**Skokie-Washburne PTO Meeting**

**September 16, 2019**

**Present:** Ben Horwitz, Andrew Fenton, Larry Joynt, Pat Kritzman, Brie Root, Laura Roney, Megan Riley, Victoria Willer, Meg Moudy,Kymm Junker, Amy Kay and Libby Elliott

**I. Introductions**

**II. Recap of Fall Events**

1. New Family Ice Cream
2. Skokie Popsicles
3. Arnold Palmers: parents have a requested a no sugar option for this back- to-school tradition.
4. GTSN: principals requested feedback regarding low number of parent visits to exploratory classrooms. The Bears/Packers game may have impacted attendance. It was suggested that parents be given colored name badges to denote whether or not they’ve previously had a child enrolled at the school. This system is used at New Trier High School.
5. 5th Grade Coffee: Pat Kritzman and Larry Joynt reported that this event went well and received good feedback from parents.
6. PTO Hospitality Lunches: greatly appreciated by teachers.
7. Skokie Picture Day went well. Carlton Washburne Picture Day is scheduled for September 20th.
8. First Social Dance was held September 13.

**III. Principal Report: Pat Kritzman/Larry Joynt**

1. Pat Kritzman reported that Skokie School parents would be receiving an email notice regarding flooding in Betsy Balkin’s music room. D36 brought in an environmental group to take a look and received last weekend a report indicating the air quality in the room is fine, however, there are lingering issues with the damp carpet. Administrators have decided to err on the side of caution and close the music room until repairs can be made. The music room has been sealed off to prevent airborne mold spores from spreading. Music classes have been temporarily relocated to The Loft. While floor repair is normally an easy solution, administrators believe there is asbestos tile under the carpeting, so replacement carpeting cannot be installed while school is in session. Repairs have been tentatively scheduled for Halloween weekend. All will be explained in the letter.
2. The letter will also address two cracks discovered in the foundation of Skokie School coming off the courtyard. The first crack is an easy fix, but the second crack will require excavation. Administrators wanted to share this information with the PTO prior to the release of the email.
3. Pat Kritzman reports that it’s been a wonderful start to the school year. A new social emotional learning piece has been added to the beginning of each day and teachers are feeling good about the addition. Teachers and staff feel it’s an effective way for students to refocus and process social issues. Principals will continue monitor and receive feedback on the program’s success.
4. This will be Pat Kritzman’s last week as Interim Principal. Betty Weir returns next Wednesday, with Larry Joynt serving as Acting Principal in the 2-day interim.
5. Last year the PTO agreed to fund a field trip to our 6th graders to the Art Institute that never took place. In the meantime, Skokie School’s Social Studies curriculum has changed and there are now two other field trips that support this year’s themes. They include: the Hellenic Museum and the Oriental Museum. The two trips combined would cost $200 more than the previously planned trip to the Art Institute. Amy Kay reports that the PTO had already approved a budget of $6,500 for the Art Institute trip, to these additional costs are covered under preapproved budget.
6. Larry Joynt reports that a number of parents at the 5th Grade Coffee were asking about volunteer opportunities. He reports that Skokie’s Resource Center is looking for volunteers and that the school is looking for student/parent volunteers to help plan the Skokie Washburne Dance. Last year the PTO’s co- chairs organized the event but participation from Washburne was low. The date of March 6th has been chosen for this year’s dance, to be held immediately after a normal school day.

**III. Principal Report: Andrew Fenton/Ben Horwitz**

1. Andrew Fenton reported a good start to the year.
2. Over the summer, funding was approved to update The Burn, a recreational area adjacent to the lunchroom, but renovations weren’t undertaken. Administrators are now seeking student input via Schoology into how the room can be improved. The budget for the project is set at $6,100.95. Members of the PTO approved having Principal Fenton move forward with deciding what new items should be included The Burn.
3. Ben Horwitz reported that last year, Washburne held three Advisory Coffees - one per trimester - centered on specific topics. He reported that the events were “fine” but not well attended. Administrators requested assistance from the PTO to better publicize these events. Two ideas are being suggested as future themes: healthy relationships and boundaries; and school life fit and balancing responsibilities. PTO members recommended marketing the coffees as problem solving workshops. Dates in mind: 10am on 10/22 10/24 or 10/29 at Washburne. Ben Horwitz reported that administrators will be picking a date and getting the information out to parents. The PTO offered to help publicize the event with a dedicated email blast.

**IV. Fund Distribution**

1. Teacher Wish List Program: the PTO asked principals to encourage teachers to a wish list of PTO- funded extras they’d like for the year ahead. In the past, principals have produced a multipage document for PTO to read and narrow down. Each teacher submits one request. The PTO’s budget for this initiative is $10,000 per school. Andrew Fenton agreed to provide a full list of teacher requests before the PTO’s next meeting on October 20th.

**V. Central PTO Meeting Report**

1. First meeting was held on September 13.
2. Insurance: D36’s Central PTO handles liability insurance for all 5 schools. All four PTOs received a copy of the liability insurance agreement. Brie Root reported that any PTO events held on park district property are covered for the entire year. Any parents planning school events throughout the year should let the PTO know so they can check with Trisha Kocanda that it’s covered by insurance.
3. Directory Spot: sales are going strong. Any print errors should be directed to Holly Miller. Some parents are requesting that nannies be added as Directory Spot users, however Brie Root reported that only parents should be listed as users.
4. Contracts: D36 schools are in discussions about streamlining contracts with food service vendors and Stuart Rogers Pictures. Greeley recentlyhad some issues with the Winnetka Park District after overfilling existing trash receptacles and losing their security deposit. Central PTO advises schools to take pictures and document problems for future reference. D36 is also discussing whether to negotiate a group PTO rate for the Remind app, currently priced $1,000/year per school.
5. Redistricting: this will be the school board’s focus until December. After that, they’ll be revisiting the facilities master plan with an eye towards decommissioning Skokie by 2023 and devising a strategy to get D36’s 5th and 6th graders over to Washburne in the most affordable way.
6. Social Emotional Learning: the district looking for two parent volunteers per school to be on an SEL parent advocacy group
7. 100 years of Carlton Washburne: a celebration is planned for early March. The district is looking for one parent volunteer to serve on this committee
8. Longtime district employee Maria Perezis resigning this week to care for her sick son at home. A short going away party is planned for after school Friday 9/20 in the Washburne cafeteria.
9. Car and bike safety – the district is having long discussion about car and bike safety because parents have reported a much higher number of close calls than in previous years. Trisha Kocanda is working with the Winnetka Police Chief on safety education. A letter will be emailed to district parents outlining the need for safety and caution.

**VI: Treasurer’s Report:**

1. Back to School payments: PTO and teacher gift donations are both down this year in comparison with last year. The PTO will use the Parent Party and Social Dance registrations as another push to get people to pay. All payments need to be finalized by early November so funds can be distributed.
2. Committee Funds: Band/Orchestra/Buildings and Grounds Committees need to communicate with PTO so budgets can be set for the coming year.
3. Composting: June fee was unusually high because of the 8th grade graduation party. Going forward, it was decided that the Graduation Committee should cover those additional costs.

**VII: Communications Report :**

Website: now updated. All links going to district new website were redone.

1. Back to School Payment Form: PTO discussed leaving it up until the day after the Parent Party to continue to push for donations. The PTO will send one last email blast the week of 10/14 to remind parents to make their annual payment.

**VIII. Vice Co-Chair Report**

1. All room parents have been designated with the exception of Ladick’s class (6th grade) and Senechal’s class (7th grade). Efforts will be made next year to designate room parents in August via Sign Up Genius.

**IX. Upcoming Events**

1. Social Dance: some students attended who didn’t pay and the PTO will reach out to those families with a reminder.
2. Parent Party: set to take place at the Winnetka Community House on October 25th.