

Walker PTA meeting: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 @ 7:00pm

Location: Walker School

Attendees:

Nicki Devine	Terry Velan	Stacey Masliansky
Darlena Simmons	Liz Ribeiro	Donna Su
Patty Harris	Dee Johnson	Ginger Lumpkin
Erin Saculti	Lisa Levine	Maureen Powers

Principal's Announcements:

- Only have 4 weeks left of the school year!
- Thank you parents for bringing your children to school ready to learn. We are so blessed to have your children here - they are all wonderful! Thank you parents and PTA for being involved and having dynamic relationships with our staff and community. Walker is a special place!
- This year our academic focus was on raising our reading levels, esp in our black and 2nd language cohorts. We wanted to focus on raising their levels up to where they should be.
- We also focused on what type of learning environment we have and getting the kids college ready.
 - We are making progress in getting our students college ready. In K & 1st grade 80% of our students mastered their college ready skills
 - Students in the bottom 25% cohort have shown the most progression. The one on one time and small group work has really been effective.
- The leadership team wanted to improve communication and connections to families/community. We have been able to do that with our partnership with the PTA and SIT Team.
- We will continue our planning over the summer.
- I see moving the school forward with the Beyond Diversity program. In the school we haven't had many conversations about race, gender, sexual orientation, language learners, etc. Moving forward we now have the appropriate tools to have these difficult conversations.
- We are having a great year and it's moving fast. We're not just focused on academics, but making sure it feels welcoming to everyone and that we're all successful.
- We have lots of events coming up: Field Day (May 28), Grade Picnics (May 29-June 3), Awards Assembly (June 5) - see more at the bottom of the minutes.

Parent Questions/Comments:

- Courageous Conversations seem to be happening on the staff level, is there any way to open it up to parents?
 - Beyond Diversity was the District's way to get staff the training (all of our staff have been to this summit). But as a staff we have yet to dive into these conversations. This year was spent making sure all of our staff went to the training.
 - In the past years we have had parent led Courageous Conversations (Dewey and Washington are doing a lot of them, maybe we can reach out to them for some guidance).
 - We need a parent or the PTA to lead and bring the Walker community to these conversations - this could be a new committee. Or maybe the Equity Committee can take this on.
 - If anyone is interested, please reach out.
- Is there anything we can do to support the kids who are observing Ramadan?
 - Teachers are all over this. They are letting the kids stay in the class for lunch so they don't have to be around food and people eating. Staff are working together to make sure all needs are met.
- Is there a way we can reduce the amount of flyers going home (esp to families with multiple children - getting multiple copies of the same flyer)?
 - Yes, we're already working on that. In the start of next year a form will go home asking the parents what form of communication they want - electronic vs. paper, and if have multiple kids which child should the flyers be sent home with.

Teacher Announcements: From Ms. Levine

- P.E. Announcements:

- D65 Track Meet for 4th & 5th graders is on May 19th. Flyers have gone out. Looking for 2-3 parent volunteers. Please reach out to Ms. Likhite.
- Field Day is on May 28th. They need parent volunteers to help run the station. Please reach out to Mr. Montcalm.
- YEA! Art Fest is on May 18th. Please come check out our Walker student art!
- A teacher would like to have more involvement with the options of enrichments offered - reach out to get teachers opinions
- One teacher was really impressed with the students engagement of the game Gaga at Camp Timberlee. Gaga is a game that's played outside in a waist high walled court. She couldn't believe the sportsmanship and interest the kids showed. This could be an idea of something we could add to our playground - it would give the older kids more to do (some complain of boredom at recess).
- All the teachers are so grateful for all that has been done for teacher appreciation week! THANK YOU!

Executive Committee Announcements

- Teacher Appreciation Week is going well. Thank you to all who brought in items.
- **School Supplies:** This week a flyer will go out for next year's fee. We changed the prices to be \$50 per student and \$25 for free & reduced priced. We'll be shortening the flyer to just the form.
- A big Thank You to Donna Su for all her hard work this year leading our Enrichment group! She was new to Walker this year and jumped right in. She's our Walker nominee for the Phyllis Ganser PTA Volunteer of the Year Award!
- Another big Thank You to the Saculti family for donating a fridge for the teachers lounge!

Treasurer Update

- We'll be ending this year with a surplus, good news
- We made \$100 from the Grecian Kitchen Fundraiser, \$440 from the Hubs Fundraiser, and we still have the Oberweis Fundraiser on the last day of school.
- We made a donation to the YEA! Festival
- We received a \$500 donation from the Jon Kimmel Memorial Fund (left open ended on what it should be spent on, but would like it to go towards the art residences).
- Parent question: What happened with the yearbook numbers?
 - The money spent on yearbook was to gift the 5th graders each a yearbook. The fundraising fell flat this year and didn't cover the cost. We made a little money from selling the books (\$120). Next year we will work more closely with the 5th grade team to get the fundraising up.

Service Committee Update: May 16th is the end of the book drive. Teachers and families will have the opportunity to pick out books before the lot is given to Bernie's Book Bank. The Girl Scouts would be able to help sort through the books - they did a great job going through the ones in our book store.

PTA Council Update:

- Doing an equity training for all incoming PTA execs from all 16 schools this month.
- Some new committees have been formed:
 - School Supplies Sub-Committee: found that school supply fees range from school to school (\$35-\$65). Wanting to push the district to take over school supplies so it's done at the top level.
 - A teacher's hunch is that if they did take it on they would just give the money to each school and the school would have to figure out how to manage it.
 - Enrichment Sub-Committee: found that enrichment company fees vary widely from school to school for the same class. Maybe we can get a deal for the whole district - make it more equitable.

Enrichment Update:

- Sending out a questionnaire about enrichment classes to get feedback from families.
- Going to send it out in Friday Folders and mass email through Beverly.
- Should send out to teachers too
- Child care has permits for the use of the gym and art room so we have to limit our use of those rooms.

- There have been requests for more STEM classes, but those classes have usually been canceled due to low enrollment. Maybe this is because of the cost (they are usually on the more expensive side), so if anyone wants to run a club to lower the cost that would be welcomed.

New Business:

- **School Grounds Beautification Project Idea:**

- We've had tons of talk about doing something with our school grounds.
- We're thinking of picnic tables, benches, maybe garbage cans
- We were also wanting to get the path that floods (between the two playgrounds) fixed - Ms. Lumpkin beat us to the punch and has already contacted Building & Grounds to get it fixed.
- We will put together a proposal for you and will present in at a future meeting.
- If we have interest from the school to grow food, we could take a piece of land and turn it into a garden with raised beds.
 - The garden we have now is too shady to grow food. What we have is limited.
 - Maybe the space with the bushes by the K-2 entrance would be good if we can clear it all out. Maureen will check if that spot gets good sun.
 - Leon's Landscaping has been offering to help us
- We will look into the Gaga pit idea.

- **Art Fundraiser:** The Women's Club of Evanston runs a holiday craft fair and each year they offer 2 D65 schools a table to fundraise. This coming year we have been offered a table.

- We need help coming up with ideas that are representative of Walker, decide what are we fundraising for, and something that the kids can make.
- We've been told that we should also have a donation jar at the table b/c people often like to donate but don't want to buy the product.
- We need to get the kids excited about the project - the more they are into it, the more successful it will be
- Maybe a mason jar baking/cooking kit (like cookie mix or soup mix). Kids can decorate the jars. We will have to keep in mind any allergies - make allergen free
- Maybe have each classroom do a themed gift basket that can be sold. Each kid can put in an item.
- It's very open ended on what we can do.
- Some schools have done cards & stationery, crafts with the art teacher, candles, ornaments, pottery, etc. - we can do as little or as much as we want.
- Please reach out if you are interested in helping
- Our time slot is Nov. 24th from 12-4pm

- **Yard Signs**

- There was discussion on our Facebook page about getting Walker School Spirit yard signs made.
- Other schools have done this (Willard, ETHS, Joan of Arc)
- It would be a fundraiser, but the price shouldn't be over \$10
- Details will come out soon.

Volunteer Needs

- Field Day, Tuesday, May 28: Need volunteers to run activity stations. Please email Mr. Montcalm (montcalmk@district65.net).
- 5th Grade Farewell, Friday, May 31: Need 4-5 parents (usually from 4th grade, but anyone can volunteer). Contact Ms. HP (Panat@district65.net). Please help, it's super fast and super easy. Just need to shop for snacks (teachers will give you detailed list of what to buy), set up the snack and then pass it out to the 5th graders - maybe takes 30 min.

Important Dates

- YEA! Art Festival: May 18, 10am-3pm
- D65 Track Meet for 4th & 5th graders: May 19
- Teacher Hosted Kindermixer: May 23

- Spring Enrichment Classes End: May 24
- Coffee with the Principal: May 24, 9am
- No School: May 27
- Field Day: May 28, K-2nd Grades: 9:15am - 11:00am & 3rd-5th Grades: 1:30pm - 3:15pm
- Grade Picnics: May 29-June 3 (K & 1st: May 29, 2nd & 3rd: May 30, 4th & 5th: June 3rd)
- 5th Grade Farewell: May 31, 2:15pm
- Awards Assembly: June 5th, 9:20am: Grades K-3 & 11:15pm: Grades 4-5
- Last Day of School: June 5
- Oberweis Fundraiser: June 5, All Day
- June PTA Meeting: June 12, 7pm

Adjournment

Mark your calendars! Our next meeting: Wednesday, June 12th at 7pm in Walker Cafeteria