

November 18, 2021

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

Approved Minutes

Officers Present: Rita King, PTO Co-President; Mark Bower, PTO Co-President; Starr Soul-McDonald, PTO vice-president; Kayla Theriault, Community Building Co-Chair; Emily Bishop, Community Building Co-Chair; Bianca MacDonald, Secretary

Other Attendees: Barbara Fletcher, Rowe Principal; Amy Hayes; Jennifer Rent; Emily Kenniston; Cesily Merrill; Michelle Waring; Alicia Hoffman; Maria Nelson, kindergarten teacher; Jennifer Evans.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Rita called the meeting to order and participants introduced themselves.

II. Approve Minutes

An electronic link to the October PTO meeting minutes was provided to participants. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. School Updates from Barbara Fletcher, Rowe Principal

Principal [Barbara Fletcher](#) provided updates about the school.

- A. Conferences and Report Cards.** Teachers are busy preparing for conferences which will be held virtually on the week on November 29th. Both Thursday, 12/2/2021 and Friday, 12/3/2021 are early release days with students releasing at 12:30. Teachers are working to make the conference appropriate at each grade level. The school will be sending out a sign up genius for conferences next week. Teachers will also be finishing grading and will have all grades in Infinite Campus by 12/13/2021.
- B. Family Directory** is being prepared for distribution to families in order for students to connect outside of school. About 100 families supplied contact information for the directory. Barb will include a link to add information as it is anticipated that more families will want to participate once the directory is released.
- C. Vaccination Clinic.** A COVID-19 vaccination clinic was held at the school on 11/16/2021. 131 Students received their first vaccine dose. Barb reports that she has heard about many students being vaccinated outside of school as well. Students will receive second doses at school in December.
- D. Walk-a-thon.** Barb thanked the PTO for organizing the walk-a-thon at school this month. She reports that the students really enjoyed the event. School staff are planning a school wide celebration to occur in December.

Parent Questions

- How can we increase connection with non-English speaking parents to help our kids to connect?

Barb reports that the school can use resources to help to bridge the language barrier and facilitate communication between families who speak different languages.

- Has Rowe been impacted by staff shortages?
Yes, the district is trying to address transportation shortages. Rowe is fully staffed but still struggles to cover absences of staff. There are 2 full time substitutes and there continue to be absences every day. Staff really has to pull together to cover all of the school needs. Barb also acknowledged that there have been staff shortages at other school support agencies such as agencies providing behavioral health professional support to students.
The school could really use volunteers particularly at lunch and recess. Volunteers need to have a background check and be vaccinated. Parents are also able to volunteer in the classroom with the same requirements.
- Have certification requirements been reduced to make it easier for people to teach and substitute teach?
Yes, people can get “emergency certification”. The school is currently hiring another building substitute and a remote learning liaison.
- Will parents be notified for the percentages of students who have been vaccinated?
The district will provide this information.

IV. Treasurer’s Report and Budget Vote

Mark reviewed highlights from the treasurer’s report as Treasurer, Steph Walsh, was unable to attend this meeting.

Income

Walk-a-thon. The walk-a-thon raised a record breaking amount of money for the PTO this year raising \$14,087 - more than \$5000 over budget!

Walk-a-thon expenses were: \$170 for dog tags for students; \$49 paper cups; \$140 paypal fees.

Anonymous Donation of \$1000. Donor specified that the funds are to meet immediate student needs as identified by school nursing and social work staff.

\$475 was spent to purchase 48 pairs of jogger pants in various sizes.

Donation Drive. Raised \$105 additional money for immediate students' needs.

Spirit wear. Spirit wear sales raised \$800 at the scavenger hunt last month.

Expenses

General PTO supplies. \$300 for Zoom and S’more subscriptions.

PBL funds reminder. The PTO has had a few requests for project based learning (PBL) funds. Traditionally the bulk of these requests come in the Spring. Barb will remind staff of availability of PBL funds.

Parent Questions

- Is it possible to add paypal fees to donations?
PTO will look into this option.
- Can we add Spirit Wear ordering to the PTO website?
The PTO is currently working to add this option.
- Nurse and social worker are in need of bags to send food/ items home with students. Can we donate cloth target bags?
Yes and bags can be donated.

V. Community Building Update

Emily and Kayla presented an update on PTO community building efforts.

A. Book Swap and Winter Gear Donation Drive

The PTO will be hosting this event on November 20th. We will be looking for donations of board games, puzzles and books. Students do not need to bring a book to take a book.

There will be a treasure hunt activity for students to find snowflakes around the school grounds. Students will receive prizes for participation.

We will also be collecting new and gently used outdoor gear and non perishable food items.

PTO will provide free snacks and cocoa. Rowanda Bean has donated 80 hot chocolates. PTO will provide free popcorn.

If you are interested in volunteering for this event please contact Kayla and Emily at communitybuilding@rowepto.org

5th grade graduation committee will hold a bake sale to support their graduation event.

Parents and teachers can leave donations with Sue and Diane in the main office.

B. Winterfest

This event will be outdoors this year. Kids love this event and it takes an enormous amount of volunteers to pull it off. January 22nd is the tentative date. There is a planning meeting on 11/22/2021 on Zoom. Please contact communitybuilding@rowepto.org if you would like to help out.

VI. Fundraising Update

A. Restaurant fundraisers. The PTO is organizing a fundraiser at Portland Pie in December and will schedule a few other restaurants in the spring.

B. Spirit Wear. There will be additional opportunities for Spirit Wear sales in December through online ordering and pick up at school or in person purchasing.

- C. Amazon Smile.** Remember that you can make Amazon purchases through Amazon Smile with a portion of your purchase going to the Rowe PTO. We will also do a reminder in the “Holiday Edition” newsletter.
- D. Sponsorships.** PTO is working to put together a packet to solicit sponsorships as a means of keeping PTO events free and accessible.

VII. Upcoming Stargazing Event

Outdoor art teacher, Jonathan Graffius, is facilitating an outdoor stargazing event scheduled for March 4th. He is collaborating with a local author present to students at school. Additionally he is working with the local planetarium for the event. We are working to establish a location, potentially off of school grounds. We are hoping to provide transportation to students who are not within walking distance to the venue. Potentially, through the school department or a private transportation company.

VIII. Wrap up and Adjournment

Rita thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm.