**North Star PTA Meeting**

**Date/Time:** September 17, 2015 7:00pm

**Location:** North Star Elementary Multi-Purpose Room

**Attendance:** Attendance sheet in PTA office file

**Agenda**

Introduction and welcome

PTA board member updates

Principal's/Assistant Principal's messages

Jessica McCarthy - The Outdoor Classroom

Question and Answer Session

Meeting Adjourned

**Board Member Presentations**

**President**

Ann Pollock

The new family directory is now available. You can keep up to date with PTA information by liking our Facebook page, signing up to receive e-news, and visiting nspta.com.

Please consider joining the PTA to help support our school by providing funds for instructional materials, school improvement projects, family activities, and educational programs. Members are not required to volunteer.

There are a few ways that parents can raise money for North Star while shopping. If each child brings in three box tops per month, we can raise $2000 in a year. Log in through Amazon smile and a percentage will be donated to NS. We can also raise money by turning in receipts from Zingos and when purchasing Name Bubbles. For more information, please visit the Product Incentives page of the PTA website.

The yearbook is in need of kindergarten and 3rd grade representatives to help take photos at school events. Parents and students can also upload photos via the website. This year, the children will have the opportunity to vote for their favorite cover art. Preorders can be placed in the spring to guarantee a copy for your child. There will be a limited number of copies for sale (at a higher cost) at the end of the year.

Spirit wear will be delivered in time for spirit fest. Accessories are available for purchase year round. The order form can be found on the Spirit Wear page of the PTA website.

This year's Spirit Fest has a fundraising goal of $13,500. If this goal is reached by Friday, September 25th, the class with the highest average donation will receive a visit from Polaris and each student in the class will receive a photo of Polaris and the class. The top fundraising class in each grade will have recess on a Moon bounce obstacle course. There are individual prizes as well. Parent volunteers are needed for Spirit Fest and a sign-up genius will be posted on the PTA website.

Teacher wish lists are available in a binder kept in the office. It will not be available online because it includes personal details about the teachers.

A motion was made by Ann Pollock to approve the meeting minutes from May 18, 2015. The motion was seconded by Stephanie Conway and the minutes were approved.

**Treasurer**

Melissa Gannon

Profit and Loss Budget overview is available via the PTA website. A motion was made by Ann Pollock to approve the 2015-2016 budget. The motion was seconded by Stephanie Conway and the budget was approved.

**Principal's/Assistant Principal’s Messages**

Smarter balance test scores were released and North Star was one of the highest performing schools. Today we welcomed Delaware’s Secretary of State, Jeffrey Bullock, and state archivist, Stephen Marz, to announce the Delaware Day competition. The fourth grade students presented a short program at an assembly and they formed a human crossword puzzle.

A video was shown to encourage children to take the bus to reduce the number of car riders (averages 150) in the morning. The drop off procedures can be found in the parent teacher handbook. A mix of pedestrian and car traffic has created a dangerous situation. It can also make the transition more difficult for some children. Thanks to parent input, the drop off period has been extended to include the area between the orange signs, allowing 8 or 9 cars to unload at one time. There will be additional staff helping children exit the car from the passenger side.

Dr. Jakubowski wants everyone to know that the North Star website has been updated with photos of our students. Information about Smarter Balance test scores can be found on the website. There will be another presentation about the tests in February by Ms. Lieber, our testing coordinator.

**The Outdoor Classroom**

Mrs. McCarthy, Mrs. Whittaker, and Mr. Watkins

Many teachers like to take their classes outside for lessons, either sitting at the picnic tables or in the grass. Ms. Huhn suggested developing an outdoor classroom. Mrs. McCarthy took the lead on researching and developing ideas with the help of the kindergarten and fourth grade students. The outdoor classroom will include an area with amphitheater seating to accommodate an entire class, small group areas, sensory tables, a mud kitchen, and more. Several classes will be able to make use of it at one time. Gateway nursery came out to help determine the best way to incorporate the surrounding land. The classroom will also feature rain barrels, solar panels, native plants, an herb garden, and a meadow. In addition to learning about how an ecosystem works, the classroom will have applications in all areas of the curriculum. There will be opportunities for the children and the community to help in creation of the classroom.

A question was raised about a proposed timeline. Mrs. Thomas said the timeline is unclear but there is an initial goal to have the raised beds installed before the first snow.

**Closing**

The next meeting will be held on October 13th at 7pm, where the topic of discussion will be homework. Volunteer training will be held immediately following the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:50pm.