

Sargent PTO Meeting #6

March 11, 2021

Minutes

1. **Principal and Teacher/Staff Updates**

* Principal’s report
  + Spoke with Facilities about broken blacktop – this is on a “wish list.” Other schools have more significant needs. He’s been asking for it for years. Could be part of Capital Project.
    - Re Capital Project, each building needs to form a committee – Anthony D’Amato, Archer, a parent, a teacher. Maybe BLTs can have a role?
  + Girls on the Run has 3 teachers – Wokanick, Winchell, Black (?)
  + Spring recess is week of 3/29
  + Kids coming back to in-person 4 days/week. More time outside: will get a permanent canopy – anchored in – more permanent than the tent used in the fall. Will be located near cafeteria to be used for lunch and make it easier for upper grades to access. Would like to see it used more than in the fall.
  + More on return to school 4 days/week
    - Dates: Pre-K and K start 3/22; everyone else 3/29
    - Special ed classes may have additional half day Wed.
    - Vast majority of staff want kids to return to the building.
    - Will have to do a lot of re-teaching for transition back to school – it has now been a year since the remote kids have physically come to school.
    - With more kids in each class, 15-19 will seem huge, but it’s not larger than in the past. We’ll use dividers, masks, windows open. NY and MA governors say we can go from 6’ to 3’. We can do that comfortably. Teachers feel good about these class sizes.
    - Mr. Archer has received the vaccine, along with front office staff, lots of teachers.
    - It will be great to have the kids back, wish it were 5 days/week.
    - Most remote kids are returning in person. It’s going to be like the first day of the year for them – learning the schedule, walking in the hallway, Social distancing. Lunch and recess is going to look more like the old days – since masks will be off to eat, they shouldn’t be in classroom. We’re working on a cafeteria schedule.
    - Opening windows is considered a best practice (not a requirement), and there are no union rules against teachers doing it themselves, and Mr. Archer encourages open windows.
  + 4th grade – Colonial Day being planned. Grant money used from last year wasn’t used. Virtual or outdoor idea.
  + School pictures came back corrected. Took 3 tries to fix “schoool.”
  + Diversity books have arrived for PTO to distribute.
  + Environmental Club – Mr. Archer will resend the proposal from last year, and Dr. Landahl will try to get it approved, prorated and active for this year. Awaiting details from Deputy Superintendent on how to submit.
  + Update on improvement plan for Target School status.
    - Parent Communication: A survey has to go back out to parents. We are also asking teachers how they communicate with parents, what they think is effective.
    - Math – I-ready benchmarks are done. 2 professional development courses: the first is on use how to use it, and the second is on how to look at the data. After the break we will get the school’s data team together to review data and see how the interventions are working so far. (The program populates math lessons for kids based on their needs from the benchmark.)
    - ELA – Mr. Archer and Mr. Wright met with a staff development person from BOCES, who will put together a PD plan for English, reading, language arts.
    - Remote learning – we have asked staff what they need
    - Assessment/grading – a plan is coming in April

Parent Questions:

* People are driving very fast on the driveway to school. Mr. Archer will put out a reminder. It’s because the speedbumps are gone for snowplowing.
* Teacher Pay Teachers – he will follow up on teachers’ interest
* Brain Pop – they are finding out if teachers are using it
* Wellness Committee recent meeting discussed reopening and the mental needs of kids. Idea to have hybrid kids make signs for the remote kids to welcome them back.

1. **Announcements and updates from PTO**

* “Wish Wednesdays” to purchase teachers’ requests – going well, have seen about 20 fulfilled so far.
* Hudson Valley Seed Co sale – $1,100 so far.
* Anti-racism books – Emily is coordinating with Meg to pick up and pack. PTO is printing nice canvas totes for every student, teacher, and staff. Distribution for remote kids TBD.
* Teacher appreciation week May 3-9.

1. **Open Discussion**

* Fifth grade planning: a few 5th grade parents are in touch with the 5th grade teachers. Parents will start meeting. Would like to know: what planning has already happened, if any? Who is the teacher contact for the yearbook? How will it incorporate remote kids? What is happening with Student Council?
  + Yearbook contacts: Forestiere and Winchell
  + Student Council: Ms. Ferrara. Mr. Archer will ask her about the status.
    - Parent idea: Could student council organize a vote on the 5th grade activity. Provide a structured way for the students to have a voice.
  + End of year activities: Mr. Archer says conversation has just begun on 5th grade graduation following current social distancing rules. Indoors is probably not an option; considering something outside. 385th graders, 6 remote.
    - Parent ideas: Rombout visit if possible, zipline/treetop
    - Goal: unify the 5th graders and help them look to their future at Rombout
* Boys running club: Lesly is speaking with 3 potential coaches.
* Having Girls on the Run back is a big deal – even kids who are homeschooling are participating. Thank you, Mr. Archer, for allowing GOTR to use Sargent.
  + Mr. Archer: It’s good socially for kids, cardio, mental health.
  + Lesly: Knowing a core group of girls going into middle school is very helpful.