

PTO Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 13, 2013

1) Co-Presidents' greeting (Amy Cooper, Emo Orrell)

Thanks to our volunteers:

- Iris McNulty for the Family Dance
The lighting was too dim; we need some new LED strings. Jessica Markowitz has agreed to be the Family Dance coordinator for next time.
- Jessica Callaghan for the Book Fair
We made about as much as we did last fall, but in a slower, steadier stream. The chapter book selection was good this year, but the selection for younger readers was not so good. (Usually we have the reverse problem.) And most of our sales are in books for younger readers. Jessica will talk to our Scholastic rep, who does a special order for us. (Peirce kids love science books, for example, so we always get extra of them.) If there's something you think we should have at the next Fair, we can put in a request and try to get it.
- The Hospitality Committee for Pumpkin Decorating
Lori reports that they ordered the perfect number of pumpkins, even with the families who showed up without RSVP-ing.
- The Enrichment Committee for Bottle Rockets
Great turn-out and lots of fun, despite the windy day. Bob LaBarge has volunteered to help out next year. Amy notes we should try to get more dads involved.
- Dorothy Schuette and Lori Pescatore for the grounds clean-up
We need to keep a broom handy (perhaps in the office) for more regular clean-ups of the kindergarten playground. Lori will see about getting one.

2) Principal's remarks (Karen Hartley)

a. Dogs

A number of parents are concerned that dogs continue to be brought onto school property during school hours. One suggestion is that we put up a sign that says specifically: "No dogs during school hours." It's fine if families leave their dogs outside the fences; that way they are easily avoided by anyone afraid of dogs. Another problem is that dog owners are not picking up after their dogs, and kids are stepping in dog waste during recess.

b. Pride Assemblies

We just had the year's first Peirce Pride assembly, "Perseverance," on Friday. Our Pride assembly format has changed this year. In previous years, each grade took charge of one of the six assemblies and put on a show for the other grades. This year, for each assembly, each teacher is nominating a student from her class for an award related to the theme. Everyone was excited and cheering for their classmates on Friday. The Advisory Council proposed that kids be able to vote for their classmates too, perhaps using a box by the office. Those chosen by their classmates could have their names read off or receive a certificate. Pride assemblies also offer a chance to recognize any kids who are moving and leaving Peirce.

3) Committee updates

a. Treasurer and Fundraising (Lori Pescatore)

- Copies of the PTO budget were distributed.
- Our Annual Drive is going well. We're topping our stated goal of \$3000, but Lori is continuing the drive and says we should really shoot for \$5000 given the number of families in Peirce, future uncertainty, etc.
- Other income: The Book Fair and Dance did well (though we still need to deduct for custodian pay). Town Day was a bit low. Shopping incentives have gone well; we just received a big check from Target.
- Expenses: \$1500 for Open Circle teacher training can be removed from the budget, as all our teachers have been trained.
- Our second annual Holiday Fair is this Saturday from 10:00-2:00. We'll have a full house of crafters. We still need pie bakers -- drop off any time from 8:00 AM on. Hot dogs, cookies, hot cider, and chili will be for sale as well. And we'll have the photo booth again: \$5 for a 5x7 by Emo. We're also holding a raffle that will continue into December: choice of FitBit, Kindle Fire, or 50/50. Tickets are \$5 each or \$20 for five.
- We're having two shopping events that will earn us 15% of the profits. One is at Coyote Impressions on 12/4 and 12/6. Coyote Impressions is across from the Town Hall, and it carries lots of Arlington and sports paraphernalia, stocking stuffers, etc. Snacks will be served. The other event is at Firefly Moon in Arlington Heights on 12/11 -- an evening event with wine and cheese. A flier will go out with details.
- On Monday 11/ 25, we will be collecting frozen turkeys and other Thanksgiving fixings to take to DCFS for distribution to needy families.
- The Peirce Pride Bank opens this Friday (and every Friday) before school in the lower lobby. 5th graders have been trained to run it in coordination with Cambridge Savings Bank.

b. Community Outreach (Jessica Callaghan)

- The Coats for Kids bin is by the office. This drive runs until January. Anton's Cleaners collects, cleans, and distributes the coats. This is their 19th year doing it.
- Jessica collected nine Trader Joe's bags full of Halloween candy for the Bedford VA hospital. They'd like to have us donate candy again next year.
- Last year, the VA had an elementary school making holiday cards for the vets. That school may not be doing it again this year, so perhaps Peirce can step up. We can put a box by the office for kids to put their cards in. And perhaps at Cookie Decorating, we could have a table with paper and markers. Note, some teachers are already doing this project with their classes. Jessica offered to take everyone's cards to the hospital.
- Jocelyn plans to ask Mrs. T if she wants to have kids write letters to soldiers, seeing as they are not making books in library this year.

c. Hospitality (Erin Whalen)

Erin was absent. Lori reported that Pumpkin Decorating went well, and they ordered the perfect number of pumpkins. Upcoming hospitality events include Cookie Decorating and the Talent Show.

d. Enrichment (Carl Elder, Jocelyn Willett, Sherri Bulmer)

Jocelyn is waiting for feedback forms on the Helen Keller program. Next event is the Amazing Art Hero. Plans are also in the works for Museum of Science, Owl Program, and more, later in the year.

e. Library Enrichment (Jane Torregrossa)

Mrs. T was absent.

f. Safe Routes (Flynn Monks, Mary Alice Vallarino)

Mary Alice and Flynn were absent. They're continuing with the monthly Walk to School Wednesdays.

g. Science Garden and Landscaping (Dorothy Schuette)

Dorothy was absent. We still need to lock in a date for International Night -- sometime in April? (Lori notes that the Art Show is in March; also, interest seems to die down in April, especially with vacation.)

h. Teacher Representatives (Alicia Coletti, Daniela Hurley)

Ms. Coletti was absent. The PTO has offered to pay for some of the great apps that the teachers are interested in using with the kids on the iPads. (Many are free, but not all.) Do they need their own credit card?

4) School Committee Representatives

Amy attended the town-wide PTO meeting. Jud Pierce, our liaison on the School Committee, is asking for a representative from each school to attend School Committee meetings, and to help with the flow of information in both directions. Another issue at the meeting was the question of liability insurance for PTOs, e.g., if someone were hurt at a PTO event. Next town-wide PTO meeting is in January.

5) School photos

Emo, a professional photographer, has offered to do our school pictures for next year and increase profits for the PTO. After the makeup date, we will send a thank you letter to this year's photographer to insure that they don't expect to be back next year. Emo will work with a small committee to determine packages, prices, etc.

6) Other points

- Brian Epstein is still looking for a replacement to run the Castle of Chess.
- After January, we will continue to have PTO meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.
- Jessica Markowitz is coordinating the Family Dance.
- We still need someone to coordinate the Town Day Booth.
- Jocelyn notes that we really should be applying for the AEF and LCC grants.
- Angela Snyder offered to help with grant writing.

7) Upcoming dates

Wed. 11/13	Coats for Kids drive begins (continues through January, box by office)
Thurs. 11/14	Makeup date for school pictures
Fri. 11/15	Peirce Pride Bank opens (7:45-8:15 AM Fridays, back lobby)
Sat. 11/16	Holiday Craft Fair (10:00-2:00 PM, gym, back lobby, cafeteria)
Mon. 11/18	Castle of Chess (2:15-5:45 PM Mondays)
Tues. 11/19	Early release (1:00 PM); lunch will be served; Mrs. T's open
Wed. 11/20	3rd Grade field trip to Plimoth Plantation
Fri. 11/22	Report cards go home
Mon. 11/25-Wed. 11/27	Turkey Trot walk to school days
Wed 11/27	Early release (noon); no lunch; Mrs. T's closed
Thurs. 11/28-Fri. 11/29	No school; Mrs. T's closed
Wed. 12/4	Walk to School Wednesday Shopping event at Coyote Impressions (9:00-noon) Parent-teacher conferences (6:00-8:00 PM)
Fri. 12/6	Early release (11:15 AM); no lunch or box lunch; Mrs. T's w/ sign-up Parent-teacher conferences (11:55-2:15 PM) Shopping event at Coyote Impressions (5:30-8:00 PM)
Tues. 12/10	Election Day Early release (11:15 AM); no lunch or box lunch; Mrs. T's w/ sign-up Parent-teacher conferences (11:55-3:30 PM)
Wed. 12/11	PTO Meeting (6:30-8:00 PM, library) Shopping event at Firefly Moon (7:00-9:00 PM)
Thurs. 12/12	Parent-teacher conferences (6:00-8:00 PM)
Fri. 12/13	Effort Assembly (1:30-2:00 PM, gym) Cookie Decorating (2:15-3:15 PM, cafeteria)