

Manzanita Family Faculty Organization (FFO)

Meeting Agenda & Minutes

October 3, 2025 – 8:15am

Attendance:

Tina Ienna-Balistreri, Molly Johnson, Celeste McBirnie, Melissa Furrier, Anita Strickler, James Strickler, Matt Landau, Leslie Mokhtarian, Jessica Papariella, Bree Glenn, Ana Maria Brode, Julia Insel, Liz Farrigia, Rachel Martin, Heather Northey, Dana Goldstein, Julia Elitzer, Bri Volpe, Brenna Rheinheimer, Kristin Michels

Welcome & Call to Order – 8:16am-Bri Volpe

Approve Minutes

- 1st: Heather Northey
 - 2nd: Tina Ienna-Balistreri
 - All approved
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Horseshoes & Poos – Bri Volpe

- Parents shared birthdays, celebrations, and personal updates
 - “Discover Your FFO Alter Ego” activity
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Principal’s Report – Rob Henikman

Strategic Priorities

- Student Achievement:
 - Focus on outcomes, high-impact instructional practices, ongoing assessment, and Collaborative Inquiry Teams (CIT)
 - Superintendent goal: By 2030, achieve 80% efficiency in Math, ELA, and Science (5th grade only) on AASA
- Instructional Improvements:
 - Increase math block to 90 minutes (75 minutes in Kindergarten)

- Core curriculum emphasis
 - Maintain high teacher retention
 - School Climate & Engagement:
 - Improve climate and culture, student engagement, and attendance
 - Decrease discipline issues
 - Community:
 - Increase community outreach and awareness
 - Boost non-resident open enrollment
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Mustang Bucks – Tina Ienna-Balistreri

- \$29,527 raised – surpassed goal!
 - 3rd Grade Otter Pop Party scheduled for October 15, 9:35am
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Treasurer's Report – Brenna Rheinheimer

- Reviewed classroom and SEP spending; September financials presented
 - Motion: 1st Rachel Martin, 2nd Jessica Papariella – Approved
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Student Enrichment Program (SEP) – Jessica Papariella & Maggie Schmidt

- Many field trips approved and processing
 - Fifth grade trip in planning, exploring payment plans
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Volunteer Coordinator – Kristin Michels

- New volunteer opportunities being created and shared to those that can't attend meeting
- Board Games Club starting after Fall Break – Tuesdays & Fridays
- Grants Chair: still seeking volunteer
- STEM Night: November 7
- Book Fair: opens November 7 during STEM Night
- AVIVA (Foster Youth):
 - Wishlists available online
 - Families needed to pick up and deliver donations (great way to involve kids)
 - Liaisons: Molly Johnson & Liz Farrigia

Committee Reports

Community Schools – Ashley Glaser

- Q1 ends today, Q2 registration open
- Fall Break camps available

Foundation Report – Bri Volpe

- Tapas for Teachers at Contigo – Thursday, November 13
- Manzanita will provide childcare with CARE (school-aged only)

Desert Dash – Matt Landau

- October 18, 6:30–8:00am
- Volunteer slots: 22 open, only 2 signed up
- Snack donations needed
- Sponsorships accepted through October 14 (\$100 from businesses or families)

Trunk or Treat – Tina Ienna-Balistreri

- October 24, 6:30–8:00pm
- Sign-ups open for trunks and candy
- 22 of 50 trunks filled so far
- Need lighting

Picture Day

- October 13 (retakes on November 20)

Book Fair – Anita Strickler & Leslie Mohktarian

- Theme: Once Upon a Book Fair
- Volunteers needed to chair and set up

Miler's Club – Rachel Martin & Kristin Michels

- Going strong, October charm = Black Cat
- Emmy posting weekly Top 25 sign
- 2 iPads for faster scanning
- Volunteer reminder: Mondays & Wednesdays

Gardening – Julia Elitzer & Julia Insel

- Teacher sign-ups for garden time(except 1st & 5th)
- Rat and fire ant issues being managed (using Dawn)
- 5th grade garden thriving (squash, beans, corn)
- Strong volunteer support

Staff Appreciation – Emmy Marshall & Celeste McBirnie

- September: Frost provided donations
- Custodian Day celebrated
- Calendar set for year
- October: Sweet & Salty theme

Yearbook & Spirit Wear – Melissa Furrier & Kristin Michels

- Yearbook layouts in progress
- Folder created for photo uploads
- Spirit Wear sales ongoing

Old Business

- Edukit: \$2,000; changed to home delivery to reduce teacher workload
- Silver Mustangs Lunches – signage, courtyard welcoming space project, prompts for Grandparent's Lunch
- Grandparents Day: to be scheduled later (likely around Book Fair for better weather and accessibility)

New Business

- Adopt-a-Family (Aviva Children's Services) Holiday Giving Project
- STEM Family Night – November 7
- Grade-level reps coordinating parent meetups

Important Upcoming Dates

- 10/4: LAST Fun Fit Family Saturday – 8am, lower field
- 10/6–10/10: Fall Break – NO SCHOOL
- 10/14: Dine Out @ Doughbird, 5–9pm
- 10/17: Board Games Club kickoff at lunch recess
- 10/18: Desert Dash, 6:30–8:00am

- 10/21-10/23: Parent-Teacher Conferences – Half Days
 - 10/24: Garden Club, 7:30-9:30am
 - 10/24: Trunk-or-Treat, 6:30-8:00pm
 - 10/29: Grading Day – Half Day
 - 10/31: Staff Appreciation – Sweet & Salty Snack Bar
 - 11/3: Adopt-a-Family Kickoff
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Next FFO Meeting

Friday, November 7, 2025 – 8:15am

Meeting adjourned.