

# Mesa Elementary School PTO General Meeting Notes

## January 6, 2023, 8:30am

### Attendees

Adi Diner, Anna Abboud, April Busch, Brian Niehaus, Carrie Simpson, Christine Chen, Crystal, Jill Walter, Josh Baldner, Kristen Reiss, Madlena Blagalia, Megan Maguire, Paige Leonard, Pete Minor, Rachel Tittle, Rosanna Koren, Sunny van der Star

### Introductions

- Went around the room and said what we did for ourselves over break

### Budget Update from Anna

- Budget looks good, about to break even with our projected income
- April Busch, on behalf of teachers, asked for water cooler to return to the lounge
  - Teachers could potentially be willing to reduce classroom stipend to fund it
- Kristen is almost positive we wrote a check for it last year
- Madlena suggested installing a water filter
  - Megan mentioned you need someone to change and clean the filter
- April is going to compose an email to the teachers to ask if you're not going to use your stipend then can the PTO use that money for the water
- Anna is going to email Helene to ask for a discount
- April suggested setting a water budget for the month, and if it gets used up that month, then everyone has to wait until next month

### DEI Report from Christine

- DEI has a lot planned for the spring
- Speaker series:
  - Feb 16, 6:00-7:00: inviting a few members of BVSD youth equity council to speak
    - The council is a two year old group of middle and high schoolers of color, doing advocacy work all around the districts
    - They will talk about what it's like to be a student of color in BVSD
    - Inviting parents of Mesa, Bear Creek, 4th & 5th graders; parent discretion if you want to invite younger kids
    - Will be advertised as a South Boulder event
    - Child care provided; they may be bring in some RER readers to be with younger kids
  - April 27, time TBD (maybe 6pm), Neurodiversity
    - Anna Stewart works for BVSD, parent liaison type role, has done several talks around the district
    - Might be bringing some students with her to speak about their experiences: what is it like to be neurodiverse, what do you want parents to know?
- Carrie will have these two dates in the January room parent email

- Paige said we will add it to the DEI page on the Mesa PTO site
- At the multi cultural event, hope to launch both of these items:
  - Little Free Library
  - Buddy Bench; 4th grade parent is building it
- Next DEI event, Thur Jan 12, right after school, 3pm, DEI meeting in Library
  - This one will be more of a transactional meeting
  - Feb 9th meeting will be a good one for people who have never come before, more of a brainstorming meeting

#### Multicultural event info from Anna

- Jan 12, 2pm, Mesa Science room
  - Would like to have involvement by parents, make task plan for the event
  - Everyone should feel welcome to come
- Intend this to be an annual event
- Event will be in May, outside, evening
  - Leaning towards Friday, following a Fall Fest model, tentatively May 12
- April asked if teachers will have to be involved
  - Carrie said not that she could think of, but if teachers want to and it makes sense by overlapping with classroom, then yes

#### Principal's Report

- Josh began his report with an update on FET
- FET does come with some grant funding
  - About 15 schools have FET, the group specifically invites & brings in families who are not typically represented
- We have welcoming school and sense of connection/belonging to Mesa for the students, Josh wants to try to do the same thing for our community
- FET - how can we better connect our families to information that isn't so obvious, things like the "hidden rules" such as:
  - Mesa is a school that uses email quite a bit, you can email the principal
  - That you can talk to the teacher at drop-off but only briefly
- Almost like giving out a parent handbook
- Theme of belonging, connection, feeling like parents are part of their kids education
- Other countries, once a week parents get to go into the school and see how the school operated
  - Can we have days where families can come in and hang out, since we don't need parent help in the classrooms so much anymore?
- Hug n Go
  - Josh thanked Carrie and some other people with prompting this topic
  - Josh is going to get information out next week (Jan 9) about Hug n Go
  - Mesa cannot sustain volunteerism all the time
    - Wants to make a push from end of Jan to Spring Break, ask for people to commit to 6 weeks of doing a Monday or something like that
  - Pete was curious to know what the issue is

- Kristen explained the many problems with the current system
  - We want to build a certain protocol and behavior over this time
    - Pete mentioned we need a protocol, potential for conflict
    - April suggested holding a sign “Please pull forward,” done at Meadowlark and it really helps to have a visual
    - April loved the idea of having 5th graders help
  - Megan suggested maybe the Boulder police show up one day
  - Kristen said the problem is really in the afternoon, not the morning
- Administration changes: Kendra retired
  - Josh admitted that he did a terrible job of getting the information out
  - Tracey is now full time: registrar, reception, secretary
  - Anna is full time office manager, she’s taking over the weekly newsletter
- Enrollment
  - Josh is on district long range committee which has just done enrollment data, projections, real estate prices, birth rates....all context building
    - By May due to give information and value based decisions on schools
    - Committee is advisory
  - Overall budget for BVSD is pretty good, looks like schools will not close
  - Open Enrollment
    - Sent flyers to preschools: NCAR, Meadowlark, Montessori
    - This year we got better materials, updated presentation
    - We put a really good foot forward, much better turnout for night than day event
  - Matrix on enrollment, on BVSD site
    - [Click here for the link for the matrix](#)
    - Open enrollment patterns for BVSD, how many kids that are in our neighborhood where they go, gives all the trends
    - Generally we retain kids in our school, zero administrative transfers out of our school, sometimes get transfers in
    - Looking at enrollment trends by percentage, Mesa does as well if not better than anybody else
  - Mesa also has dual enrollment piece to contend with
    - Roughly 90 families get to choose, could stop dual enrollment, might be on agenda of long term committee
  - State law that people get choice, this is not a BVSD rule
    - BVSD does have the choice schools: BCSIS, Montessori, High Peaks. These are not charters, BVSD schools without a neighborhood
    - Three other schools in South boulder in addition to us & Bear Creek, etc that are in our area that are also competing for kids - and those 3 schools do have demand
    - Horizons, Peak to Peak, Summit are charters
      - BVSD strategy is be friendly with charters, include them, so that BVSD has some control
  - Board doesn’t want to take away people’s options

- However with budget, BVSD might start dictating more/taking away choices while staying within state law
- Mesa has Macro problem with BVSD enrollment, micro problem within South Boulder
- Neither Bear Creek nor Mesa want the dual enrollment, happy to have BVSD redraw the lines
  - 1991, Summit was an elementary school, when it closed, kids in that area got to choose Bear Creek or Mesa
- Is there a way to gently target the dual enrollment families to encourage them to register?
- Sunny mentioned following up again with people who came to the tour, which Josh said he did shortly after tours and would do so again
- Mesa will have a preschool, Aug 2023
  - With last bond, Mesa did a great job outfitting the school for preschoolers
  - Paige asked Josh to include basic preschool info in next principal's comments in school newsletter
  - Madlena asked Josh to mention that we still have capacity for after school, because Bear Creek is full

#### Final Updates from Carrie

- Great schools, put a review on there if you feel inclined
  - Josh said a few people need a meeting to discuss Great Schools listing
  - Mesa's rankings are not looking good
  - If anyone interested in discussing this, please see Carrie
- Yearbook
  - Bess & Blair are going to help Leah
  - Every child gets one
  - **Please submit photos**
- Family Treehouses
  - Concept: multi grade groupings of families, trying to figure out a variation on the theme
    - Not all treehouses are working that well, some are working great
  - Should we have mentor families? Buddy families?
  - If you have interest in this, please let PTO know
- Dine outs
  - Need someone to lead this, Megan is covering it this year but cannot continue
  - These are a great way to add money to PTO budget, and meet up with other Mesa families for a meal
- Fun Run
  - Outdoor event for all grades
  - In the past has been a fundraiser
    - Still need to decide if we want to raise money
    - If we decide to raise money, then we need to keep it consistent

- Don't want to go crazy, we do have the multi-cultural event too, don't want to spread ourselves too thin
- Rosanna suggested a Kindness Run
- Megan is going to reach out to Michelle to see if she will do it again
- Carrie suggested the fundraiser is for Belonging
  - Sunny suggested repurpose the garden with picnic tables, an outdoor space for multiple uses
    - Josh loved this, how can outdoor space be more inviting
- Last year's theme was well received
- Date TBD, maybe April 20, Josh needs to finalize Jaycee on field day