

Symmes Elementary PTO General Agenda (Minutes) 11/9/2018

Call to Order

Camilla Millar

Performance by 4th graders attending ORFF Conference

- *Presentation by Julia Bethune, Music Teacher*
 - o *Sycamore is huge supporter of the Carl ORFF program and philosophy, which involves children in music at multiple developmental stages. The ORFF conference is designed to provide professional development specifically for music educators.*
 - o *Our 4th grade students were selected to participate in a performance at this year's 50th Anniversary conference. Our theme is 'flight' in honor of the Aviators.*

Approval of October General Meeting Minutes

Leigh Grause

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

Teacher Representative Report

Cathy Jones

- *Thank you for the teacher dinners from Maggiano's and Slim Chickens during the Thursday night conferences! We dined sufficiently! The dinners were delicious! You out did yourselves!*
- *Also, thank you for taking the time to attend your child's conference. The teachers and parents working together results in a relationship that enhances the academic, emotional, and social success of your child. Thank you for your support.*
- **Kindergarten:** *We have been working on our Veterans Day celebrations and are preparing for Thanksgiving with a Friendship Feast on Tuesday, November 20th, in their classrooms!*
- **First Grade:**
 - o *Language Arts: We are diving into a nonfiction unit in Language Arts. We will study various features of nonfiction texts as well as compose our own nonfiction writing!*
 - o *Social Studies: Students are learning more about Veterans Day. They are understanding what a veteran is and how they can be respectful and thank them for their service.*
 - o *Math: Students are becoming more fluent in their addition math facts.*
- **Second Grade:**
 - o *Reading: Grade 2 is working on "characters" and how they respond in major events and change throughout the story. We are also working very hard to locate evidence within the text to support these changes. Things we look for include what characters, "do, say, think and feel". We then list the steps associated with their change. Finally, we identify character traits at the beginning and end of the story.*
 - o *Writing: We are working on Opinion writing pieces. Currently, the kids are writing about their favorite restaurants. Don't be surprised if your kids want to check out a new place the next time you go out!*
 - o *Math: We are learning to be flexible thinkers by learning multiple strategies (more than just memorization) to learn math facts. These strategies, such as "making ten, counting on, counting on, and using doubles" challenge even those students who*

already demonstrate math fluency, as they can be applied to larger problems! Next up: paper and pencil addition of larger numbers!

- *Social Studies: History is a busy unit! We have asked parents to help gather pennies and pictures for one of our favorite activities, "Penny Timelines". Kids will use pennies to mark important events in their lives.*
- *On November 30, the entire class will participate in an "Old Fashioned school Day" in which the events of the day mimic life in the 1800's--think Laura Ingalls! Kids are encouraged to dress up in period attire, as suggested on the info sheet sent home.*
- *Finally, be sure to mark your calendars for December 7th for our Artifact Museum. Children will be bringing in items that are either obsolete, or have changed drastically over the years. It's always amazing to see the amazing artifacts that are found in our children's homes!*
- *The 2nd grade teachers are very proud of their boys and girls, and the progress they are making!!*
- **Third Grade:**
 - *Third grade is getting ready to learn about their family's history through our study of cultures. The students are looking for information about their families' cultures, food, and language. The project will be a family crest that will be on display during the Third Grade Cultural Feast, which will be held on November 20th. Each child will bring in a dish specific to his or her culture, and all the students will be able to sample foods from around the world.*
 - *In science, we are reviewing the steps of the scientific method and science tools, which will lead into our unit on Matter, and we will be completing some labs using Mystery Science.*
 - *In language arts, the students just finished their unit on descriptive paragraph writing. They wrote a descriptive paragraph about a witch that they made at home. They described the witch and they played a guessing game called "which witch is which?" They are currently studying opinion paragraphs using the Oreo method.*
 - *In math, the third graders are working on multiplication; most specifically memorization of their multiplication facts.*
 - *The third graders enjoyed their trip to the Cincinnati Art Museum on October 15th, where the focus of the trip was on Cincinnati.*
- **Fourth Grade:**
 - *Language Arts: Students will be researching their chosen natural disaster. In writing, they will begin learning how to write persuasive essays.*
 - *Math: Students are doing well in acquiring the skill of learning how to multiply 2-digit x 2-digit numbers using various strategies.*
 - *Social Studies: Students are currently learning about Ohio and its participation in the Civil War, with a concentration on the subject of slavery.*
- **Julie Paterson:**
 - *I'm grateful for families who came to talk at conferences because it really helps shed light on the individuals I work with. They're different people in class vs. at home, so it's helpful to have that perspective.*
 - *My math classes are "all over the place" because the current units are revealing some gaps in skills. MAP scores wouldn't reveal this since the kids can figure out correct answers, but may be lacking vocabulary, other strategies, or a standard*

algorithm. I'm working with individuals and small groups to provide instruction and practice where needed, while giving advanced kids other tasks that are meaningful to them.

- Fourth graders are working on poetry with me- it's maddening because gifted readers can either be so literal or they can try to make anything work and "force fit" possibilities where they don't work. We are laughing and working hard at the same time!
- Third grade readers finishing up fiction where our focus was character development, layered problems in stories that seem to lead to other problems and then reveal a deeper, root cause. Now we are examining themes and lessons across stories as we prepare to transition to nonfiction.
- **All Grades:**
 - All of the Symmes students are very excited to go out on the Aviation Station Bus this week to work with Legos!
 - Lastly, we are looking forward to our first Veterans Day celebration assembly on November 9th (tomorrow). Thank you to those who submitted names for our Symmes "Veteran Wall of Honor." Mrs. Neill and I will be constructing the display today after school, so please stop in next week to see the finished project.

Principal & Assistant Principal Report

Anne Van Kirk &
Jessica Ralston

- *Veterans Day Celebration - students are preparing for the assembly tomorrow. Staff are also posting on Veterans' Wall of Honor. There will likely now be room for some extra parents if anyone would like to come, the assembly starts at 2:20.*
- *Thank you for parent conference teacher dinners.*
- *Presentation by Kindergartners - several students shared their favorite books and book characters.*
- *Aviation Station - Mrs. Van Kirk shared a video of Matacia's class using LEGOS to make a habitat for a Hexbug. All students are working on building LEGO structures with varying degrees of difficulty.*
- *Election Day challenges - students were able to vote on a reward (using ballots) they would receive if they earn 4,000 B bucks during one week. The popcorn party option won, and showed students the power of voting.*
- *Lunch Room Update -*
 - *Unfortunately, the answer to lunch room concerns is not as simple as adding more lunch time. Even a 5-minute change to the schedule can have a domino effect to instructional time during the school day.*
 - *We are also limited financially to the amount of time we can have lunch and recess staff available.*
 - *Students have 20 minutes dedicated to lunch, with 5-minute transition time. This is the same amount of time allotted at the other elementary schools. We also have recess before lunch as we believe it increases hunger and hopefully encourages students to eat more and more efficiently. But this also does not allow for slower eaters to miss recess to eat instead.*

- *Efficiency of lunch lines - We have trialed various routes to see which moves kids the quickest from recess to the lunch room. We are also incorporating more ways to help younger students and ESL students with their ID numbers, and with verbally communicating their names and lunch choices. Some examples include ID tags and use of visual pictures with menu items in the lunch line.*
- *The Sycamore Nutrition Director came in and evaluated the buy line as well. She felt the timing went fairly well during her visit. But some additional suggestions include putting some of the small buy options outside the cafeteria line (milk, snacks, etc.). We can also consider putting recess after lunch.*
- *Most students and classes also are allowed a snack time to supplement lunch during the day.*

Presentation of mental health services at Symmes

- *The District has entered into an alliance with Children's Hospital to provide mental health services. Symmes is the first school with a full-time therapist on staff.*
- *Rich Gilman, Director of School-Based Mental Health Programs*
 - *This program began as Children's noticed the number of mental health related cases coming into the ER (up to 60% of total volume). This prompted the initiative to go to where kids are spending the bulk of their time (school), and are experiencing the actual issues and treating them there vs. at the hospital. This program is not designed around talk therapy. The focus is on developing coping skills to deal with stress, anxiety, depression, and other issues that may arise while in the school environment. The curriculum spans over a 12-week course designed to incorporate these coping skills into everyday life. The program is based on cognitive behavioral skills, and Coping Cat.*
- *Jamie Wiener, CCHMC School Based Therapist*
 - *Parents can call directly to initiate process of being enrolled in the program. The process involves discussions with parents and individual students, as well as a group approach involving Beth Hill, our school counselor.*
 - *The program is considered a value-added resource, so costs are not covered by the District. However, many insurance policies will cover expenses and Children's can help with finding family assistance options.*
 - *Jaime does have an office on-site in our building.*

President Report

Camilla Millar

★ ASSPO report

- *The Aviation Station received state award for innovative programming.*
- *The High School PTO Hangar Bookstore has a no donation policy. Please keep this in mind for upcoming events. Any items must be purchased from the store.*
- *The District has posted the Directory on Blackboard. Claire Newman has also taken our Symmes data and created a pdf Directory file that will be sent out to those who have officially joined the PTO.*
 - *FERPA - Federal Information Release Act - The law states that the school/district only has to offer an opt-out option of directory information. Sycamore actually requires participants to opt-in, and only those that give consent will be put into the*

directory. If you have safety or other concerns about sharing your information be sure NOT to opt-in when completing Final Forms.

★ **Carnival theme**

- *Theme will be 'Out of This World' aka Outer Space!*
- *The 2nd Carnival meeting is scheduled for 11/28 at 7:00 pm. Leigh Grause and Michelle Martin will be co-chairs this year.*
- *We will be using the BAND app to share information for those who want to help on the committee.*

★ **No Meeting in December due to busy holidays**

★ **Nominating Committee will be forming in January**

Treasurer's Report

Ashley Werthaiser

★ **Budget Report**

- *Cookie Dough and City Saver fundraisers were awesome - both put us ahead of budget this year.*
- *Expenses so far have included the purchase of the Symmes Players script and associated royalties, PBIS materials, Symmes Spotlight and Steppers prizes, the Kindergarten Halloween parties, Nature Trail and garden supplies, Kindergarten t-shirts, and muffins for Muffins with Moms.*

★ **Gifts for supplementary staff members in lieu of the Appreciation Committee collecting money**

★ **Cookie Dough Sales**

★ **Audit**

- *The audit is in process but has not been completed yet.*

VP Family Involvement

Megan Haring

★ **Muffins with Moms, last day tomorrow, Friday, 11/9**

★ **4th Grade Winter Concert, December 11**

★ **Cultural Celebration February 1. Lots of help needed! Please consider signing up! Everyone has some kind of cultural background!**

- *Suggestion for communications to start going out in early December.*
- *The Committee is re-vamping a new pamphlet for Heritage Night, with a new design and updated information.*

VP Ways and Means

Gerri Woods &
Karina Alves

★ **Thank you to Jackie Ogden for chairing cookie dough fundraiser, pick up will be November 15, afternoon.**

★ **Book fair a success!**

- ★ Carnival Committee will have a second meeting on November 28th.
- *Everyone is welcome! No amount of help is too big or too small.*

VP Student Programs

Tulika Prasad

- ★ Symmes Steppers update
- ★ Symmes Spotlight update
- ★ Clothing Drive Recap- 10 families were served, THANK YOU! Thanks to Jane Kahle for organizing
 - *10 families were served, including coats, shoes and outfits for everyone in the family. Extras items were donated.*
- ★ Spelling Bee recap- Thanks to Ash Goel for organizing
 - *Noah Paticoff was this year's winner. The event was a success, and all the students did well.*

Recording Secretary

Leigh Grause

- ★ Nature Trail clean-up day
- ★ Yearbook-please send your photos to Michelle Martin (michellepto@jmm.bz) - include names of students with your photos please.

Corresponding Secretary

Michelle Martin

- ★ Symmes Ambassadors
 - *The next Gathering is scheduled for the first Friday in December (the 7th) from 1:30 -3:00 pm in the MPR. These are social gatherings, and everyone is welcome.*
- ★ Hearing and Vision Screening recap, thanks to Jane Kahle and all other volunteers.

SAC Report

Margo Rapp

- *Margo will be part of a research committee to investigate ways to improve communications between the District and our non-English speakers. She welcomes suggestions, and always appreciates updates unique to Symmes to share during their meetings.*
- ★ PTO Parking Space Drawing
- ★ Old Business / New Business / Adjournment