

Symmes Elementary PTO General Meeting (Minutes)
Thursday, January 10, 2019

Call to Order

Camilla Millar

Approval of November 9, 2017 meeting minutes

- *Motion to approve minutes - approved and seconded.*

Teacher Representative Report

Cathy Jones

- *Happy New Year!*
- *Thank you to all of the room parents who assisted with the Thanksgiving lunches, brunches and various activities, as well as the December holiday parties. The students enjoyed them! Also, thank you for staff gifts! The Symmes staff feels so fortunate to have such caring and supportive parents!*
- **Kindergarten:** *Thank you for our holiday wishes - the kindergarteners wrote about them, and also wrote about their New Year's resolutions, which are hanging in the hallway!*
- **First Grade:**
 - o *Students in first grade are continuing to dive into nonfiction texts. They are analyzing and discussing the main idea and details in nonfiction books while also writing their own nonfiction texts! Students are able to "show what they know" by writing about topics they are "experts" in!*
 - o *First graders are measuring using rulers and unusual units. They are learning how to accurately measure objects. Next, we will be learning and practicing how to tell time to the hour and half hour!*
 - o *Our upcoming science unit is discussing the differences between living and nonliving things. We hope to get out on the Nature Trail on a warm day to explore this topic more!*
- **Second Grade:**
 - o *Math: We are now starting subtraction of larger numbers. Besides the typical "paper pencil" method we all know, students will be taught other strategies which benefit mathematical flexibility and mental processing. Some students will be offered enrichment materials to expand their knowledge of other concepts.*
 - o *Reading/Writing: All second graders are working on how to attack and better understand nonfiction reading materials. Understanding the main ideas and details help us identify the author's main point and purpose for writing. Classes are incorporating various writing lessons to enhance understanding through practice. Later this month, all classes will have a week-long homework assignment to write a "how-to" writing piece. Students will be asked to demonstrate in class. Examples are "how to make a bookmark", "how to make delicious salsa", etc. Complete details and daily guides will be provided.*
 - o *Spelling: All students have been reevaluated to ensure that they are in the correct spelling group. While most children do progress to higher levels, occasionally, some children need more time to practice certain skills. In that case, they will stay in the group until ready to move forward.*
 - o *Science: In our force's unit, our investigations will give students a new understanding of the invisible pushes and pulls that operate in the world around*

them. They will realize that understanding forces will let them do surprising things — from building a sturdy bridge from paper to using the pull of a rubber band to send a cardboard "hopper" flying. What students learn in this unit will connect to the world around them, leading them to think about such things as the force of friction as they slide down a playground slide or the invisible force that makes magnets cling to the refrigerator. Hands-on activities focus on engineering, investigation, and discovery. *Please help us by sending in 100 pennies to school by Monday with your child. *These will be returned!

- **Third Grade:**

- For math, we have just finished our multiplication units, and we are beginning our division units. The expectation is for the students to continue to memorize their multiplication facts as well as to start memorizing their division facts.
- In science, we just completed our unit on physical science. The students enjoyed the different mystery science labs that we completed. We will be beginning our life science unit that will take place through the beginning of the quarter.
- Mrs. Ferron will begin teaching the Basic Aid Training unit.
- In Language Arts, we are learning about nonfiction and the students will be writing a non-fiction piece as well as reading nonfiction.
- We really enjoyed our winter party!

- **Fourth Grade:**

- In Math, students are completing the division unit wherein they have been exposed to the various strategies - repeated subtraction, partial quotients, the long division process. Our next unit will be fractions.
- During this quarter, students are completing the Social Studies curriculum and will begin Science, starting with the Physical Science unit.
- In ELA, students will begin reading and writing about historical fiction.

- **Media Center:**

- The elementary Media Specialists have planned a fourth-grade Project Based Learning unit entitled: "Save Me a Seat: Getting to know the Class of 2027!"
- We have noticed fourth graders feeling anxious about the transition to Greene School in the past so this year we wanted to create a PBL centered around the driving question: "How can we build friendships with students from the other elementary schools before going to Greene?"
- Our plan is for each fourth-grade student to create a Flipgrid presentation to introduce themselves to the other students who will be in their "wing" at Greene school. They can use props, write a script, make a poster, etc. This work will be done in Media Center. Our hopes are to start this project before spring break and have all videos finished by the first week of May. Students will be able to view all of the Flipgrid presentations in their "wing" in order to get to know other kids. They will have to watch the videos and fill out a "scavenger hunt" to find students who have common interests with them. We are also collaborating with the Greene school teachers and hoping to plan some type of a social when the students have their field trip and meet their teachers for the first time in May.

- **Julie Paterson:**

- Today during our staff meeting we discussed cultural awareness, which is part of the district initiative - "Culturally Responsive Practices." We were reminded that

seeing differences in our students is ok! Treating all students the same is not ok because each child has different needs - we MUST see what is needed and provide for those unique needs.

- **All:**
 - o *Beginning on Monday, teachers will have the opportunity to participate in an article study entitled "Empowering Students in Poverty." We will take a closer look at poverty in the brain and strategies for students in poverty. Speakers from the district have been invited to present the resources that are available.*

Principal & Assistant Principal Report

Anne Van Kirk and
Jessica Ralston

- *We have enrolled 9 new students since December. Students are getting back on track after break.*
- *MAP tests (grades 1-4) and benchmark meetings have taken place. These determine if staff need to change instruction plans based on student progress.*
- *District facilities planning - the public is invited to attend community forums to get additional information and ask questions regarding upcoming changes to the District school buildings. There is a forum scheduled at Symmes at 6:30 pm on 1/30. Symmes is earmarked to get significant funds due to current building status.*
- *PBIS - The staff is doing a re-boot after winter break to refresh expectations and encourage participation. The presented challenge is for the students to earn 15,000 B-bucks in January and earn a special reward.*
- *Book Study - Culturally Responsive Practices (CRP).*
 - o *The focus will be students living in poverty. 25% of Symmes students are living below the poverty line (as based on participation in the free lunch program). This is higher than the district average. Staff can attend the book study to earn professional development hours while learning about how poverty is affecting student learning. Program will involve reading articles and in-person discussion forums.*
- *Our evening custodian has moved to Jr. High and staff is interviewing for a new custodian to fill that role.*

Media Center Presentation

Mel Beckmann

- *Current year changes in Media Center -*
 - o *More student center opportunities - the student is at the center of their own learning (hands on experiences vs. teacher led learning).*
 - o *More leveraged technology - involving tech in learning.*
- *The Future Ready Framework pledge*
 - o *Librarian role includes*
 - *Having digital resources available and teaching both students and teachers how to use them in the classroom. This includes tech such as robots, ipads, video tools, etc.*
 - *Providing flexible space - the focus here is creating a collaborative space where students can work together using these tools.*
 - *Curriculum - literacy is the focus, while incorporating STEAM and Makerspace*

- *Station-based learning - based on STEAM*
 - o *Students can pick which station to work at and are encouraged to learn on their own while librarian guides the focus.*
 - o *Stations stay open about a month before the activity changes.*
- *Literacy Skills*
 - o *Students may check out 2 books during library time (literacy station stays open all year long)*
 - o *D.E.A.R. - Drop Everything And Read - this is always an option.*
 - o *Library skills - teaching ABC order to find books or online lookups.*
- *Mrs. Behran will be subbing during Mrs. Beckman's maternity leave.*

Cultural Heritage Night Progress Report

Delphine Matray
Bhawana Bhat

- *February 1st - 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm*
 - o *Families can tour booths based on different countries, to sample food and learn about other cultures.*
 - o *There will be a fashion show, talent show and raffle baskets.*
 - o *More volunteers are needed, especially in food booths*
 - *Food booths will provide small bites for approx. 100 people*
 - *Please list ingredients for allergy concerns*
 - *Boy Scouts are bringing 10-14 boys to help volunteer*

President Report

Camilla Millar

- *Thank you for Holiday Parties/gifts*
- *Directory Data available through Parent Portal*
- *The PDF file with Symmes information was mailed to PTO members. If you are an official PTO member and did not receive an electronic copy, please email a board member.*
- *Vote to approve second half lighting before 3rd grade concert*
- *The funds are available for use, and we propose to release \$2300 to go towards the 2nd set of lighting. Motion to approve the lighting was made, unanimous yes vote by meeting members.*
- *Nominating Committee is forming.*
- *Open call to anyone interested serving the Board for next year.*

Treasurer's Report

Ashley Werthaiser

- *Budget Report*
- *Please fill out your reimbursement forms timely, especially with big events coming up soon.*

SAC Report

Margo Rapp

VP Family Involvement

Megan Haring

- Cultural Heritage Celebration February 1

VP Ways and Means

Karina Alves/ Gerri Woods

- Carnival, March 1, Out of this World
 - Final Planning meeting
 - Prizes meeting every Friday 9:30-12
 - Camilla's house 11122 Brookbridge Dr., children welcome
 - Donations of gently used plush will also be accepted...Kings Island was unable to donate the number of prizes we've had in the past.
 - Charity Auctions
 - All auction items and bidding will be done on online
 - Pre-sale carnival tickets (games and food) will be sold online
 - Involvement/Volunteers
 - Help needed to procure donations for auction, contact Leigh Grause/Michelle Martin (can be done weekends or evenings) at lgrause@hotmail.com, michellepto@jmm.biz
 - See passed signup sheet for a few businesses to contact!
 - Decorating Committee (can be done weekend or evenings)
- Dodgeball co-chair needed, limited time required
- Bridge Books chair needed (can be done nights and/or weekends, contact Gerri or Karina)

Recording Secretary

Leigh Grause

VP Student Programs

Tulika Prasad

- Symmes Players
 - James and the Giant Peach
 - 70 students signed up
 - Audition week is next week
 - Can still sign up with a late fee (\$100)
- Symmes Spotlight
 - They need volunteers for February 4th and 11th
 - They would also like to thank all the volunteers that have been helping so far.

Corresponding Secretary

Michelle Martin

- (recap Holiday gifts)
 - *All staff members received gift cards and candy canes.*
- Symmes Ambassadors
 - *Next Gathering is scheduled for tomorrow (1/11) from 1:30-3:00 pm in the MPR. Open to everyone.*

- PTO Parking Space Drawing
 - *Leigh Grause won the parking space for the month.*

Old Business / New Business / Adjournment