

March 16, 2023

Rowe School PTO Meeting, 6:30-8 PM

Draft Minutes

Officers Present: Rita King, PTO President; Kayla Theriault, Community Building Chair; Jennifer Rent, Fundraising Chair; Bianca MacDonald, Secretary

Other Attendees: Jesseca Steele, Interim Rowe Principal; Bianca Winship, Math Coach; Meghan Torrieri; Maria Nelson, Rowe Teacher; Janna Stefanowicz; Damon Yakovleff.

I. **Welcome and Introductions**

Rita called the meeting to order and participants introduced themselves.

II. **Rowe Updates from Interim Principal, Jesseca Steele**

A. **Updates**

- a. **Community Potluck** was a huge success. Transportation to the event was a big success and Jesseca utilized a PPS van to transport families to and from the event.
- b. **Enrollment** is currently down to 454 from 466 at the beginning of the school year. 3 new students enrolled this week.
- c. **Staffing** the school is currently fully staffed except for a BREATH 3-5 position.
- d. **Current focus for teachers** is preparing for spring conferences and completing assessments for report cards.
- e. The school has also been using a Kindness Chart and students are writing kind messages. 5th graders are sharing a few each morning with a focus to include multilingual population.
- f. **Staff Morale** the group discussed concerns about staff morale given the influx of new students and lack of services. Jesseca reports that Rowe overall is in a good place. All grade levels are at capacity except k and 5. Staff is also managing a lot of behavioral issues particularly in the k,1 and 2 populations. This may be related to the pandemic. Additionally, integrating a new ELA curriculum has been stressful to staff.

B. **Questions and Comments from Parents**

- a. **What Can Families Do?** Jesseca encouraged families to look at the proposed school budget the budget proposes an increase in operational costs and Rowe would lose the garden position and 1 FTE classroom teacher. Meaning that teachers will lose support of additional special which impacts planning time. Additionally class size will increase which would be especially impactful in the younger k-2 grades. Additionally the community coordinator position would be cut.
- b. **Why is the BCBA position being cut?** Jesseca explained that the position was never filled and it appears to work better to contract BCBA work. The Breath program has its own BCBA

c. **Garden position, current garden projects and potential greenhouse?** The group wondered about how to advocate to keep the garden position and possible advocacy to the school board. Teachers shared opinion as to whether the garden projects could continue without a dedicated position and shared that likely much of the work that Jess does would not be sustainable. The PTO will reconsider whether or not to fund the greenhouse that was under consideration for PTO funds.

d. **Transportation and traffic patterns in the Rowe parking lot and how can parents help?** Jesseca shared that there continue to be safety concerns around the parking lot. The staff is working to control traffic to safely get children to and from school. The biggest concern is traffic passing other vehicles who are actively loading students. Jesseca reports that a new system for dismissal has been working well. Morning continues to be a challenge and staff will work to educate parents about safe drop off procedures.

e. **Encouragement for Families to Bus to School.** A community member made a plea for more families to take the bus to school rather than driving to increase safety for people who are walking and biking.

f. **Greening Project at Sagamore** A community member educated regarding a greening project at Sagamore Village that will begin in 4/2023, Many families are unaware of the project and this may impact walkers from Sagamore.

g. **How is the principal search going?** This is currently in progress. Hoping to hire by 4/2023.

III. **Math and Movement night - Bianca Winship**

Rowe Math Coach, Bianca Winship, requested PTO support and coordination to host a math and movement night before the end of the school year. We discussed potential Dates of 5/18/23, 5/25/23, 6/1/23 are potential dates. Bianca will determine the best possible date and coordinate with PTO officers.

The group agreed that having staff at the potluck event was very helpful and organizers are exploring whether title 1 money could be used to pay staff to attend.

IV. **PTO Event Updates**

A. **Teacher Coffee, March 17, Kayla Theriault.** Kayla reported that she feels prepared for the teacher coffee with donations from Holey Donut, Tally's Kitchen and coffee.

Invitations to the event have also been extended to bus drivers.

B. **Calendar Raffle, Jennifer Rent.** Calendar raffle sales are going on now. Please buy and sell tickets.

C. **SpringFest, May 6, 12-3 pm, Meghan Torrieri.** Meghan reported on SpringFest planning and preparations. This is the largest community event of the year. Looking for volunteers to cover 45 minute shifts. We will also recruit volunteers through the high school and middle schools. There will be games, bounce house, teacher raffle, bounce house, silent auction, tattoo parlor, concessions, cake crawl and the locker project will be present. We are adding a dunk tank this year. Realm of rowe will provide craft projects. PE teacher, Renee Custeau will have an engagement area with bubbles and hula hoops.

People will be able to buy tickets ahead of time. All activities will be paid with tickets. Goal is for tickets to be affordable and accessible to the whole community.

D. Teacher appreciation, First Week of May, Kayla Theriault. Kayla and Janna are currently planning teacher appreciation week activities. The theme will be Hollywood.

V. Approve Meeting Minutes

The December 2022 meeting minutes were shared with participants electronically. The group unanimously approved the minutes.

VI. 2023-24 PTO Board Nominations, Rita King

Rita shared the current nominations for the PTO board.

Steph Walsh - President

Vice President - Ashley Eiler

Secretary - Audrey Bartholomew

Treasurer - Janna Stephanowicz

Community Building Chair - Kayla Theriault

Open Positions:

Fundraising Chair

Community Building Co-Chair

VII. Upcoming Events Calendar

4/22 Greening Day

5/17 National Walk/ Bike to School Day

5/20 Twin Swirls Day

5/23 United Way Day of Service

VIII. Wrap up and Adjournment

Rita adjourned the meeting at 7:44 pm.