

October 19th, 2023

Rowe School PTO Meeting, 6:00-7:30

Officers Present: Stephanie Walsh, PTO President; Ashley Eiler, PTO vice-president; Janna Stefanowicz, Treasurer; Emily Davis and Kayla Theriault Co-Community Building Chairs

Other Attendees: Bill Anton, Rowe Principal; Maya Lena; Damen Yakovleff; Melanie Caldwell, Rania Campbell-Bussiere, Alicia Peters, Jill King

I. Welcome and Introductions

Steph called the meeting to order and participants introduced themselves.

II. Update and Q & A with Principal Bill Anton

Mr. Anton shared his experiences and observations as the new Rowe principal this year. He feels supported by the parents and colleagues at Rowe. As the new principal, he reported not being fully aware of the depths of challenges in the school and structure; however, staff and families have positively received the changes made to set the foundation to prepare students for learning.

There have been 54 students added to the school since June. We now have 489 students enrolled at Rowe with 130 of those students being multilingual learners and a large percentage of unhoused children. He is currently spending about 90% of his time making conditions/classroom environments suitable for teachers to teach their students. He reported the school has the talent; however, we are lacking the resources and infrastructure to meet the challenges of our student population. Mr. Anton reported that despite the daily challenges, teachers and staff come to work everyday to make the best outcome for the students' day. The biggest obstacle is resources which equals money. Mr. Anton feels a deep responsibility to advocate for the students but the daily challenges have made it difficult to do so and he is waiting to see how the budget will allow funding in the future.

The attendees asked what resources are needed to be successful. Mr. Anton reported that Rowe needs more highly trained education technicians, more school counselors, and more dedicated building substitutes to support the students, staff and administrators.

Mr. Anton and attendees encouraged everyone to talk with the school board members and neighbors about what we (the school and district) need and he believes the superintendent will be honest in his reports.

II. Treasurer's Report & Budget Approval Treasurer Janna Stefanowicz presented the treasurer's report and plan for the 2023/2024 Budget.

The total budget is \$28,680 for the 2023/2024 school year.

- A. Expenses
 - a. Supplies
 - i. Specials
 - ii. Teacher wishlists (\$100 stipend to classroom teachers)
 - iii. Teacher's lounge - Also seeking donations
 - iv. Makerspace (the school and PTO did not renew Ruth's Reusable Resource membership this year)
 - b. Appreciation
 - c. Enrichment \$14,200
 - i. Spirit Week
 - ii. Garden/Outdoor Learning
 - iii. BREATHE
 - iv. Misc (Math Night)
 - v. Special Education Reading Curriculum Subscriptions
 - vi. Curriculum/Enrichment/Field Trips - broken down for each grade level at ~\$20 per student
 - d. Overhead/PTO fees - Square, Stripe, Smore subscriptions
 - e. Clubs/Teams - PTO helps support clubs/teams, we hope to add more
 - f. School Culture
 - i. 5th grade farewell
 - ii. Community Building
 - iii. Back to School Popsicle Social/Mr. Anton
 - iv. Annual Snack Fund

B. Income - \$25,150

- a. Fundraisers
 - i. Walk-a-thon - largest fundraiser
 - ii. Miscellaneous Donations/Grants
 - iii. Clynk/Hannaford Community Cash
 - iv. Restaurant fundraisers
 - v. Calendar Raffle
- b. Community Building Events
 - i. Rowe Spirit Wear
 - ii. Springfest
 - iii. Community Events

Steph explained that the PTO budget operates on funds raised from the previous year.

C. 2023/2024 Budget Vote The group voted unanimously to approve the proposed PTO budget for the 2023/2023 school year.

III. Calendar - Community Committee

- A. Alicia Peters asked why the PTO chose to use Print: A Bookstore over the traditional Scholastic book fair. Kayla reported this was largely due to Covid but

there were other factors to consider from an equity standpoint. Attendees addressed concern that since Print is a local bookstore the prices are higher and less obtainable for some families. PTO members indicated that collaborating with Print was used last year as a conscious choice to support our classroom teachers in revamping their classroom libraries and not intended to be act as a fundraiser for the PTO. Members also stated that most, if not all, classrooms receive one or more free books throughout the school year giving all students an opportunity to receive their own new books.

- B. Attendees suggested that the PTO calendar and/or newsletter add school board dates and suggests families engage with their city representatives and school board members

IV. Steph and Janna reminded the attendees that “You are the PTO” if you are a parent of a child at Rowe. We encourage all parents to participate, engage, and offer suggestions/ideas

V. Room Parents/Directory

Ashley updated the group on the status of room parents. She reported the biggest obstacle for room parents is being unable to access contact information to engage classroom families. Ashley has also received feedback from former room parents about not knowing the role of the room parent. Ashley plans to send ideas to room parents as a suggestion. She also indicated some teachers may have different ideas about how to utilize room parents.

- A. Reminder to families that a background check needs to be completed in order to volunteer in the classroom.

VI. Other

T-shirts were distributed to all students and staff but some teachers have held onto student shirts to pass out on the walk a thon day.

VII. We discussed upcoming events and activities and indicated we would love to add more parent-led clubs and activities. The PTO executive board will offer support as needed.

VIII. Maya informed the attendees that Rowe has no school crossing guards which has been reported to the superintendent. She hopes 3 to 4 crossing guards can be added to the Rowe walking route. The group also discussed the previous walking bus and if we should inquire about bringing that back. Kayla reported that the walking bus was previously managed by school employees but after upset parents, the staff no longer maintained the walking bus route. Damon also reported there is no longer funding to support that initiative.

Adjournment

Steph adjourned the meeting at 7:34 pm.