. We are concerned with connecting with all of our remote students to ensure they are in attendance, and this reaching out does fall primarily to the teachers for daily contact. Administration has also made 40 home visits in the last 3 weeks. It is imperative that we keep in touch with our students over the long winter as we face short days, sickness and the covid threat. Parent Teachers conferences are taking place this week, with a half day on Friday.

3rd Grade Report—Mr. Hamilton

Miss Karn will be departing her student teaching rotation on 12/11. We thank her for her contributions to our class and wish her good luck for the remainder of her studies.

Science and Math—The class finished their fossil unit, where they investigated features that might indicate information about size, diet and activity. They are now learning about claims and evidence to support animal survival groupings. Students are learning to look for key words in Multiplication and Division word problems. We are looking at using KAMI editable PDFs for math instruction as they are an available chrome extension.

Reading and Writing—In reading, we are looking to deepen comprehension with visual notetaking, make predications via background knowledge, and jam boards to share with peers. The students are beginning informative writing, and starting with subtopics and planning strategies.

“Kudos to Kiddos!” Since September they are making significant progress and growth in remote learning, with academic and social support provided by their parents.

4th Grade Report—Mr. Allen

Reading and Writing—In reading, students have wrapped up learning about characters and started to learn about story elements such as theme. They are working on fictional stories in writing. We are hoping to set up a Virtual Author visit—stay tuned.

Math and Science—we are reviewing basic facts in multiplication to check for learning and will begin multiplication with multiple digits. They will learn both the standard algorithmic and box or grid method. In Science the students are learning about Energy, with exhibited phenomena, exploration through activity, and explanation by short responses that show claims and evidence.

Social Studies—We learned about the impact of Native Americans on the world today.

5th Grade Report—Mr. Gregoire and Mr. White

Math and Science—We are working on double digit multiplication with decimals. We are also using Nearpod to share slides with each other, an interactive and collaborative experience. Teachers can get printouts of answers. We worked on earth systems by exploring biospheres (food webs/chains) and human impact. We also had a virtual tour of a landfill to see what could have been reused or recycled.

Social Studies—the students are using Social Studies Weekly to learn about colonization.

Reading and Writing—materials are a mix of online and in person adapted to digital format. Students are doing mini-lessons: reflecting on self-behaviors (to do or not), making goals, and determining steps to meet goals. They are clicking into their reading logs to review their entries, note patterns and set new goals. In Writing, the classes are finishing up personal narrative and moving to short fiction. The curriculum team is adapting units to shorter published pieces, easier to complete remotely.

Old Business—Jill Manupella

Thank you to teachers for coming to the Hilltop Bowling Night! The kids were thrilled to see you. We sold 10 Save Around books. Thank you also for your involvement in our virtual STEM night, and again to Mrs Greene for her video compilation. Mr. Allen’s “Blooper video” should definitely be viewed! We appreciate Principal Hopkins’ willingness to be slimed.

New Business—Jill Manupella

Picture Day is still tentatively scheduled for December 18. As school has not opened, there will be a final determination this week.

The Bretons discussed RPES student access to uninterrupted home internet service and making sure needs were met in regards to access. Mr. Hopkins and Mrs. Santarcangelo will look into specifics with the Bretons to study this issue at the present moment, and mitigate any potential future disruptions. More mifis are on order with the district.

Meeting adjourned at 6:25pm by Jill Manupella