

Mesa Elementary School PTO General Meeting Notes

October 7, 2022, 8:30am

Attendees

Rosanna Koren, Shayna Linn, Rachel Tittle, Holly Martin, Pete Minor, Jessica Gillespie, Lauren Sanders, Amabel Akwa-Asare, Meredith, Vanessa Gerhards, Carrie Simpson, Anna Abboud, Megan Maguire, Jill Walter, Madlena Measelle, Kristen Reiss, Sunny van der Star, Ms. Hobert (subbing for Josh), Ms. Busch (teacher representative)

Introductions

- Went around the room and did introductions

Josh's notes (read by Carrie)

- He wants families to know he is always available to parents to connect directly with thoughts or questions
- So much to celebrate with Fall Fest and Thrives - sense of community is strong
- Everyone looking forward to parent teacher conferences
 - If you haven't heard from your teacher about that please reach out
- 3 important committees
 - DEI Committee - had to reschedule their meeting yesterday, Mesa is prioritizing DEI
 - Families and educators together (FET) - help build stronger connections for underrepresented families, provide dinner & childcare
 - School Accountability committee (SAC) - work on specific school goals, parents are on this committee, district driven, Kim and April are on the leadership, data driven academic goals, teacher evaluations connect to school goals
- New office Manager - Anna, if you have the chance please pass through the office and say "Hello!"
- Ms. Pinsker - new counselor, just finished district's bullying curriculum
 - A great resource for anything kids might be struggling with; parents can email teachers and they can connect their child with Ms. Pinsker.
- District stakeholder committee - There is a recommendation/meeting that will come out in the spring. This will be a topic for us as a committee.
- Watched Superintendent's Rob Anderson video on BVSD critical infrastructure needs
- Shayna asked: how many kids in our kindergarten this year are open enrolled?

Fall Fest Debrief

- Carried thanked Megan for learning us in such a successful event
- Megan then gave a debrief
 - Gave thanks to everyone's help, very grateful that the community rallied to get everything in place
 - Middle Schoolers (Spiders) were really great
 - Asked for suggestions/feedback on what could be improved

Questions:

- Pete: Is it growing because it seemed really crowded?
 - Similar size to last year, little smaller likely due to the rain
- Shayna: Can we use the gym for rain plans? Set up bouncy house in the gym if rain?
 - We can ask for it as part of rain plan, but trying to keep it somewhat contained (if indoors)
- Lauren: Food Trucks for next year?
 - This adds some complexity, with the food trucks you have to guarantee a minimum and not as much money goes to the PTO.
 - Pizza is both cost effective and simple.
 - If there are creative and simple options that need no utensils and can be easily distributed, we welcome someone who wants to volunteer next year to take this on
- Holly suggested making cotton candy ahead of time
 - We couldn't because of having to move indoors at the last minute
 - Have on agenda today a vote to approve a second cotton candy maker
- Rachel suggested having chairs for older people to sit down and relax, ie like a viewing area
 - We had them set up outside, but those didn't get set up once we went inside.
- Carrie mentioned we're going to ask/highly encourage to not have M&Ms as part of Fall Fest - it felt like too much
 - Maybe have M&Ms at 4? 4:30? 6:30?
 - Would offer PTO support for a different event
 - Curious how kids felt being pulled away from Fall Fest
 - Need to be mindful of how much extra work this puts on Ms D-S.
 - Carrie and Megan have an action to talk to Josh and Sarah about a concert plan.
- Roseanna asked about the marching band from last year
 - Carrie mentioned how the band was unavailable this year
- Holly asked about carnival games, versus doing so many walks?
 - Mostly it's an issue around having enough volunteers to run the events.
- Jessica asked if 5th graders could volunteer?
 - Often it's their last year and they want to experience it.
 - Could potentially ask if they want to volunteer.

Suggestions/Notes

- Lots of books leftover
- Would be nice to have a place for people to get water, shouldn't have to buy it
- Tentative plan for the face paint/rain plan for next year (sensory room) but it needs to get approved first.
- Must have a pre-approved rain plan.
- Don't want kids in the classroom as the classrooms get messy/disrupted.
- Space for cake walk was kind of cramped.
- If there are other fall fest comments please reach out to Carrie or Megan.
- There are lots of planning meetings if people are interested in volunteering and influencing the plans for next year.
- Sept 22 most likely the date next year, or Sept 29?
- Collected \$10001.98 at Fall Fest, after expenses made just under \$7965.67

Mesa Thrives

- Ms. Busch gave a shoutout to Pete for all he's done for Thrives
- Strong participation rate of 86%, even before covid have not had more than 85%
 - Past 6 years never had participation as high as 86%
- Debrief from Pete:
 - Lots of funding issues in general to get the things we need at Mesa.
 - From a planning perspective we are a small school so we don't get a lot of revenue per head
 - Plus Mesa is high performing so don't get a lot of incremental funding
 - Mesa Thrives is the way that we deal with the funding gap to pay for our 4 paraprofessionals
 - Allows the teachers to break the classes up into smaller groups. These are incredible group of experts/educators (PhDs, 15 years experience)
 - Focus was to run it for a period of time to inform, expose, educate people.
 - Lots of emails from classroom ambassadors.
 - Focus on participation rate, not amount collected
 - Last year 65% participation after 5 months, this year 86% after 5 weeks.
 - This is a great performance given we are a public school, this is an optional program, and we want to be very welcoming.
 - 7 classes above 90% participation
 - We have a policy where we don't want to identify people who didn't give - we don't want to create a toxic atmosphere.
 - Notable area of change is in recurring giving, where families choose to give over a period of time
 - 2 families last year to 21 families this year.
 - Same level of giving from corporate matches, people who sponsor a child.
 - Expect to do a similar short/focused campaign next year.
 - Will do some refinements to the program but stay with mostly the same format (intense 4-5 weeks)
 - Pete hopes next year it'll be even easier as people will be use to the campaign and know what to expect
 - Want to make sure that it's clear that we are asking people to give what they can which may be less than the \$350 requested.
 - Depending on budget/funding, spring fun run may not be a fundraiser
 - Years past have raised \$20K at spring run
- Anna passed around budget
 - \$74,840.68 in bank
 - \$83,519.00 still owed in expense for para-professionals and yearly teacher support
 - Have \$9k in recurring payments to expect throughout the year and expect about another \$7-10K in corp match
 - Hence, the budget is looking positive with expected donations. These totals do not include king soopers rewards, community nights and other passive fundraisers that will occur through the year.
 - Total donated per the Mesa Thrives campaign so far is: \$64,378.00

PTO Voting Issues

- New speaker for Music Program, \$1195
 - Kristen made motion, Madlena seconded
 - Passed with unanimous approval
- Paying Tax Preparer \$650 to prepare last years return
 - Anna made motion, Kristen seconded
 - Passed with unanimous approval
 - Additional note: We weren't able to find a tax preparer at a discounted rate amongst parents so paying a preparer \$650
 - If anyone can volunteer free or discounted tax prep for the Mesa PTO (which is a non-profit organization) please contact Anna Abboud.
- New cotton candy machine (around \$300)
 - Carrie made motion, Megan seconded
 - Passed with unanimous approval

Volunteer Opportunities/Volunteers Needed

- Carrie reviewed all areas that Mesa needs volunteers
- Mesa Bakers
 - Kristen coordinating this group again this year
 - Roseanna will takeover from Kristen next year
 - If you sign up, it's a Baked Goods listserv - you'll get emails every now and then to provide baked goods for various events
- Copycats - come occasionally to the school to help make copies, have only been seeing things from one teacher
 - Michelle K is spearheading the Copycats
 - Shayna asked if all teachers knew, Carrie to remind Josh to spread word
- Dine-out coordinator:
 - Shayna volunteered to do it
 - If you have any leads to a restaurant let the PTO or Shayna know.
- Playground and lunch helpers - Josh does all of it over lunch
 - Need volunteers, please reach out to Josh directly or contact Carrie.
 - Do parents need to do background check on Raptor to volunteer in schools?
- Halloween parties - room parents please connect with your classroom teachers
 - Carrie will send a heads up for new families.

Open Areas

- We were running out of time, but mentioned these items, will discuss next month:
 - Enrollment
 - Multi-cultural spring fling