

Arnold Elementary PTA Board and Committee Meeting

March 25, 2014

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Arnold Elementary Media Center

MINUTES

1. Call to order
2. Welcome
3. Approval of January 2014 Minutes
4. President's Report:
 - a. The results of the school feasibility study were presented to the School Board last week and in spite of the Superintendent's recommendation for remodeling the school, the School Board voted 4:3 in favor of replacing the school.
 - b. Documentation of the feasibility study and results of the vote are now shared with the State before the design phase. We should have an indication of the State's position within the next couple weeks.
 - c. \$2.5 million has been requested of the County Council for development of the school design. In May there will be two Council meetings AES families should attend to make sure AES stays on the list to receive design money.
 - d. PTA members presented PTA President Kerry Petz and former PTA President Lisa Body (who was not present) with flowers and thank you cards for their efforts up to this point to get a new school built. Their eloquent presentations to the School Board made a big difference in the outcome of last week's vote.
5. Treasurer's Report:
 - a. The PTA's current account balance is \$15,292.
 - b. Checking account reconciliations have been completed for all months to date. The Personal Property Report was filed with the State and MD PTA.
 - c. Since the January meeting PTA has sponsored the Mother/Son spring Fling, the Father/Daughter Snowflake Dance, the second school book fair, and Spring Enrichment classes. All raised small profits this year.
 - d. Coming up this spring are a third book fair, Grandfriend's Day, and Fifth Grade Promotion.
 - e. With over \$10,000 raised by the walk-a-thon and direct donations to date, PTA has purchased:
 - i. Video camera, tripod, microphone, camera bag, and DVD burner with CDs
 - ii. Three laptop computers, ordered in January but not yet delivered
 - iii. STEM lab Smart board
 - iv. Four STEM lab iPad cases for iPads funded by a grant
 - v. Subscription to the Junior Library Guild for new books for the Media Center
 - vi. Financial assistance to AES children in need, including a PB&J lunch fund
 - vii. Professional campus cleanup of fall leaves and pruning of trees and shrubs
 - viii. Mobile planetarium for STEM night

- f. Overall we are right on target for where we wanted to be with cash flow for the year.
- g. The budget included a line item for a School Spirit Event. Last year it was movie night at the school. However, since this activity did not have a Chair to run it, it did not happen this year. If anyone is interested in running that event it is available.
- h. Our current projection is that we will end the year with a \$7,000 fund balance, which is where we need to be to cover costs over the summer, like insurance, and costs that come up at the beginning of the school year, like assistance to teachers.
- i. The PTA still 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.
- j. The PTA Board is beginning to assemble the 2014-2015 budget so Committee Chairs have been asked to submit their requests.
- k. The Treasurer is still seeking a Treasurer's Assistant to help with thank you notes for donations and to provide additional oversight in the Treasurer's role. Time commitment would be about one hour per month. The Assistant would ideally train to become the Treasurer when the current Treasurer's two-year term ends next year.

6. Committee Reports:

- a. **Enrichment:** This spring's Enrichment registration was online for the first time, which had some pros and cons. Overall it was a very positive development but there were some glitches that can be corrected for the fall. One problem was that the wording made it seem like you couldn't register for more than one class. Another problem is that people registered and then didn't go back and pay for the class. Enrichment made a net profit but it was less than expected, possibly due to computer issues, or classes have become too expensive because many are run by businesses, or possibly because too many classes have been repeated. The PTA would like to encourage teachers (and parents) to offer Enrichment classes so the PTA is looking at setting a standard rate for class leaders to charge so they don't feel guilty about charging as much as the other classes and still feel compensated for their time. The Enrichment Chair is looking for someone willing to Chair or Co-chair next year. Preferably it would be someone tech-savvy who can adeptly run and make changes to the online registration.
- b. **Snowflake Dance:** The Snowflake Dance went very well, but a lot was learned for next year. Namely, that the PTA could save money on flowers and decorations if the dance is held after Valentine's Day, rather than before. One suggestion was to have young men from the school volunteer to dress up and be door holders or work the coat check to learn to be young gentlemen. Another idea was to have people take a number for photos and go get their pictures taken at a specific time rather than having to wait in line so long.
- c. **Green Team:** The Green Team did some work clearing space for the outdoor play space. Some of the leaves from cleaning the traffic circle were dumped in that spot so there is still more clearing to do. They are considering mulching the area to discourage vegetation growth and will try to get the mulch donated, but would like to budget funds for that in the future. When the space is ready they will place a trunk there containing items such as magnifying glasses and bug boxes for students to use.

They are also trying to plan for open play space around the new school when it is built.

The Green Team has also been moving forward on constructing a meditation garden that will be located at the front of the school near the flag pole. We would like to express our appreciation to Jessica Zinder who applied to Unity Garden for a grant to fund construction of the garden. The application was submitted on March 15 and we will know by April 15 if it was awarded. The garden will need to go in right away this spring with the help of the student body before it gets too hot for the new plants. For the arts integration aspect, they may have students design and make their own pavers and decorate border stones. Once it is completed students and teachers will be able to use the garden as they wish.

- d. **Arnold Cares:** A new PTA Committee called Arnold Cares held its first meeting and has started collecting items to support families in need at AES. First items collected include unused Valentines that can be distributed next year and Easter basket supplies. A bin has been placed outside the front office to collect items. The group is currently forming committee working groups that will address specific needs within the school and the community. Anyone interested in participating should contact Alice Bowman at aabowman9@gmail.com.

The Principal noted that it would also be helpful to send in items that can be sold at the school store, which is run by the Guidance Counselor, and perhaps have some volunteers to help work at the store. One parent noted that it would be nice to have a running list of requested donations, such as items for Arnold Cares, the school store, or the art room, that parents can consult from time to time and send things in. The PTA will look into posting such a list on its website.

7. Principal's Report:

- a. Funded by a federal *Race to the Top* grant, the Board of Education recently bought each elementary school in the state 30 Chrome books, which will be used by the students for online testing, but also for general academic use. The Chrome books will come with their own cart. As a result, the Principal suggested that the PTA need not focus on technology donations for the school for a while.
- b. Grandfriend's Day will be after Easter break, on May 2.
- c. To assist the PTA's sponsorship of the Artist in Residence program the Principal will be seeking additional grants to cover annual costs.
- d. The Mobile Science Lab is at the school this week and is going well. The Parent Open House is Friday, March 28. Although the PTA has covered the cost of the Mobile Science Lab in the past, the Principal was able to secure a grant to pay for it this year and will seek a similar grant for future years.
- e. The AES Black Saga team did very well and placed 2nd in their competition. The Severna Park Voice will be doing a story on them soon.
- f. AES is hosting a homework workshop March 27 from 6 to 7 pm to help parents help their kids, particularly with math homework.

8. Old Business:

- a. PTA has received positive feedback regarding sending out its own email on Thursdays to share information on PTA activities. The PTA email is in addition to emails sent from the school office on Thursdays, which are strictly school-related. The reason for the separate emails is partly to have a direct line of communication to AES families as we move forward with efforts to get the school reconstructed, because any information meant to mobilize families to advocate for the school rebuild/remodel cannot come from the school itself. However, it has also been helpful in helping families to discern which activities are PTA activities and which are school activities and has generally improved communication. Families can opt out of receiving PTA emails.
- b. The PTA had previously sought a locking filing cabinet to use to store the new video camera in the PTA storage closet but didn't find one. Principal Kaufman offered the locked closet in her office to use instead. Parents are reminded that the camera is available to use to record any school events.

9. New Business:

- a. The President noted that for the first time there are needs and requests above and beyond what is in the budget so we need to consider new ways to raise funds. Her suggestion was to model the Friday fundraiser this month where kids brought \$1 to school and got to wear a sports jersey. That raised \$200 with little effort and no outlay. The Principal suggested utilizing her Principal's Council, which consists of two fourth and fifth graders from each home room, to coordinate a monthly fundraiser. The Council could decide which causes they want to support and determine what the activity will be, i.e. pay \$1 to wear your pajamas to school.
- b. This discussion led to consider whether it is time to do another survey to see how PTA members want to spend their money. One member volunteered to set up a poll to get feedback from parents and teachers and will bring it to the next meeting for review.

10. Announcements:

- a. Next Meeting is May 13, 2013 at 6:30 pm

11. Meeting Adjourned