

Hillside PTO Meeting Minutes

September 20, 2022 – 3pm, Hillside Library



Attendees:

1) Call to Order 3:15 by Laura Cooper. Introduction of board members. The meeting was attended by Chris Mills, Laura Cooper, Anne Dahl, Crystal Richard, Jennifer Crane, Jen DiDonato, Whitney Hanrahan, Adarsh Sinha, Cheryl Nebhut, Jennifer Hildebrandt, and Jessica Butler.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes

a) Approved and seconded.

3) Standing Business

a) School Principal Report – update from Mr. Mills

- i) Right now: reading assessments, MAPs (completed already), kindergarten readiness, PALs. The school is required to tell all parents when assessments are happening and individual parents if their child falls below benchmarks.
- ii) October will be busy. interim report cards go out for kids in danger of falling below proficiency (as in a C level grade). SOLs begin. Many assessments like MAPs compare students across the nation and is not necessarily aligned to our standards. SOLs are specifically measuring against VA standards. The school uses both type of assessments to develop programs.
- iii) A religious observance survey will be going out soon so that teachers can avoid assigning major assignments on those days.
- iv) Class size: our classes are within policy and staffing standards. We are NOT over enrolled. We are at the high side of staffing standards and policy. What happens if we go above policy? A new teacher can be hired if it's BEFORE the school year, but we DON'T want to hire a long term sub (and may not be able to anyway) and split up the kids into new classrooms once the school year starts. That would be a terrible outcome for the kids, the teacher shortage makes it difficult, and so it will not happen. SO if kindergarten classes go over 25 kids, the additional kids will go to other schools (max sizes by policy vary by grade level: 1-3 is 28 kids (30 with an aide) and staffing standards affect how many kids a single teacher can have). We may qualify for teacher aids to deal with larger classes. Mr Mills meets with the planning office this week to discuss next year's projections. Pandemic numbers were mid-500 and are now 632 (and are 2-3 kids above staffing standards across the school). If parents want to have smaller class sizes, they need to take their

concerns about POLICY and STAFFING STANDARDS to the school board. Until those policy and staffing standards change, these are the class sizes we will have.

- b) President Report – update from Laura Cooper and Anne Dahl
 - i) Immediate volunteer needs are: Book Fair, Movie Night, Silent Auction, and Communications
 - ii) People who joined the PTO by Sept 1 were entered into a raffle which was won by Jiang Liu. Congratulations, Jiang!
 - iii) Executive Board- We hold monthly meetings. At the first meeting of the year we discussed:
 - (1) Future Hillside Hawks playdates at the Library. Ashburn Library September 28th 10:30-11:30 AM
 - (2) Supporting Title 1 School Library- Lori Redman is a Hillside Parent who is the Librarian at Rolling Ridge Elementary. We're awaiting discussion with her to decide how to support them.
 - (3) Starting the year with a surplus of funds. We have a couple of ideas of ways to spend, and will cover later in the meeting
 - (4) Hawk Campaign- Focuses on multi-year projects for large items
 - (a) Playground Improvements is an example and we want to discuss.
 - (5) Met with Mr. Mills to discuss the budget and items in the future: Kindergarten field trip shirts \$455.00; Outdoor Classroom- Grassy area between the pick up doors for Walkers along the side of the school. It's currently overrun with weeds. We discussed the possibility of making it a usable space for teachers as an outdoor classroom: leveling, covering with mulch, landscaping. Hillside parent volunteered to chair a committee for this; Using the funds for some library improvements; Playground Shade Structures for the Kindergarten Play Area, this would require approval,
- c) Treasurer Report – update from Crystal Richard
 - i) Budget available at meeting.
 - ii) Expenses are based on last year's totals. Added this year: back to school activities, community connections (meet and greet type stuff), reading program, books in the classroom (classroom libraries START at 3-500 books and are ideally 1,000+ books).
 - (1) Books in classrooms allows for curated options so each child can pick books that interest them at their reading level.
 - (2) The library does not accept donations because they buy library bound books. Books in the classroom can be normally bound. The book swap is a great way to donate books.

4) Current Committee and Event Updates

- a) Care and Share Committee – update from Jennifer Hilderbrandt
 - i) Focus on teacher appreciation.

- ii) Volunteers are needed for thanksgiving lunch the Nov 16th, cookie corner, and teacher appreciation week
- b) Restaurant Nights/Spirit Days – update from Anne Dahl
 - i) Oct 4 Manhattan pizza (all day event) and Robeks Oct 19th 4-8pm.
- c) Halloween Family Movie Night - update from Jen DiDonato
 - i) Will need volunteers to help with pre-orders, day of concessions. No costume contest this year to make the event shorter and more manageable. Kids will vote on the movie they want to watch.
- d) LEAF Committee - update provided by Erika Daly
 - i) (read by Laura Cooper) The LCPS School Board has created a committee, the Loudoun Education Alliance of Parents (LEAF), to engage parent representatives that will advise and provide feedback on policies and issues. The LEAF representative for Hillside, Erika Daly, will share Board information with parents and bring issues back to LEAF and the School Board. LCPS is relatively unique in that it solicits public input for policies, some of which are state-mandated. Each policy is reviewed after 5 years on a rolling basis, about 100 policies per year.
Parents that would like to discuss these can meet with Erika on Tuesday, October 11, at 3:00pm at the shade structure behind the school. Parents can also contact her at hillside.leaf@gmail.com.

5) New Business (including topics to discuss, action items)

- a) We want to bring back Odyssey of the Mind. We need a parent rep for each team of seven kids. The PTO will financially support the parent representatives.
- b) We also want to bring back Math Olympiad.
- c) We are open to ideas for the Hawk Campaign.
- d) Because we don't have a quorum today, we will email surveys to vote for what we will use our surplus of funds and Hawk Campaign funds.
- e) Mrs Butler, school librarian,
 - i) Mark Tyler Nobleman is a children's author (30 minutes over Oregon) may be available for a "meet the author" event through a partnership (1.500 for an afternoon if we partner with another school)
 - ii) Sue Fliess is a local author who may be available for a Meet the Author event. Her pricing will be less than Mark Tyler Nobleman.
 - iii) Accessibility and equity in the library is a big push for Mrs Butler. Last year, they worked on labeling stickers and rearranging to make books more findable.
 - iv) Second graders will continue to write a Caldecott nominee every year in hopes of expanding the illustrator wall.
 - v) The library is OUR LIBRARY. Everyone belongs in the library. Mrs Butler is working to build a wall of the kid's faces and ways to build interest in the biography section.

6) Parent/Member Questions and Comments

- a) Motion made and seconded to fund both Meet the Author events.
- b) Motion made and seconded to use our excess for playground improvements
- c) Request for the Hillside Hawk to appear at the Broadlands HOA Christmas event. PTO will see if someone is available to appear. The Hawk costume belongs to the school.

7) Adjournment of Meeting

- a) Done and seconded.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 18th – 7pm, Virtual

Documents available for attendees: Agenda, June 2022 Meeting Minutes, PTO Key Dates Calendar.

PTO Executive Board for 2022-2023 School Year

Co-Presidents: Anne Dahl and Laura Cooper
Treasurer: Crystal Richard

Recording Secretary: Jennifer Crane
Member-at-Large: Jen DiDonato

Email: hillsidepto@hillsidehawkspato.com

Website: www.hillsidehawkspato.com