

PTO Minutes

February 17, 2011

Peirce Library, 6:30 pm

Present: Karen Hartley, Susan Goetcheus, Janice Weinberg, Krissie Delaney, Carl Elder, Ingrid Gallagher, Kristen Garrigus, Mimi Griesmer, Tara Lamont, Cate Oranchak, Cindy ReVelle

FYArlington presentation (Len Kardon, Steering Committee)

- FYArlington is a new group formed early this year to advocate for our schools and the kind of town we want
- Components are discussion group, website, working groups (school budget, town budget, state issues, communication)
- See website (www.fyarlington.org) for email addresses to contact steering committee members

Thanks for recent successful events (Janice Weinberg)

Thanks to everyone involved in the rummage sale and Stories from Around the World.

Educational videos (Janice Weinberg and Karen Hartley)

PTO interested in ensuring a good supply of educational videos available to teachers, but will not purchase right now; on next professional day, teachers have a chance to learn about Discovery Streaming, a service now available through the town that offers web-based educational videos by grade level and subject areas.

Advisory council update (Karen Hartley)

- Council is looking at updating the Peirce handbook, which will be online. Betsy Lawson is working on it, should be done by end of year
- Part of this will be determining the school's "screen policy".
- Council also tackling issue of the lack of communication about what the teachers are doing in terms of "Work to Fair" – union president is supposed to release a statement. Basically teachers are being asked not to do anything they're not being paid to do.

PTO purchases (Janice Weinberg)

- New PTO tables - Voted on and approved.
- ELMO projector – Voted on and approved purchase of one. Janice to look into getting a "smart cart" for the projector.

Fireside chat – APS school budget impact on Peirce (Karen Hartley)

- Hard to combine grades at Peirce -- we might lose specials, might lose a teacher, but most likely not a position

- Inclusion program will stay with two teachers and an aide and the cap at a 60/40 mix, but there may not be a cap of 25 kids in an inclusion program
- Right now class size looks the same as last year – in the low or mid-twenties
- May have biggest 5th grade in ages
- Main cuts will probably come in specials, librarian aide

- Parents can do enrichment activities but can't teach because of union rules. Next year, aide may be taking kids to library, parent volunteer might be there.
- Thompson students will most like go to Hardy and Stratton.
- If we decide to seek publicity for the inclusion program, Karen can help identify parents who would comment.

Grants (Kristen Garrigus)

- Kristen provided a spreadsheet of key grant opportunities.
- Want to be sure we're focusing on spring and fall budget cycles.
- Historically
 - o We had recent success applying for townwide enrichment (e.g., Teosinte).
 - o Have also used grants to jumpstart projects like Science Garden – multiple grants and community contributions.
- Lots of opportunities are out there for science and cultural enrichment, technology, green energy.
- Grant opportunities are \$500-\$2000. There are bigger ones out there but need a long term vision.
- Peirce has ELL and SPED so is in good position to apply for grants.
- To do this bigger, need consensus on what is important to Peirce -- Technology? Enrichment? Curriculum? Capital improvement?
- May need a central demand or division of labor where committees work on their own grants – could work either way.
- Good to have multiple champions of an idea for which we receive funding, in case of staff turnover.
- Good to cultivate and train new parents to take things on.
- People who are interested in grant-writing should contact Janice or Susan.

School newspaper (Janice Weinberg and Krissie Delaney)

Discussed whether this could be an afterschool activity with some connection to the high school journalism club.