

Auburn Elementary PTO Minutes

Monday, September 18, 2017

Attendance:

Stephen Sevenser (principal), Ashley Nowak and Amanda VanTol (PTO Co-Coordinators), Elizabeth Garchow (PTO Co-Coordinator and Secretary), Nicole Kingsbury (PTO Co-Coordinator and Treasurer), Diana Samborn, Amy Lupcke and Julee Dillon (Teachers) and 10 parents.

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 and was followed by welcomes and introductions for the first meeting of the year, and then immediately followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Secretary's Report:

Meeting minutes from the final PTO meeting of the 2016/17 school year (May, 2017) were reviewed and approved. Suggestions were made to shorten the length of the meeting minutes by going into less detail. A motion was made to approve the report by Jill Harrison and was seconded by A. Lupcke.

Treasurer's Report:

Kingsbury reviewed budget transactions and updates as of the conclusion of the 2016/17 school year and thus far into the current school year. A motion to approve the report was made by A. Lupcke and was seconded by M. Bornemann.

Principal's Report:

- Mr. Sevenser welcomed everyone to the first PTO meeting of the 2017/18 school year and thanked all in attendance for taking their time to join us.
- An item in the May, 2017 meeting minutes was the discussion of the new school mascot, which had been put up for a vote with feedback to change the school mascot to the Explorers. This has been put on hold. The process used to gather input was followed correctly however the school district's legal advisors have recommended waiting until the State Legislature makes a decision to change school mascots that represent or impact a person's culture. The aim is to achieve a balance between community, State and respect for individuals in regards to what is "appropriate" to use as a school mascot. The concern is that if we, voluntarily, change the Auburn Elementary mascot now, it could impact Western High School (Warriors), which is not the objective. So, for now, no official change will take place at Auburn Elementary and the school mascot will remain the Indians.
- Another item mentioned in the May, 2017 minutes was the idea of a before school or after-school care program mentioned by a parent joining us from another school district. Information was gathered into how this previous school, and other schools, are funding after-school programs. It was found that they have grant funded programs (like GSRP) already in place. Unfortunately, Auburn Elementary is not a school that receives State or Federal grant funds and cannot develop this type of program at this time.

- We welcomed 3 new employees to the Auburn Elementary team this school year. Wendy Maida is our Behavior Intervention Coordinator, Amy Hurst is our Content Coach, and Elizabeth Garchow is an Educational Assistant.
- Since the conclusion of the last school year, our final drinking fountains have been installed near A-Wing and the Cafeteria. We now have a total of 4 water drinking/filling stations in the school. These stations provide cold, filtered drinking water and eliminate the need for disposable, plastic water bottles, which cuts back on the number of bottles being added to our landfills every day. They also seem to encourage our students to drink more water, which is very healthy.
- Western High School Athletics donated 2 of their practice soccer goal posts to Auburn Elementary at the beginning of the school year. These have been positioned on the playground at a distance equal to an official U8 soccer field. We want to thank Western for their amazing generosity. The students love them.
- This year's enrollment numbers are down from last year. We have 500ish students enrolled. Our numbers have fluctuated quite a bit so far this year, with an unusually high number of adds and drops already. We did lose a few students to the new STEM school that opened in Midland this year. The district is in the process of evaluating to see if this will be a permanent change, or if this is more of a "new shiny toy" effect, resulting in students returning and enrollment numbers going back up.
- Last year our school implemented the use of a new classroom called the Learning Lab. This classroom provided intervention for students needing more one-on-one help with certain skills and two programs; Leveled Literacy Intervention and Read 180. Unfortunately, due to budget reductions, Auburn Elementary lost the Intervention teacher position. We thought we would be able to make the Learning Lab work still, but Special Education IDEA laws are specific about the use of Special Education resources outside of an inclusion setting. The Learning Lab was very beneficial to students struggling and needing additional one-on-one help. We will continue to explore options.
- Many of you have heard of the new 3rd grade reading legislation. This new legislation will be affecting this year's new Kindergarten and 1st grade students when they reach 3rd grade. The current 3rd grade and 2nd grade classes will not be affected by this new legislation other than targeted planning. The very basic explanation of the new legislation is this; if 3rd grade students do not meet the grade level proficiency reading level, as determined by their MSTEP results, by the completion of their 3rd grade year, they will be retained with some exceptions. Teachers will be in contact over the next few weeks with parents of students where there is an identified concern with student performance. Again, this does NOT affect this year's 2nd or 3rd graders.

Coordinators' Report:

- Recap of last year's fundraising
 - 56 Chromebooks
 - 4 water stations
 - 3 Chromebook charging carts
 - Multimedia projector for the gymnasium

- 5th grade celebration luncheon
 - Teacher classroom supplies
 - Talent show needs (cords, decorations, etc)
 - P.E./outdoor items (jump ropes, kickballs, etc)
- New business-
 - PTO is using a new method, called Sign-Up Genius for volunteers to sign-up for events. Whenever we have an event coming up, and need volunteers, an email will come home containing a link to Sign-up Genius. Descriptions of each volunteer position will be posted allowing volunteers to determine how they can help.
 - The fall fundraiser merchandise delivery/pickup will be the next event needing volunteers. We will need volunteers available to organize the delivered merchandise and to help with parent pickup. Watch for an email to come shortly.
 - Bake sales are being replaced this year. We have had a serious decline in volunteers available to work the bake sale and have had very few parents willing to donate food items to sell. This year we are trying some additional “fun days”. Like the spirit days, students will be able to wear their pjs one day and hats the next. They will have to make a monetary donation to do so. More information will be coming home.
 - Scrip- we will no longer be placing family orders in the office. Orders can still be placed individually online at shopwithscrip.com. We will have a select number of cards available for purchase in the office daily, and will have a larger selection available for on-site purchase at the Holiday concert and Variety show
 - Western’s homecoming parade is coming up Friday, September 29 at 5:30pm. This year’s theme is “safari”. Auburn Elementary will have a float in the parade again this year. We welcome all students and their families to walk with us. A flyer will be coming home to fill out letting us know your student(s) will be joining us. All students MUST have an adult with them to walk. While not necessary, an animal outfit/mask/face paint would be greatly appreciated and welcomed.
 - Picture day is this Wednesday, Sept 20
- This year’s new fundraising focuses will be-
 - Chromebook sets for K and 1st grade, focusing on getting half for each this year
 - An outdoor classroom area near Kindergarten wing, with seating and an assortment of outdoor educational tools to give teachers and their students an alternative learning environment.
- We continued the popcorn prepay option this year, which has been extremely successful so far. Cutoff is September 22nd.
- Instead of the treasure chest prize tickets hidden in select bags of popcorn, this year we are trying a new prize option. We will be giving out “Friend chips”. These are an assortment of coins that can attach to backpacks, zippers, etc and all contain a variety of positive affirmations. These can be collected and/or shared among friends.

- Our annual harvest party is coming up on Friday, October 27 from 6:30-8:30. Watch for more information and an email for volunteers to come home.
- In November we will be starting a toy drive called "Presents for Pediatrics." This will run from Nov 2-Dec 15. We have partnered up with United Financial Credit Union and Adio Chiropractic to collect toys and stuffed animals for the pediatric units at St. Mary's, Covenant and Mid-Michigan hospitals. Watch for more information to come home, but start collecting those small toys now!
- December 15th will be our holiday "shop 'n drop" movie night. Plan now to drop your students off for a night of cheap babysitting, while you get your last minute holiday shopping done before break starts! Watch for more information and an email for volunteers to come home.
- The PTO will be sponsoring a classroom door challenge beginning in October. Classrooms will be challenged to decorate their doors meeting a variety of certain criteria using only a specific list of items. Classrooms will be judged and winners will be chosen for each criteria.
- A new fundraiser idea was proposed. R. Buffman approached the PTO about doing a *Scentsy* fundraiser, selling air freshener packets. She is offering her entire commission plus what we would earn, equaling about a 30% earnings for the school. Details of this fundraiser were provided and voted on at the meeting. Parents present voted yes to try this new fundraiser. Details will be ironed out and passed on as soon as possible.

Our next PTO meeting will be **Monday, November 6, 2017**. Child care will be provided by the Bay Arenac ISD Early Learning Development class.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02pm.