

# Arnold Elementary PTA Board and Committee Meeting

January 14, 2014

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Arnold Elementary Media Center

## MINUTES

### 1. Call to order

### 2. Welcome

### 3. Approval of November 2013 Minutes

### 4. President's Report:

- a. PTA is now sending out its own email on Thursdays to share information on PTA activities. This is in addition to emails sent from the school office on Thursdays, which are strictly school-related. This is partly to have a direct line of communication to AES families as we move forward with the feasibility study, because any information meant to mobilize families to advocate for the school rebuild/remodel cannot come from the school itself. Families can opt out of receiving PTA emails.
- b. There is a new security door between the entrance foyer and the student hallway which will prevent access to classrooms and lockers after-hours. This affects the PTA because a new protocol will need to be developed for picking up students after Enrichment activities.
- c. The PTA plans to develop a list of “jobs” or “roles” it needs to fill that will allow parents to volunteer in the capacity that best fits their schedules and abilities. Examples include school beautification tasks or videotaping school events.

### 5. Treasurer's Report:

- a. The PTA's current account balance is \$13,602.
- b. Both the Holiday Breakfast and Secret Shop raised a small profit this year, though neither are meant to be income-producing.
- c. Recent expenditures include purchase of a video camera and accessories, paying for leaf removal and clean-up on school grounds, making a payment for the Junior Library Guild subscription for the Media Center, paying the transportation costs for school field trips, and paying for a Cultural Arts assembly.
- d. A \$1,000 grant was received for the Artist in Residence program. A grant of \$420 was also received to cover the cost of assemblies, but it was only a portion of the \$1,000 requested.
- e. Discussion items: paying for a Mobile Science Lab, realigning Cultural Arts funding to pay for assemblies, and purchasing iPad cases for the STEM lab. (New Business)
- f. The PTA has an opportunity to create an Amazon site where a small percentage of the profit generated by purchases would go to AES. Anything Amazon sells would be available, but AES could put together a wish list for books. This would be in

addition to the Scholastic book fairs. A volunteer is needed to explore this opportunity further.

- g. PTA is looking for a locked file cabinet to place in the PTA closet that would hold the new video camera and accessories and will need volunteers to record school events. Parents would be able to buy a DVD of the event so they wouldn't need to try to record it themselves.

## 6. Committee Reports:

- a. **Cultural Arts:** The Joe Romano and Step Afrika assemblies were well-received. The next assembly will be the Chinese acrobats in February. There will be another assembly later in the spring. The Artist in Residence finished in November with grades 1 and 3. Next year she will work with grades K and 5. The reason it skips around rather than always being the same grade is so the teachers are also exposed to the program, not just the students. The Chair recommends finishing next year with the current artist then looking into finding someone new in 2015-2016. The PTA received state and county grants for Artist in Residence, but only got part of the county grant for assemblies. There is enough funding left in the PTA line item for Artist in Residence to shift over to make up the difference in the cost for assemblies.
- b. **Enrichment:** So far there are ten classes scheduled for spring. The cooking instructor is unable to teach this spring and the mini-musical class is not being offered, so the Chair is looking for ideas for another one or two classes. One suggestion was to talk to Whole Foods about providing a class. All of the classes will start in March so they run concurrently. The goal is to have Enrichment registration online and to do selection by lottery instead of first-come, first-served, but the process hasn't been worked out yet. The Chair is looking for someone to Chair or Co-chair Enrichment next year.
- c. **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion:** Promotion will be the last day of school, but the date will not be confirmed until we know how many snow days we end up with. The kick-off meeting for Promotion planning will be February 5 at 7:00 pm at AES for any parents who want to be involved. Ideas were discussed for possible gifts from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade to the school, including a new logo rug to go outside the front door or new flags.
- d. **Snowflake Dance:** The date of the dance is February 7, with a backup date of February 21 in case of snow. The doors will open at 6:30 for photos, but the official time is 7 – 9 pm. The same DJ will be coming back. An invitation for the dance went out January 16. Need a parent to take photos for the year book.
- e. **Green Team:** The Green Team is looking at creating a meditation/sensory garden to combine with a vegetable garden for student use. Currently putting together a grant proposal to Unity Gardens. The garden will be designed so that it can be broken down and moved to accommodate a possible new or renovated school building. Hope to involve students working in the STEM lab as well as integrating the arts in the design.
- f. **Dad's Club:** The Dad's Club is waiting to hear back from the Principal on the location of the Nature Place Space. Found a dad with a brush-chipper who can help

clear some areas and will be working on clearing out some space with or without the Nature Play Space. Trying to address the sediment/erosion situation, but it is overwhelming and unlikely to be resolved until/unless the school is rebuilt or remodeled.

- g. **SchoolKidz:** A new committee to provide back-to-school supply kits is moving forward to be ready for the 2014-2015 school year. The PTA can get a 9% discount that can either be used as a fundraiser or the savings can be passed on to parents.
- h. **Yearbook:** The committee has assigned sections and set up a Shutterfly share site for uploading pictures of school events. Deadlines for dedications and baby photos will be in March. Need parents to take photos of school events and provide them for the yearbook.

## 7. **Principal's Report:**

(The Principal was absent on family leave so the report was provided by the PTA President.)

- a. The committee working on the school feasibility study is currently more than halfway finished with its work and will be done by the end of February. The committee's proposal will go to the County Council in March. If funded, the design would be completed next year. The hope is that construction money will be in the 2015 budget to allow for construction to begin the following year.
- b. The AES site is very challenging due to elevation change and sediment erosion issues. The cost of moving and leveling so much dirt may make new construction infeasible. These are just some of the considerations the feasibility team will take into account.
- c. New construction of a school would need to go up on the field so that we can continue to use the current facility while it is being built. If the design requires that the school go on the current site it would be difficult as there is currently nowhere for the students to go temporarily during construction.
- d. It is not feasible to build the school on a completely different site. Attempting to do so would cause a delay of many years.

## 8. **Old Business:** None

## 9. **New Business:**

- a. The PTA voted to combine Cultural Art line items for Artist in Residence and Assemblies into one line item, which will allow the PTA to cover the cost of one additional assembly this spring.
- b. The Principal's Discretionary funds will be used to pay for the Planetarium at the upcoming STEM night.
- c. The PTA discussed how it would use the remainder of its Capital Projects and Board Discretionary funds. Funds to cover the cost of the remainder of the Junior Library Guild subscription have already been committed. Additional options include:
  - i. Purchasing protective cases for the four iPads Mr. Kovacs received through a recent grant
  - ii. Purchasing a smart board for the STEM lab
  - iii. Purchasing two or three laptops for classroom use
  - iv. Covering the cost of a Mobile Science Lab

- d. Last year the PTA paid for a Mobile Science Lab to come to the school, but it is not a line item in the current budget. After some discussion, rather than pay \$1,500 for the Mobile Science Lab again, the PTA voted to purchase one additional laptop for classroom use, for a total of three, in addition to the iPad cases and smart board.
- e. Several parents present asked about parental attendance at Cultural Arts assemblies. It was discussed that teachers are now required to stay at assemblies, which may have made it seem like Cultural Arts helpers were not needed. However, the consensus was that it would be helpful for the Chair to have parents volunteer to help with set up, moving chairs, clean up, and eventually performing video camera operations, rather than acting as chaperones.
- f. This discussion lead to comments from parents regarding a growing feeling of being marginalized and a sense that the unique community culture enjoyed at Arnold is changing. A general discussion was had regarding the challenges teachers and parents have faced this year and ways to bridge the gap between parents and the principal.

**10. Announcements:**

- a. Next Meetings:
  - i. March 25, 2014 at 6:30 pm
  - ii. May 13, 2013 at 6:30 pm

**11. Meeting Adjourned**