

Marshall Road Elementary



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Marshall Road Elementary PTA Minutes
October 20, 2017 @ 9:30am
MRES Cafeteria

Attendees: Anna Moore (President), Andrea Kramer (Vice President), Laura Parker (Treasurer), Helen Lee (Secretary), Missy Walsh, Elizabeth Korondy, Jenny Lee, Joanne Lhulier, John Evans, Catherine Mascovitz, Zita Rostas, Ashwin Joshi, Stephanie Joshi, Gary Hinisor, Yesenia Argueta, Lisa Kelso, Missy Dixon, Pegah Poorshaghghi, Patricia Hanna, Krista McClelland, Catharine Andricos, Loginn Kapitian, Heather Palmer, Kara Reynolds, Rachel Shnekendorf, Yoshiko Osaka, Kelly Johnson, Urvi Desai, Zhanar Kudaibergenova, Tanya McClelland, Annemarie McCaslin, Lara Brooks, Olga Hernandez, Anna Cerefice, Peg Fram, Laura Jairam

- I. Call Meeting to Order – President, Anna Moore, called the meeting to order at 9:33am.
- II. President's Report – Anna thanked everyone for attending and welcomed everyone to coffee and cookies.
 - A. Book Fair - Anna thanked all book fair volunteers whether for an hour or every day (thanks Olga and Denise!). Tonight's the last night until 8pm.
 - B. STEAM Night - Tonight from 630-830pm! We received a grant from National PTA/Mathnasium. There will be a coloring station, complimentary snacks, lots of tables, thanks in advance to volunteers for tonight's STEAM Night!
 - C. Volunteer Opportunities Email – This is a new initiative this year that is sent out through the same list as eNews. We plan to do this every month. November's will feature the Food Drive, Runathon, and Thanksgiving teacher lunch. It's a one stop shop to look for volunteer opportunities for the month.
- III. September Meeting Minutes - Helen made a motion to approve the September 2017 meetings. Motion was seconded, attending PTA members voted, and the stated Motion was accepted.
- IV. Treasurer's Report – Laura explained that every year during audit, we're asked to go digital, so this year we're using MoneyMinder to keep track of our finances, which makes it much easier for treasurer. The treasurer's report will be posted online after today's meeting.
- V. Program Reports
 - A. Runathon (Missy Walsh) - We raised \$5500 in t-shirt sponsor sales! Kids that helped get sponsors will get lunch with Principal Heiges. We request donations of gift cards (even \$5 ones) you have lying around or if you want to get a donated one from businesses for Runathon using letters that are being distributed today. Regarding pledge sheets: 100% goes straight to support the school; if you get \$50 in donations - you get a chance at the raffle.

- B. Garden (Laura Jairam) – The garden is in the courtyard area behind the library, accessible through the back of the library. It was out of use for the last couple years. Laura has been working with volunteers to prune trees, mulch, replace bedding, remove debris, replace doormats, put a new sprayer on hose. In terms of student involvement, fifth grade students did an archaeological dig project last week for museum night in the garden; daisy troop planted bulbs; and Laura has new students in mind for next month once the new beds go in. The next big effort is installing 4 new raised cedar beds on 11/6 (Teacher Work Day!), and Laura is looking for volunteers.
- C. Directory (Anna Moore) - You should've received an email for the directory yesterday. You can opt out or control what gets included in the directory. The directory is open to everyone until 11/17; after 11/17, only PTA members get access to the directory as it is a benefit of PTA membership.

VI. Principal's Report - Jen Heiges says welcome and thanks for coming. She presents the following with a Google slides presentation.

- A. Positivity Project - Positivity Project and Responsive Classroom (RC) are 2 totally different things. Positivity Project is an add-on, based on research a couple years ago to help students gain basic life/social skills that kids are missing these days. It focuses on 24 character traits, and her morning message every day is based on the trait of the week. The biggest question she gets is what lessons look like. Principal Heiges explained that it's a program that's handed to schools/teachers, and she gave a demo of what the school receives. The demo includes a powerpoint that is divided into lessons each day, e.g., a video clip of students eating different sandwiches throughout 100 years for "openmindedness"; discussion for students is "what does openmindedness mean to you?" The school plans to continue doing this next year, as it provides positive and valuable messages, the information on the slides seems to get updated each year, and it's free.

On the other hand, responsive classroom is a work in progress. Teachers have to get trained in RC to get this right; new teachers get RC survival kits. It's about greeting students at the classroom door every day, establishing classroom rules, having morning meetings, discussing hopes and dreams, taking a break space (not timeout but as a self-regulation tool), and honing teacher language (e.g., the way we compliment kids should be very specific or "show me what a fourth grade class should look like in hallway", etc). It's really helpful to the teacher during transitions and to make it peaceful, which is very difficult to achieve for kids. The school is working very hard on closing circle this year to help kids leave school in a more peaceful way, which helps with dismissal and hopefully helps kids transition to home more peacefully.

- B. Project-Based Learning (PBL) -This is very exciting for the school and teachers. MRES started this last year. It's a tool for teachers to help get abstract thoughts into something concrete. The goal is to achieve FCPS' Portrait of a Graduate skills. It gives kids an opportunity to explore without requiring something specific or having students regurgitate exact answers, which is a shift from standards-based movement that has dominated education for the last 10 years (e.g., standards listed on each classroom board). Some teachers are trained, some are starting training, some not trained yet. PBL is difficult for teachers since they like to control students. Some examples of PBL: in order

to make 6th grade wax museum less rule-based and more collaborative and free, students watched a video from a curator talk about what museums look for in their artwork and applied what they learned to their museum; Vienna mayor proposed students solve actual problems going on around town (e.g., "how can Vienna convince its citizens to plant more trees"). The idea is for kids to come up with what they "need to know" to solve problems or execute a task; all about inquiry and innovation. In the end, there's supposed to be an authentic audience because in the real world, somebody sees your work product and gives you feedback, which is what we're trying to give the kids a taste of. Examples of this: 6th graders doing a gratitude hallway that shows "how do i show gratitude to people in my life"; 1st and 3rd graders will give feedback to 6th graders before the 6th grade parents come to see it. Another goal is to get students to authentically assess themselves. If there's something you can offer to teachers (you or someone you know), please do! For example, if you know 2nd graders do monarch butterflies but you think there's a way to make this project more PBL-based and more authentic, please let your teacher know.

- C. Portrait of a Graduate (POG) – FCPS developed this over the last couple of years. Teachers are starting to post POG tools (communicator, collaborator, etc.). These are county developed rubrics that the teachers are using more for themselves right now than for kids.

Principal Heiges praised the new superintendent (Dr. Brabrand) for hitting the ground running because he worked here in FCPS and knows where the schools have been and has a vision for where to go forward (priority number one is to figure out how to make teachers' salaries comparable to jurisdictions nearby who offer \$15,000 more).

- D. Universal Screener (FCPS mandated for all schools) – iReady assesses reading and math. All students already took this. It's a computer-based screener that is highly engaging for kids. It's another datapoint the purpose of which is to identify a student's strengths, students at risk and in what areas, who needs further diagnostic assessments, and who needs enrichment and intervention. Parents will receive this snapshot in an upcoming Tuesday Folder (letters going home will have caveats/explanations from county), but take it for what it is - as a snapshot for the 2 sessions. Principal Heiges explained that there's a huge learning curve and that the school is using it as a tool to reinforce certain skills in which several students may have scored lower. There will be a total of 3 snapshots this school year (beginning (Oct), middle (Jan), and end (May)), so the results will be more useful to observe the student's growth.

eCart is another online assessment that is more rigorous than SOLs and offers another data point. DRA is a reading assessment where teachers hear you read; another data point. SOLs will continue to be around (minimum competency). There was lots of discussion and questions from the attendees about iReady and other assessments.

- E. Communication – The big push this year is to communicate better (including on social media) and to give parents what they want (even though different parents want different things). There are more frequent Keep in Touch (KIT) messages from MRES (FCPS is going to News You Choose rather than KIT messages; KIT being more for emergency messages now). You can follow Principal Heiges (@marshallroades) on Twitter. Teachers trying to update Class websites (Google pages) every 2 weeks --> more parent feedback to teachers

on this is desirable!! Tuesday Folders still going out to parents every Tuesday. We are starting grade-level accounts (5th grade posts pictures on Instagram; 2nd grade starting Twitter account soon). Phone calls, meetings, and emails with teachers available too. Suggestion from attendee for PTA to go green and have parents opt-in to e-communications to cut out duplicative paper communications.

VII. New Business – no new business discussed

VIII. Meeting Adjourned by Anna at 11:11am.

IX. Next PTA Meeting with Service Activity for Kids is on November 1, 2017 @ 7pm.

Parents and Teachers Please...

- JOIN the PTA! <http://marshallroadpta.org/join>
- DONATE to Friends of Marshall Road! <http://marshallroadpta.org/direct-donations>
- SIGN UP for ENews! <http://marshallroadpta.org/news/subscribe-to-enews/>
- LIKE us on Facebook: MRES PTA

PTA Board Contacts

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