

Hemlock PTA Meeting Notes – Tuesday, October 3, 2023, at 9:30am

Agenda Item Notes:

1. Call to order: Kristen welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all the participants and speakers for joining.
2. Principal's Introduction/Report
 - a. Mrs. Melanie Odone thanked Kristen, the various PTA committees, and PTA Members for their support thus far this year, especially the beautification, photo day, and spirit week committees for their work early in the school year.
 - b. It is our 20th day of school, the children are learning a lot in class every day, loving their classes and teachers.
 - c. New Staff includes Ms. Goldberg (Kindergarten teacher), and Ms. Sinacori (or Ms. S) our new P/E teacher. She will be implementing a P/E award each month for various classes.
 - d. Front courtyard is awaiting rubber mulch, it is expected to be done in the Spring/Summer.
 - e. New Flagpole out front
 - f. Upcoming school events include a Fire Prevention Assembly for the students on Friday, Unity Day on the 19th, Storybook Parade on Oct 31st, the pumpkin hunt & decorating event (now for both K and 1st grades) on the 31st, and our Veteran's Day Assembly (looking for Veterans willing to speak to the students – an email will be going out shortly).
 - g. Communication includes a Principal's newsletter every Friday and newsletters from your teachers. Also follow @HemlockGC on Twitter, and there may be an Instagram account later on as well.
3. PTA Committee Updates
 - a. Reflections: The contest is up and running, submissions are due by Oct 31st, students may submit their projects to the box at the front of Hemlock, and this year an electronic submission form must be completed as well. All rules can be found on the PTA website, including the submission form. The theme is "I'm Hopeful Because...". Lauren Peebles, the committee chair, will be stopping by each classroom next week to read the children a book related to the theme to help promote the program and get the children thinking about the topic.
 - b. Photography: Maria Pepicelli thanked all who helped. Your proofs were emailed to you from Irvin Simon under the subject line "Add [Your Child's Name]'s Name or School Year to Their Portraits!" Retakes are being held Nov. 3, if you wish for your child to have a retake, please email your child's classroom teacher to request one around that date. The school-wide photo will also be taken on November 3rd.
 - c. Curriculum: The committee is holding their first meeting tonight, will set a time to meet with the Primary School principals shortly as well. There is a tentative event on October 18th from 5-6 PM that is a Math & Literary Experience, and on October 24th the Committee will be holding their quarterly meeting with the Interim Superintendent of Curriculum. Last Thursday there was a webinar focused on how to use the district website to find additional support materials for Math & Literacy. All classes have now adopted Illustrative Math. In addition to using the resources on the website, any specific concerns about your child's progress should first be directed to their teacher.

- d. PARP – Holding their first meeting tomorrow, “Choose Your Own Adventure” is the theme, they are considering activities such as author read alouds, book collections, pen pals, and Literacy Nights for K-5 students at the Middle School.
 - e. After the meeting an updated Spirit Week Schedule was distributed. Spirit Week is Oct 13-20, with Homecoming on Oct 21. Themed days are as follows:
 - i. Friday, October 13: Comfy Cozy Day
 - ii. Monday October 16: America Day
 - iii. Tuesday, October 17: Positively Pink Day
 - iv. Wednesday, October 18: Unity Day (wear Orange) for Primary Schools
 - v. Thursday, October 19: Jersey Day
 - vi. Friday, October 20: Spirit DayDetails for each theme can be found in the PTA newsletter that went out yesterday. Optional T-Shirt Order form will be going out shortly, it is a quick turnaround, so please respond quickly. Shirts are distributed the Wed or Thursday of Spirit Week. These are a small cost to parents. Primary students will also receive a Spirit “item” for use during the Pep Rally on Oct. 20, and this item is sponsored by the PTA.
 - f. Beautification Committee: Thanked everyone for the fall décor donations and to the committee for decorating. The committee decorates in Fall, Winter and Spring, and are looking for volunteers. There will be a Winter SUG going out next month for donations for the Winter décor.
 - g. Service-Learning Committee: Meeting next week to plan projects, there will be 2-3 projects that each have a hands-on learning component for the children.
 - h. Family Fun Committee: New Committee formed that will be meeting this week, looking for volunteers as well. The goal is to plan 2 Family Fun Events for the school this year, in like committees that exist at the other primaries.
4. Introduction to SEPTA Director: Anna Stankiewicz encouraged all to join SEPTA, mentioned they have raised \$100,000 that has gone to initiatives such as flexible seating in the elementary schools and coding activities in the primary schools. There is a Creativity Tuesday on Nov. 7th, \$20 for members and \$40 for non-members from 10-11:50. The next SEPTA meeting is Nov. 8th at 7 pm. Every Tuesday from 12-12:45 they are participating in a workshop about school avoidance. On Dec. 7th, they are holding their Ugly Sweater Party at Calagero’s in the evening.
 5. Social & Emotional Learning in the Primary Grades’ Presentation was given by Dr. Stacey Esmond, School Psychologist, and Ms. Tracy Martinez, School Social Worker. Presentation can be found at: https://mcusercontent.com/a475109de6a033ee8e4464d9f/files/435e38f1-be67-ada5-2be5-fc68d22a68d9/SEL_workshop_.pptx.pdf. Discussed Social Emotional Learning Competencies, such as teaching Self-Awareness (how children learn to recognize emotions), Self-Management (how children learn to regulate emotions), Social Awareness (recognizing emotions in the peers around them), Relationship Skills (learning how to manage those relationships) and Responsible decision making (identifying, analyzing and making choices), and how they help teach those skills at the Primary level. Presentation is loaded with information and resources for parents to use to help support their children, and both Ms. Esmond and Ms. Martinez are available for further support where desired.
 6. Q&A: Included a question about whether Health & Safety Committee was going to be meeting this year, the answer is yes, the directors are waiting to receive information from the District Chairs and will be meeting with the committee soon.
 7. Closing Remarks: Kristen thanked all for coming and participating.