

Mesa Elementary School PTO General Meeting Notes

Sept 1, 2023, 8:30am

Attendees

Adi Diner, Anat Hurwitz-Michaely, Anna Abboud, Carrie Simpson, Chelsea Colwyn, Christine Chen, Holly Martin, James McCreight, Jill Walter, Josh Baldner, Julie Saurit, Justine Prothro, Lauren Weaver, Madlena Measelle, Matt Henderson, Megan Maguire, Michelle Duvall, Paige Leonard, Pete Minor, Rachel Tittle, Ryan Watson, Shayna Linn, Sunny van der Star

Introductions

- Where did you go to elementary school?

Budget - Anna Abboud updated

- Passed around copies of last year and this year's budgets
- We did a little more than break even last year, Josh thought tutors would cost more but they ended up costing us less last year
- Through other additional events, aside from Thrives, we made extra money
- Explained what PTO pays for aside from paras, ie teacher stipends, teacher requests
- Mentioned PTO has a surplus, explained why PTO has it
 - During Covid, previous PTO was conservative and didn't spend as much money
- Said we can only carry over 20% of budget
 - Don't want to hold onto money, parents donate so that it can be used for their kids
- Pete voiced concern against Mesa Oasis, said it's reaching \$20-\$40K, we voted on Oasis back in May, now we're voting again on another \$8k
- Josh apologized for not bringing phasing plans
 - Phase 1 was the concrete/flatwork
 - Phase 2 is the tables
- Josh said it's been up to him to get a better phasing plan together
- Megan asked Josh did the teachers want the Oasis, and is there anything else the school needs?
 - Josh said yes the teachers do want it, we have not left a need unchecked
- Anna confirmed that the numbers we voted on (concrete & tables) are the current hard numbers
- Shayna asked what happens if we don't vote for the tables
 - Anna explained that we have to put out a request again to the community for how to spend excess funds, or we have to change the bylaws
- Sunny explained that:
 - Because of Covid we learned our school is more resilient with an outdoor space
 - All the resources/studies that show how great outdoor space is
 - Mesa has many groups helping us
 - BVSD has a mandate for outdoor space
 - Oasis will be multi-use, community space
- Michelle asked how many tables will the \$8600 buy

- Josh explained they are round tables, 4 small bench seats, 8 kids per table, 8 tables, will hold 64 kids
- Shayna asked assuming it was a big hit, are there plans to expand this
- Anat asked how the voting works
- Megan moved to approve the purchase of the tables
 - Jill seconded
 - 2 abstained, Josh & James
 - All voted for it

Thrives - Paige Leonard updated

- Mentioned how Pete rebranded it last year
- Said this is to directly fund paraprofessionals salaries
- We have four paras, might be bringing on a fifth
- If we don't completely fund Thrives, we have to cut the paras hours or raise funds other ways this year
- On average the paras have 15 years experience
- We focus in Thrives for Sept only
- Ways to pay: [online](#), check to front office or in kids friday folder, monthly donation
- Company matches are critical
- Carrie stressed **PTO is more interested in percent participation**, don't let the \$375 scare you away; give what you can
- Paige explained all the ways we're trying to reach the community
- Pete emphasized that we should all be explaining why we have Thrives, that it's directly funding paras

PTO Chairs

- Carrie explained that aside from Thrives, the biggest part of the PTO is community; which means we need all hands on deck to make the activities happen
- Megan made a plug for room parents, and that we hope each parent will donate four hours of time to Mesa this year
- Megan asked for people to chair the following committees:
 - Bike to school
 - Community dinners
 - Fall Fest
 - Mesa Bakers
 - Multi cultural fest
 - Yearbook
- Megan made a specific request for Fall Fest volunteers

Principal's report - Josh

- Acknowledged a lot of preschool, kindergarten & new families were here today
- Clarified that the preschool has their own funding stream, doesn't get benefit of the paras that Mesa Thrives funds, he needs to make sure preschool families know that
 - Preschool is Mesa yes, but we don't want to ask them for money

- The paras are critical/essential to deliver high performing education, there's a culture of adaptability for them since class sizes per grade change, student needs change (ie math intervention, just like the literacy intervention we used to have)
 - Cannot be grateful enough that we have this flexibility/adaptability of paras to go where the kids needs are
- Showed the Mesa one pager that he had to produce, the [ROI document](#)
- Emphasized the welcoming school piece of Mesa, we welcome any kids from any situation/struggle, we are here for you
- John Irwin award, based largely on state testing performance, out of nearly 50 schools in BVSD, 15 were awarded it last year, Mesa included, out of 30+ elementary schools, 11 got it
 - He mentioned that CMAS testing is not graded on a curve
 - CMAS are higher standards than national testing
- James asked when CMAS are taken
 - In April, doesn't start until 3rd grade
- James asked how much is done on practice tests
 - Josh said very little, a few hours in the weeks ahead, more to show the kids how the format will look online; we don't teach to the test
- Matt mentioned that his kid has made such progress in ELA and math while here, and she loves coming to school, he doesn't give a crap about testing, and he feels that is not said enough
- Michelle emphasized that teachers don't create a high stress scenario for testing
- Carrie said if you have testing questions, ask your teachers/Josh, encouraged people to reach out

DEI Committee - Christine Chen updated

- Next meeting is Thur Sept 7, library at 3 o'clock
- Gave a one minute pitch to come get involved in the DEI committee
- Areas they look at: racial equity, LGBTQ, neurodiversity
- Focus on staff development, kids, community engagement
 - Did ADHD training for the staff this year already
- Will continue with [Reading to End Racism](#)
- Did a speaker series last year, and will continue this year
- If you have any interest, something you want to see done, please come

Final Note

- Carrie thanked Pete for representing Mesa as the District Parent Council Member