

North Star PTA Meeting

Date/Time: February 27, 2017 7:00pm

Location: North Star Elementary Multi-Purpose Room

Attendance: Attendance sheet in PTA office file

<p>Minutes approved at PTA Meeting on March 20th, 2017.</p>

Agenda

Introduction and welcome

PTA board member updates

Principal's message

Question and Answer Session

Meeting Adjourned

Board Member Presentations

Ann called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

Please sign in and fill out a raffle ticket. The winner will be given a \$10 voucher to use for North Star spirit wear accessories of their choice.

A motion to approve the December 5, 2106 minutes was made by Julie Alvarez. The motion was seconded by Zoe Harris and the minutes were approved.

Kristen Dassel – Student Services

Skate night was a great success with proceeds of \$1,424 which after paying for the hire of the skate rink (\$350) gave overall profit of \$1,074. This will be used to fund PTA activities.

Thank you to Lisa Brown for running Bingo night. On the night 190 bingo boards were sold.

Yearbook pre-order forms were sent home with students today and are orders are due by Tuesday March 7th. This is to guarantee your copy at \$15 (\$5 discounted rate for teachers). At the end of the school year yearbooks will be on sale but will be \$20 each and there will only be a limited supply.

New this year, the PTA will be offering for sale school supply boxes through First Day School supplies. Orders will be taken online direct with the vendor and the supply lists will be based upon the grade level lists provided by the school, with the option to add on extras such as tissues, hand soap, Clorex wipes, etc. The school supplies will all be name brands and the supply sale will also be a fundraiser for the PTA.

Zoe Harris – Fundraising

The basket donation winners based upon highest percentage participation have been announced and the winners per grade of the pizza reward party are:

5th- Conner; 4th – Rivera; 3rd – Lieber; 2nd – Kaplan; 1st – Clarke; and KN – Kane.

The lunch will be sponsored by the PTA and the food is being purchased through Red Clay catering and the lunch will be held on March 24th, 2017.

There was one more volunteer needed for basket shopping and the volunteer was found at the PTA meeting – thank you Cara.

Ticket sales for preview week and will call tickets for the carnival night are to go on sale on March 20th. Flyers coming home soon.

Many volunteers are needed for both preview week and the carnival night itself. Please sign up and help if you can.

Stephanie Conway – Vice President

The new spirit wear line has been launched and the PTA is working with a new and local vendor Unique Images who are based on Kirkwood Highway. The vendor also works with many local schools. All orders are placed online, and the spring sale ends on Friday March 3rd.

Ann Pollock – President

In the absence of the PTA Treasurer (Mary Ruth Nich), Ann presented the latest accounts.

- The book fair income was \$10,369, and there is still over \$4,000 to come as a reimbursement from “Dr. D’s book club”. The donation of a book to each student in the school made the book fair more successful than prior years.
- New line item being “Grant income”. Through their place of work a parent received a volunteer grant that they designated to the PTA. We received \$63.36.
- Carnival basket donations were \$6,000, but at the date of the accounts not all monies had been deposited from Cheddar Up.
- Amazon Smile product incentive money to date since we started the scheme has been \$255.05. Not all this income is within the current year.

The latest accounts are on the PTA website,

<http://www.nspta.com/Budget vs Actual February 26th 2017.pdf>.

The PTA now has 322 members which is 2 more than last year. We are pleased to announce that at the end of February we had achieved 100% teacher membership.

Five PTA instructional grants have been awarded based on applications received. Both Mrs. Rivera and Ms. Tiberi received a grant to build reading lofts in their classrooms; Mrs. Becker had a grant for “escape room” materials; Ms. Browell has a grant to partially fund a visit from Jonathon Sprout for a 4th grade musical workshop; and 2nd grade received money for science books to support their curriculum.

Guest presentation – Mrs. Becker

Mrs. Becker presented the “escape room” materials she has purchased with the PTA instruction grant, which comprise of a series of lock boxes. The idea is to make learning fun in the classroom and expose students to a new way of learning.

Everyone at the meeting divided into 4 teams and each team worked on solving the lock boxes. A fun live demonstration.

Principal's message

Mrs. Thomas

The new projector has been installed in the cafeteria and was being used at the meeting.

The following has been requested to be shared as a car rider reminder. Children under the age of 12 or 65 inches tall are required under Delaware law to sit in the back seat of the car.

Dr. Seuss birthday is March 2nd, and the school is planning a “Seuss-A-Thon” reading event from 9am-3pm, where guest readers will continually be reading Dr. Seuss books and homerooms can tune in to listen throughout the day when ever suits their schedule.

Mid-year check in with homework policy

The Washington Post had an article in yesterday titled “What happened when once school banned homework – and asked kids to read and play instead”. Copies of the article were handed out at the meeting but it can be found online at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/02/26/what-happened-when-one-school-banned-homework-and-asked-kids-to-read-and-play-instead/?utm_term=.81d9ebeac3d8

Mrs. Thomas stressed the school is working on moving away from parent involvement to family engagement.

The North Star revised homework policy survey has sparked a 54% reply rate with 380 students out of 691 having returned a survey as of Friday February 24th, 2017. Out of the replies 12% chose to add additional comments. There are still responses coming in but the result shared were as of the date given. North Star staff were also surveyed with a different questionnaire aimed at teachers rather than parents.

The revised homework policy was shared again:

“Homework may be assigned with the same level of planning as classroom lessons, differentiated based on student need. Homework, if assigned, will consist of purposeful, authentic, relevant learning activities which students should be able to complete independently.”

The results from the survey were shared as follows:

How well has our revised HW policy been communicated to families?

- ▶ 81% of respondents feel our communication has been clear & consistent
- ▶ 17% of respondents feel our communication has been inadequate & inconsistent

How well is our revised HW policy understood by families?

- ▶ 80% of respondents feel they have a clear understanding
- ▶ 16% of respondents remain unclear & unfused

How comfortable is your family with our revised HW policy?

- ▶ 57% of respondents feel comfortable
- ▶ 40% of respondents remain uncomfortable

How effective have you found our revised policy to be for your child?

- ▶ 51% of respondents feel the revised policy is effective
- ▶ 41% of respondents feel the revised policy is ineffective

Staff survey

- ▶ 33% of staff respondents have been unchanged in their opinions of homework
- ▶ 50% of staff respondents have found their opinion to move from being a proponent of homework to an opponent of homework

(positive response to revised policy)

- ▶ 11% of staff respondents have found their opinion to move more in favor of homework

(negative response to revised policy)

Mrs. Thomas shared how she has spoken to the Principal at HB Du Pont Middle School about homework to gauge his view, and he shared that on average 6th grade students will have 50-60 minutes of homework a night, but this does depend on their individual teachers. He felt Middle school is the sandwich filling between the changes in homework from Elementary to Middle to High School.

Themes and trends to be worked on

- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Prepare for Middle School... build "soft skills"
- ▶ Further Family Engagement

Many teachers are now using the homework agenda books to get students to write down things about their day that can then be used as starting point at home to discuss the day and what is being taught and worked on at school.

The school is looking at hosting curriculum and family engagement nights by grade level.

The school is sticking with the revised homework policy and there will be focus on communication, and looking at what are "soft skills" needed throughout school and on to Middle School, and how can these be put into daily instruction.

Mrs. Thomas opened the floor to any comments, feedback or questions. None were raised.

Questions

No questions asked.

Meeting adjourned at 7:54pm.

Closing

You can keep up to date with PTA information by liking our Facebook page, signing up to receive e-news, and visiting www.nspta.com.

The next meeting will take place on Monday, March 20th at 7pm. We hope to see you there!