

PTO Meeting Minutes  
Monday, June 10, 2013

- 1) Welcome and President's/Vice President's remarks (Susan Goetcheus/Amy Cooper)
  - a. This is Susan's last official meeting. We thank her for her service as president!
  - b. Thanks to Cindy ReVelle, who has served three years as secretary; Carl Elder, who has served several years on the Enrichment Committee; and Lori Pescatore, who has taken care of both Hospitality and Fundraising, in addition to being Treasurer. Thanks for the ongoing work of Krissie Delaney, Jocelyn Willett, and others.
  - c. We received a thank you note from the AYCC Campership Fund for our donation to help sponsor kids' participation in summer programs.
  - d. EMO (Elizabeth Orrell) is coming on as VP next year.
- 2) Principal's comments (Karen Hartley)
  - a. Next year's class lists are ready and will be sent out soon. (The district likes the schools to wait and release all their lists at the same time.)
  - b. This year, in conjunction with our January Open House, we celebrated the new school building's tenth year. Next January, we would like to have a Math and Science Night in conjunction with the Open House. The cafeteria was a bit crowded this year, so maybe the kids' projects could be set up in the gymnasium instead, and the kids could be there to explain their projects to the parents.
  - c. We received a grant this year that helped us to get our own school social worker. That grant will also fund two anti-bullying programs which we will be trying out, starting in the fall.
  - d. Peirce is a Title 1 school, and as such, receives extra funding based on the number of our children who qualify for free or reduced lunches. Some families who qualify do not take advantage of this program. We need to get the word out that the school as a whole benefits from it and encourage those families to apply. The kids are not necessarily aware of who participates in the program, as payment in the cafeteria is all computerized.
  - e. Julie Goff is joining the Peirce Advisory Council.

- f. Next year, all our teachers will be getting iPads, and the school will receive two or three iPad carts, each containing 24 iPads, for classroom use. (At some point in the future, every grade will have its own cart.) Teachers will be able to take full advantage of all the great teaching apps they've learned about. The carts are used to lock up and charge the iPads. The room in which the carts are stored will have to be locked too. Note, Ottoson had a theft of some \$10,000 worth of computer equipment this year. The question was raised whether the iPads will be insured against damage from being dropped, as well as theft.
- g. The kids who live in the buffer zones have not been placed yet, but we should expect 22+ kids in each kindergarten class and 24-28 in upper grade classes from now on.

3) Thanks to outgoing officers and committee chairs (Cindy, Carl, Lori as Hospitality Chair)

See item (1) above.

4) Introduce new officers and committee chairs

Co-president: Elizabeth Orrell (EMO)

Co-secretary: Anne Dixon

Fundraising: ? (Lori continuing as Treasurer)

Hospitality: Erin Whalen

Enrichment: ?

Motion passed to accept new officers. Mirella Zulueta may join Jocelyn on the Enrichment Committee. Dorothy Schuette will continue as head of the Science Garden and Landscaping Committee. Jessica Callaghan continues with Community Outreach.

Mary Alice Vallarino and Flynn Monks are taking charge of the Safe Routes Committee. Note, bike safety training may be added to the Safe Routes agenda next year, as more kids are riding to school. There is also a very serious need for crossing guards, both on Park Ave. and in Downing Square. The crosswalks are not being respected by drivers, and the kids are in danger.

5) Thanks to volunteers: Ice Cream Social, Spring Fair, Walk to School Days

Lori notes that our Spring Fair did not make quite as much as expected. It seems with the heat, people did not stay as long; also many kids had sports to go to. But the fair is a great school tradition. The kids love it, especially seeing their teachers helping out, and it brings the community together and generates a lot of good will. Maybe next year, we could try to do two Cake Walk circles, as that seemed to be the most popular event. Krissie notes that it's easy to bake multiple cakes ahead of time because they freeze well – then you can just pull them out, frost, and embellish them last minute. Former pastry chef EMO may be willing to decorate some cakes too!

6) Vote on bylaw updates for compliance with IRS guidelines for nonprofits

In order to be a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, the PTO needs certain wording in its bylaws. See the PTO page of the Peirce website to read the updated bylaws. Article 12 basically states that the money we earn will not be given to our members; that we will not make political endorsements etc.; and what will happen to our assets in the event that the PTO is dissolved. Motion passed to accept article 12.

7) Change request for teacher's photo-copying to come direct from teachers

In the face of difficulties getting volunteers to serve as room parents and do the teachers' photocopying, the teacher representatives had suggested that the teachers themselves be the ones to approach parents for help. They can be more specific about their needs and expectations, and probably get the volunteers more quickly than we can using our fall volunteer request form. There will have to be a letter to remind them of this change in the fall.

One co-president will attend the teachers' first meeting in the fall, which will be the Thursday before Labor Day.

8) Committee updates

a. Treasurer, Fundraising, and Hospitality (Lori Pescatore)

- A copy of the budget was distributed. We have spending still for Colonial Day, Fifth Grade Graduation, and the teachers' classroom funds. Funds set aside for a math program are still unused.
- Fundraising: We had a fine year raising money with a number of events including the Spring Fair, Book Fairs, Dances, and Craft Fair/silent auction. Our dates are worked out for next year. We're skipping the Walkathon – it's run its course. We still need someone to run the Family Dance and the Book Fairs. We will be adding an International Night, as well as a Trivia Night at the Sons of Italy for adults. This will include a silent auction with baskets put together by the classes (donations from the parents with help from the teachers). Again no single huge event, but the smaller events are a nice way to bring in the money we need.
- Upcoming on Friday 6/21, we have the Volunteer Breakfast and Field Day. Sign up to volunteer for Field Day. This year we're going to give the kids popsicles during the R&R time to mellow them out a bit, as they get so excited.
- The Lost and Found collection will be boxed up and donated by the end of the week, so everyone should check to make sure they have their stuff by then.
- We bought a microwave and some plates for the teachers' lounge, as part of teacher appreciation.

- The Peirce Pride Savings Bank finished for the summer last week – six graduates closed their accounts. The bank has not been as popular in recent years.

b. Community Outreach (Jessica Callaghan)

The Arlington Soccer Club is again collecting used t-shirts for children in Uganda. Look for drop boxes at school.

c. Enrichment (Carl Elder and Jocelyn Willett)

- Our last events of the year are the bubbles program for the kindergartners on 6/18 and a storyteller for kindergarten and first grade on 6/19.
- Jocelyn is looking into a lucrative program which helps schools get a portion of merchant fees in credit card transactions.
- Jocelyn also wants to distribute questionnaires to the teachers to evaluate the enrichment programs; perhaps the teachers could find out which ones the kids liked as well. (Carl notes that asking the kids to rank their favorites may be the best way to elicit this information.) How best to get the teachers' responses? Karen thinks putting hard copies of the questionnaire in the teachers' room may be the way to go. It would also be helpful to know about any changes in the curriculum and the schedule of topics studied, so that enrichment programs could be timed to coincide with what's currently going on in the classroom.
- Jocelyn notes that the prices for many of the programs seem to be going down.

d. Library Enrichment (Jane Torregrossa)

A good year for library enrichment. Thanks to Krissie for her work on the fifth grade newspaper; thank you to all our library volunteers as well.

Tuesday and Thursday of this week, the third graders will be reading and recording their books for the ACMI TV program. The fifth grade has already done so. In the fall, we'll find out when the programs are scheduled. (Only the kids' first names are used on TV.) Jane sent the ACMI press released to the book publisher, Studenttreasures, and they were very pleased.

e. Safe Routes (Susan Goetcheus)

See item (4) above.

f. Science Garden and Landscaping (Dorothy Schuette)

Thanks to all the parents and children who helped out with the grounds and Science Garden this year. Mrs. Manning's second grade class did some planting in the Science Garden recently, and the third graders had a program there on Colonial Day. We will again need volunteers for weeding and watering over summer. (The water spigot has been fixed.)

g. The teacher representatives were absent.

9) Upcoming events

The fourth grade is holding another fundraiser for Pitching in for Kids and the Alanna and Joshua Foundation. Eat at Not Your Average Joe's on a Tuesdays June and bring a copy of their flyer (a link is on the Peirce website) to have 15% of your purchase go to those charities.

Friday 6/21 is the PTO Volunteer Breakfast and Field Day. We need volunteers for Field Day!

10) Other

Amy notes that next year, PTO meetings will be on the same Wednesday of each month.

Susan adds the following contact information for those concerned about pedestrian safety around Peirce: The Transportation Advisory Committee liaison for Walking in Arlington is Elisabeth Carr-Jones ([elisabeth@carr-jones.com](mailto:elisabeth@carr-jones.com)), and the rep for precincts 15-21 is Jeffrey Maxtutis ([Jeffrey.Maxtutis@aecom.com](mailto:Jeffrey.Maxtutis@aecom.com)). The TAC's website is [http://www.arlingtonma.gov/public\\_documents/ArlingtonMA\\_BComm/TAC/index](http://www.arlingtonma.gov/public_documents/ArlingtonMA_BComm/TAC/index).