Little River K-8 PTO Meeting

February 6, 2023

Attendees: Stephanie Robinette, Julie Kent, Cory Hogans, Maren Schreiber, Kayley Talbert, Martha Camacho, Mary Ross, Lesley Watson, Marcella Harris, and Nicole Connelly, with Anjelique Jeter, Christina Randall, Jessica Rider, Kim Perry, Lynette Cary, Quivetta Lennon, and Seronda Robinson via Zoom

1. Welcome: Attendees introduce themselves with name, student grade levels, and board position (if applicable)
2. Committee and Event Updates
	1. Hospitality
		1. We need continued donations for the teacher coffee station. Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/LRCoffee> to donate, especially coffee pods and individual creamer pods.
		2. Gift Card Giveaway: We planned to collect donations of gift cards for every teacher for the winter holidays but have still not received enough donations, as we currently have about ¼ of needed gift cards. We will continue to promote this request and hope to have enough by Teacher Appreciation Week in early May.
			1. Question about redirecting funds raised for gift cards for another purpose. Part of our requirement as a PTO nonprofit necessitates that we use funds for the specific purpose we requested them for, so current CheddarUp funds for gift cards must still be used for gift cards unless we get approval from every donor to redirect the funds.
			2. We may need to decrease the amount of money on gift cards purchased with CheddarUp donations to ensure everyone receives a card, even if it isn’t in the amount we originally proposed.
	2. Dine Out Nights
		1. We did not receive funds from our December 13th Dine Out Night at Zaxby’s due to a recent, unforeseen change in their policy. A PTO representative must now be present throughout the event with a Little River sign.
		2. Our families have typically had difficulty when restaurants require us to state when ordering that they are “with Little River,” which was the case at our Alpaca Dine Out Night on December 6th.
		3. We have an upcoming Dine Out “Murdsay” event with Elmo’s Diner from February 13-16th! From Monday to Thursday, we will receive 4% of all in-house dining sales. We are hoping to plan a Little River post drop-off breakfast event to take advantage of this event, so keep an eye out on Facebook for details.
		4. Let us know if you have any ideas or connections for future Dine Out Events! Interest was expressed in renewing contact with Early Bird donuts for another donut sale.
	3. Little River Spirit Wear
		1. Socks are available for sale at $10/pair—see Maren.
		2. Shirts can be ordered here: <https://littleriverk8.itemorder.com>
	4. Northern Durham Schools 5K and Festival
		1. Date: March 3rd
		2. See this site for pricing information, tickets, and further event details: <http://tinyurl.com/LR5K2023>
		3. Details: The main event is a 5K walk/run with a gaming trailer, ninja obstacle course, food, and possible bingo game.
		4. There is different pricing available for 5K full access, fun run access, and festival only. You also do not have to pay to attend, just to participate.
		5. Participants register on their school’s “team” and each school will receive a portion of those registration fees back.
		6. We will get flyers soon to customize and send home with each student. Look out for a Facebook event.
	5. Penny Wars
		1. This fundraiser was postponed from its original late January run time to avoid overlap with the Kids Heart Challenge. New suggested dates are for the end of February through early March.
		2. The fundraising goal is $750.
		3. There will be a “sneak attack” function on CheddarUp. All donations made on CheddarUp are positive points.
		4. The winning grade level will receive pop-its, teachers will receive a month of priority parking, and Mr. C may agree to let the entire school duct tape him to the wall!
		5. We will have a sign up genius for volunteers to count funds each day once this starts. We need two paid PTO members as volunteers for each day, and we now have a change counter that will make the process much easier.
		6. We also still need eight 5-gallon water jugs for this fundraiser. Please let us know if you can help!
	6. Crayons 2 Calculators
		1. There are 2 shopping dates left in the school year: Tuesday, March 14 and Tuesday, May 2nd.
		2. We will need volunteer “shoppers” for both dates to pick up school supplies; please let us know if you are able to volunteer.
	7. Science Night
		1. Date: Thursday, March 16 from 5:00-8:00pm
		2. The event will take place at Little River and is open to the community.
		3. We will need approximately 30 volunteers for this event! No science experience is needed. Please let us know if you can help.
		4. We will schedule a planning meeting in early March for working out details.
		5. Other schools have also expressed interest in having a Science Night, so we hope to act as a model for future events.
		6. This may be an opportunity for redistricted students to check out a cool event at Little River.
	8. Little River K-8 PTO + ComedyWorx
		1. Date: Thursday, April 20 with two shows; first show is 6-6:20, break from 6:20-6:50, and second show from 6:50-7:30. Parents of little ones may prefer the earlier, shorter show time. Coincides with Book Fair, which can remain open until 8:00.
		2. Cost to us is $1,000. We hope to offset this cost with funds from Penny Wars so that the event can be free for Little River families.
		3. Do we want to consider popcorn and/or light concessions during the event?
		4. Promotion: We will need volunteers to photocopy flyers and distribute the correct number into each teacher’s mailbox to be sent home with students.
		5. Event volunteers: We will send out a sign-up genius in late March to recruit volunteers for the event as well as the book fair.
3. Volunteer Needs and Nominations
	1. All positions on next year’s PTO board are open for nominations! We will need a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Financial Secretary. Email nominations to: littleriverpto@hotmail.com.
	2. We are looking for individuals who know they will be here for at least one or more additional years to aid in the transition of Little River to a Montessori program during redistricting. Consistency from the PTO will be key in supporting new and continuing teachers and students at Little River.
	3. Volunteer needs for committees: 1-2 volunteers for GoPlaySave, 2-3 volunteers for Silent Auction, and 1-2 volunteers for Little Shops at Little River.
		1. GoPlaySave will be primarily online sales instead of sending home books in packets to each student, which will make managing the fundraiser much easier.
		2. Other ideas for fundraisers for next year? Let us know!
4. Financial Update
	1. Revenue Update
		1. Amazon Smiles is ending this month and will no longer be a source of revenue.
		2. Final number from the Little Shops event is $2,311.57. We also received a donation back from the Kendra Scott representative following the event.
		3. 2022-2023 Expected Revenue is $20,348,00; 2022-2023 YTD Revenue is $15,169.62.
	2. Expenses Update
		1. Hospitality committee expenses have increased to $820.83 following donut purchase in coordination with Mrs. Moose’s hot chocolate day event.
		2. Grade Parent Allocation expenses increased to $51.00. Grade parents are provided up to $3.00 per student in reimbursements.
		3. Teacher reimbursements increased to $3,577.43. This will change in March as teachers try to use their funds before the end of the school year.
		4. We also expect more teachers to use Field Trip funds as these have not been utilized yet, though our budget accounts for $1,800 in available reimbursements.
5. New Business
	1. Flower Power Fundraiser
		1. Coming this spring, date TBA: online bulb and seed sales!
		2. April 1st- May 15th are shipping and closure dates, but we have not yet determined when to run our sales.
		3. Interest was expressed in opening sales soon to encourage early ordering while people are starting to think of spring planting. Shipping will still not begin until April 1st, however.
		4. Question: can we order seeds to plant around the school, possibly coordinate a planting day for volunteers? We will discuss this idea and form a plan for a planting event.
	2. Hospitality Upcoming Needs
		1. Volunteer help is needed for an upcoming Valentine’s Day event. Some work may be done in advance.
		2. Help also needed for Teacher Appreciation Week, which is usually the first week or so of May (firm dates TBA).
			1. Teacher Appreciation will have a Wizard of Oz theme!
			2. See Julie Kent if interested in helping, or email littleriverpto@hotmail.com.
6. Q & A with Dr. Hogans, Little River Principal
	1. Dr. Hogans opened the floor to follow-up concerns or questions from last Thursday evening’s presentation from the school board and Growing Together committee representatives.
		1. To review, DPS is shifting boundaries in the ’24-’25 school year and Little River will transition to a third Montessori option in addition to George Watts and Morehead Montessori schools. Dr. Hogans encouraged those with questions or overall interest in learning more about Montessori programs to observe classrooms at either of these schools, as they are accustomed to visitor observations as part of the Montessori process. Teachers from Little River will be going next week to observe a “work cycle” in which students are engaged in Montessori work.
		2. Little River will also be closing its middle grades program. This year’s 7th graders will be the final 8th grade class. Current 5th and 6th graders will return to their base assigned middle schools in the ’24-’25 school year.
	2. The School Improvement Leadership team met earlier in the day. Highlights from this meeting include:
		1. Little River is on goal for grade-level performance and socio-emotional goals. Current SEL goals are based on school climate survey results from 5th graders.
		2. Decision was made as a staff to forgo Leadership Day this year, as this is a culminating event for the Leader in Me program which is currently sunsetting as Little River shifts to a Montessori program. Current focus is on the changes forthcoming from the Growing Together initiative.
		3. 5th graders will receive an Intent Form the week after next to gauge interest in 6th grade for the ’23-’24 school year. 7th and 8th grade will follow soon to allow for tentative planning based on prospective numbers.
	3. Question: Should we wait until after families make more decisions about charter or other school application periods have passed to collect the intent forms? Dr, Hogan’s response is that we are accustomed to charter decisions changing intent responses each year and it is always an issue. DPS competes with other area programs for families and understands these timelines and parental decisions.
	4. Question: Will traditional program students in Little River during the coming transitional years feel like they aren’t receiving the same attention or are somehow “lesser than” compared to Montessori students? Dr. Hogan’s response is that families have a “perceived quality” of education, but each student will be served no matter which program they take part in, and we cannot prevent the perception, but we can disrupt it when we see it. The goal is that there will not be a distinction between students in traditional vs. Montessori programs.
	5. Question and suggestion: If we survey families in the spring and keep middle grades staff based on survey responses, could staff potentially be laid off if final numbers are lower than estimated? Enrollment numbers will be down for next year because of the district changes, therefore we may want to survey families again in May to get a more accurate idea of what they are planning for the fall. Dr. Hogan’s response is that no teachers would be laid off, as they are under contract and release from that contract would be a Board action, however, enrollment can have an impact on staffing and surveying again may be a viable option.
	6. Question: What can we [parents] do to support teachers in transitioning? Dr. Hogan’s response is that parents can support teachers by volunteering to be on the PTO Board, by being consistently involved in PTO, and bringing a friend to PTO. PTO is a great cheerleader and source of support, and it has provided continuity with teachers throughout the years. Some items may seem small or insignificant but they still have a great impact on teachers. Other means of PTO support are more readily apparent: teacher reimbursements, classroom materials, school supplies, etc.
7. Conclusion
	1. Final thoughts after Dr. Hogan’s responses: When this transition happens, teacher needs will increase. There may be an inclination to ease off on fundraising, but consistency is key to ensuring that future needs can be met. Any help you can provide will set up future PTOs for greater success.

Meeting adjourned 7:18 pm

Minutes recorded by Kayley Talbert