

Mesa Elementary School PTO General Meeting Notes

May 5, 2023, 8:30am

Attendees

Adi Diner, Amabel Akwa-Asare, Anna Aboud, Carrie Simpson and her parents, Christine Chen, Jill Walter, Josh Baldner, Kristen Reiss, Leah Winski, Madlena Measelle, Megan Maguire, Michelle Kalinski, Paige Leonard, Pete Minor, Rachel Tittle, Rosanna Koren, Sunny van der Star, Susan Traube, Ellen, Karen Simpson, Glen Simpson

Introductions

- What do you appreciate about spring?

Carrie's comments

- Carrie thanked:
 - Leah for her guidance this past year
 - Henry & Rosanna for cleaning up the school yard on Earth Day

Budget

- 2023/2024 budget was passed around, Anna explained how she created it
- Thrives:
 - Kept revenue conservative for Thrives - number of students, % participation
 - Took into account 8% COLA increase BVSD recently passed
 - Using those assumptions, increased Thrives ask from \$350 to \$375
- Expenses: highlighted DEI and Oasis, 2024 fun run earmarked for Oasis
- Mentioned 2023/2024 budget would be uploaded to PTO website
- Adi asked about chrome books, should we start raising money now?
 - BVSD has 1:1 web program, you purchase a chrome book starting in 5th grade
 - BVSD doesn't have a 1:1 ratio for K-4 kids
 - Mesa keeps our K-4 kids at 1:1
 - BVSD does supply some Chromebooks to K-4, just not a 1:1 ratio
- Anna explained how we have extra money from Covid years, PTO had kept spending conservative
- Anna went through PTO bank account, showed PTO has about \$23K leftover to spend
 - PTO is still waiting for final invoice from BVSD for paras
- PTO received two funding request forms
 - Busch/Casey asked for Decodable texts, \$2087
- Christine asked what decodable texts are
 - Josh mentioned the leveled texts which are all over the school
 - Decodable texts match up words with where kids are at
 - It's for K-2 students
 - Kids can engage with interesting books that have the phonics they are working on
- Anna made a motion for decodable texts
 - Carrie seconded
 - Carrie's parents abstained

- Everyone else voted for it

Mesa Oasis

- Carrie explained we want to take the remaining \$20K and put it towards the Mesa Oasis, as a starting place
 - Explained the vision for the project will go beyond \$20K
- Carrie explained as a PTO we want to support what Josh/teachers want
 - Good news: Mesa doesn't have long list of things it needs
- Oasis is a great value add to Mesa
- Want to vote to earmark the \$20K, as quotes are finalized yet, but want to move along once we have them
- Carrie said \$20K can go to getting the surface done (concrete pathways, pea gravel, turf, resurfacing) and at least 6 permanent tables for the kids to sit outside
- Susan asked if there would be a designer
 - Sunny explained how the Mesa Oasis vision came to be
 - Contacting students at CU environmental design to look at Sunny's design
- Pete put in opposing view, feels best money spent for Mesa is inside the school
 - Pete and another parent can't get math i-ready help
 - Pete mentioned coming out of covid, lots of kids are coming out with educational issues
 - Sunny mentioned the fact there is so much support for an outside space, there is quite a bit of research showing all the benefits
- Anna brought up the point that any project needs to have longevity, and cannot require ongoing funding
- Josh said it was great that everyone was speaking, it's part of the democratic process
- Josh said 2010 was the last time Mesa saw major staff cuts, we had full time Library and a full time Literacy person that went away
 - PTO budget then came to replace those positions
 - The focus has always been on getting back to that level
 - Dilemma of adding people is planning/collaboration, teachers are happy with the number of people/aides they have right now
- Josh confirmed he would be project manager of Mesa Oasis
- State of CO and BVSD are providing Zearn next year to assist with math
- Amabel: asked about maintenance piece, will that be taken into account, usually underestimated
 - Carrie mentioned yes, we will take all that into account before any of the \$20K is spent, we are looking at this as a bigger issue
 - We will look to use lasting/sustainable materials, to keep maintenance costs down
 - There are no "no maintenance" designs, only low maintenance
- Paige highlighted that Mesa Thrives first responsibilities is to paraprofessionals
 - Leah spoke up to say that we make sure we state specifically what other fund raisers are funding

- Ellen gave a quick summary to make sure she understood everything, she wanted to clarify where funds were coming from
 - Josh explained that BVSD might give \$1500-\$2000 to us, but that's it
- Susan spoke on behalf on SAC, she said that if teachers ever ask for anything, that it always gets funded
 - She is happy that we're going this route (she is working on outdoor space for Denver middle schools)
 - Susan highlighted that kids in 4th & 5th grade don't have windows
- Ellen asked to make sure to look into materials that are fireproof
- Kristen explained we want to vote to earmark the money today, we want to make sure we can go down the path
- Carrie moved to approve earmarking \$20K of our excess funds to continue moving forward of the Oasis:
 - Sunny seconded
 - All in favor: 15
 - Opposed: Pete
 - Abstaining: Josh
- Carrie reiterated that if anyone is in conversations with other families that are frustrated, that they were told something couldn't happen because of money, to give them her number
 - Wants us to be transparent community
- Rachel said maybe teachers haven't heard that money is available
 - Josh nicely pushed back, said he needs to do a better job of letting teachers know if they don't

Followup votes

- Carrie moved to approve 2023/2024 budget
 - Anna seconded
 - Unanimous
- Kristen moved to reinstate current board, except for herself
 - Carrie explained how often we meet
 - Michelle D-K seconded
 - Unanimous
- Carrie moved to approve April minutes
 - Sunny seconded
 - Unanimous

Principal's comments

- Josh mentioned how he's grateful
- In one week had SAC, DEI, PTO
 - Saw a lot of alignment, which is great, due to some crossover
 - Philosophically families in this community care about other families/kids in this community, shared cultural values
- Have 22 kinders so far, doing an orientation on May 18th, allocated for one teacher
- Megan asked if there was a Ms. Moore replacement

- Definitely have two first grade classes, Ms. Moore's position still TBD, maybe a transfer from another school or posted open position?
- Sunny asked if there was anything planned for Ms. Moore's retirement
 - Josh said staff internally yes, and room parents reached out to Josh for that