

Minutes from the 11/6/17 Fiske PTO General Meeting  
Fiske Library

Attendees: Manisha Varma, Robin Bellinger, Alison Giorlando, Megan Kamm, Elizabeth Svedlund, Danielle Nixon, Greg Lief, Rachel McGregor

Copies of minutes from the 9/18/17 general meeting were presented on the meeting tables.

At 6:36pm Manisha called the meeting to order. She welcomed the group with a few brief updates:

- Despite the number of ongoing drives, community seems aware of all and is participating in all: Cradles to Crayons, Fiske Cares, and Halloween candy drive. Toys for Tots drive is upcoming. Last day for the dentists' candy drive is Wednesday 11/8. Rachel noted that Sprague has filled 6 boxes of candy, and Fiske has filled only one and a half; she wants to catch up.
- The search for auction chairs continues. Manisha has been reaching out to people. The previous chairs (from two years ago) are trying to get people involved. Greg pointed out that auction proceeds represent half of the PTO's operating budget. Manisha pointed out that the Creative Arts programs are PTO-funded, and we can't increase the Creative Arts budget to keep up with speakers' and other visitors' annually rising fees unless we know we have a fundraiser coming up.
- RE: budget, the Fiske ski trip in March will not be PTO funded.
- RE: budget, the PTO allocates some money for fifth grade activities. The fifth grade also raises money themselves through bake sales, cycle bar classes, etc. In addition to fun activities, they usually use the money to give the school a gift. Rachel said last year's fifth graders gave the library multicultural books requested by librarians.
- Wild West was very successful. Greg said we netted \$27,000 on \$37,000 revenue, \$1000-\$1500 more than last year. Manisha thanked Greg and everyone who handled behind-the-scenes licensing issues for the raffle.
- Teacher Appreciation luncheon scheduled for 11/15. Teachers love this event, and it has high parent participation.
- The WEF spelling bee was a success. Dan LeBlanc, Harp Bedi, and Siva Lavu represented Fiske. Elizabeth Svedlund volunteered her husband for next year's team.
- Manisha said she is working on cleaning up the Monday Memo. Megan LeBlanc, who does the PAWS PTO memo, will help.
- Game night was supposed to happen in October, but Hillary Madge, who ran it last year, is no longer at Fiske. On this night the library is open, the PTO orders pizza, and families bring in their own board games for kids and parents to play. November 17 is a possibility. Rachel wondered if Hillary Madge had bought some games for the PTO to keep.

- Bingo night at Babson in January is usually headed up by Tracy Cyr. Babson provides the pizza, so the PTO makes money from ticket sales and a bake sale.
- After-school enrichment programs are very successful and popular with parents. Rachel said she and Cherry Poulicakos keep costs down by using Fiske teachers; Katie Laufer and Andrew Bell teach two per session. Most classes fill up. Rachel said that Fiske is always seeking a chess teacher for these classes. There are scholarships for families who need them.
- The science fair is usually in February. Anshul and Manisha ran it last year.
- Manisha said Anshul had raised the idea of a school spelling bee, and she said anything parents propose, we can try to pull off.
- World Heritage Night, which is usually in March, will be discussed at the January PTO meeting. Rachel and Manisha have discussed the possibility of bringing it back to Fiske from the Middle School.

There were not enough people present to approve the 9/18/17 meeting minutes. They will be approved at the January meeting or by email, if appropriate.

Principal's update:

- Car line safety continues to be an issue. Some people are dropping their kids off in the lower parking lot, which is quite dangerous because of visibility issues and because that is where the buses come and go. Elizabeth wondered if the school might use a police officer for a day or two, and Rachel said we must police each other. Manisha wondered if a visible sign might help parents follow rules.
- Rachel showed fun pictures from the fall. She wants a mascot costume; does anyone know where to get one?
- Students have been reviewing the Fiske fundamentals.
- "Growth mindset is in the air we breathe here." Students have been presented with inspirational math problems. Rachel bought Jo Boaler's *Mathematical Mindsets* for all the teachers last year, and they have been using it all kinds of ways. Julie Verret uses it in music class, for instance.
- After this fall's devastating hurricanes, the Student Council researched groups the school could help and chose the American Humane Society and All Hands Volunteers. Each class will have a jar to collect change for these groups. This is an opportunity for students to be in charge of their own charitable activity and will be tied into 11/15 Turkey Trot.
- Lunch has been calmer this year with one grade eating at a time. Kindergarten and second grade eat together, since they each have only two sections.
- In October, the fifth grade had a team building morning run by Project Adventure programs.

- In October, Manisha came to talk to students about Diwali and to provide the teachers an Indian lunch.
- Teachers are using the "triangle of respect" from Stan Davis, who works with the school on peer-to-peer programs. The triangle of respect has a different relationship on each side: teacher to student, student to student, and student to teacher. Megan Kamm showed a poster second graders made with concrete examples of respect. Alison Giorlando said her class talked about how you can't have the whole without the parts. How does it feel when all parties respect each other? Children said "harmonious" and "peaceful." The triangle of respect has been used in Open Circle discussions in class, and teachers did skits about it at assembly. Rachel has been seeing many doors being held open and hearing many polite greetings. Manisha wondered if the Fiske Revue (formerly the talent show) could have a theme, such as respect.
- The Halloween Parade route was a bit longer this year than last. Kids loved it. Then they did October crafts in classrooms.
- A lot going on this fall; a great feel; so much positive energy!

Elizabeth asked if the lunchtime recycling program introduced last year is still going on. Rachel said yes, the students know the drill now and are proud to do it. She then said that soon fifth graders will be given a chance to apply for a school job, such as helping with recycling. They will need to get a recommendation from someone at school and will be required to give two weeks notice if they want to quit!

Manisha said our next meeting is not until January. We want to start sometimes bringing guests of interest to our general meetings (School Committee members, League of Women Voters, etc.) School Committee members may come in January.

Elizabeth asked the teachers present if there is anything more the PTO could do to support them. The teachers said no, and that the parent population in general is great. The said Creative Arts is where they feel the most direct impact in the classroom, and that those parents are good about communication. Manisha asked them to let the PTO know if anything is not working well.

Manisha adjourned the meeting at 7:20.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Robin Bellinger, co-secretary