

Rensselaer Park PTA

March 2021 Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2021 via Google Meet

6pm

Present via Google Meet:

Jill Manupella, Sarah Huls, Elaine Garrett, Terri Sanderson, Peter Allen, David Hamilton, Melissa Santarcangelo, Sara Brandenburg, Jamie Cavanaugh, Mr. and Mrs. Breton, Rob White, Adam Gregoire, Deyva Arthur, Wayne Foy

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM by Jill Manupella

Treasurer's Report—Terri Sanderson

So far we have sold Burghopoly game spaces totaling \$8350, which will be applied to the upfront production costs. We also received the \$1000 TikTok grant for the upcoming Family Technology Night. We continue to sell Save Around books and had a minor dividend earning. Our expense this month was the down payment for the game production.

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report by Allen, seconded by Gregoire.

Secretary's Report—Elaine Garrett

February Minutes presented for approval.

Motion to approve February minutes by Allen, seconded by Gregoire.

Principal's Report—Mrs. Santarcangelo

We are open! Things are going smoothly at about two weeks into the reopening. While concurrent teaching isn't easy, the faculty is knocking it out of the park! We have been able to accommodate about 2-3 more children per week who wish to switch back to in person learning.

3rd Grade Report—Mr. Hamilton

Thank you to the Bretons for the headphones for our class! In Reading, students are looking at characters; their problems and reactions. We are also learning about secondary characters and have been reading Because of Winn Dixie by Kate Dicomillo. In Writing we are working on personal narrative and editing and revising stories, as well as adding in dialogue and direct action.

We are two weeks into the fractions unit in math and doing great. The students are identifying the value of shaded and unshaded areas and also learning about number bonds. The third grade Math and Science team (Hamilton, Testo, Walzer and D'Adamo) had a productive professional development session with Ms. Marra to review the weather unit in accordance with new NGSS standards. The students are now using resources such as Mr. Science and Generation Genius to learn about Forces and

Interactions. They are also practicing identifying and writing Claims, Evidence and Reasoning with a focus on Evidence. The annual Leprechaun Trap building is upcoming! This Friday the students will have a mystery Science lesson on “What Makes Bridges Strong?”

4th Grade Report—Mr. Allen

The students are working on “close reading” in preparation for the upcoming NYS Testing. Close reading is reading a passage or short story broken down into chunks, with marks and underlining to parse out ideas and concepts. In Writing they are responding to text reads. Math is multiplication and division work; continuing to build and strengthen foundational understanding. The students were able to learn about Waves (amplitude and effect on energy dispersal) with a Wave Machine made out of gummy bears and kabob sticks! The current Social Studies unit is Explorers in Colonial America.

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

The teachers and students are doing well with the transition back to in person and also concurrent learning, which has gone smoother as the technology needs have been identified. Mr. Gregoire notes the uptick in retention with in person instruction.

Math is focused on fractions, as lots of review is needed from the interruption to the students’ 4th grade year 9 addition/subtraction with unlike denominators). Students are using iReady and Prodigy to practice. We are also using the Extra Math resources, which are fun digital flash cards, and noticing good improvement with use of these. Mr. Gregoire is focused on motivating and keeping the students happy as he sees big improvements via in person learning. He is also making sure the remote students get equal attention and participation, so they can all build a class community together. The faculty is also looking at the topics and skills needed to prepare for the NYS tests. In science, the students complete the biosphere and are now on the hydrosphere. They will then move to the atmosphere and geosphere. To support these units we hope to bring in guest speakers such as meteorologists.

In ELA, we are finishing up the ladder remediation review to make sure students are meeting their 5th grade levels. Some teachers are following the virtual plans with literary essay and others are teaching the non-fiction feature article unit. In writing, they are working on informational pieces (instead of lengthier research writing) in order to balance concurrent teaching needs.

Old Business—Jill Manupella

Paint and Snack Night was a success—130 kits were ordered and 100 picked up. Thanks to Mr. Hopkins, Mrs. Santarcangelo and Mrs. Greene for hosting!

New Business—Jill Manupella

Family Tech Night funded by TikTok is Friday March 26th, and will feature a presentation, Kahoot style games and a family survey on screen time. If the families screenshot an email their completed screen time contracts they will be entered into a \$500 drawing! The PTA is looking for teacher help with the

games. Mr. Gregoire suggested Blooket, with its Battle Royale Tournament style and ability to host more participants without needing breakout rooms. There will also be prizes for the individual game winners.

Picture Day will be March 23, 9-4:30, to allow remote students to attend. Signups are out to teachers. We are hoping to be able to take a 5th grade group photo by mid-April, as yearbook content is due by the end of April. The photo logistics would point to outside with masks. Mrs. S hopes to have more guidance soon on protocols. We will also ask parents to send in pictures from the remote learning months to add to the yearbook.

We have three squares left to sell for Burghopoly. There are a few pending asks and checks to wrap up. The PTA will also finalize the card sponsorships.

The Bretons report sales for the Mary Fund giveaway remain brisk which was a pleasant surprise—while some are still available, they are nearly sold out.

Mr. Allen asked if there were plans for new logo spirit wear soon. The PTA is considering it, though we have to look at the quota minimums.

Motion to adjourn meeting by Allen, seconded by Mr. Breton.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 by Jill Manupella.