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MINUTES

September 21, 2021 – Virtual Format

The September meeting of the Randolph Heights PTA was called to order at 7:00 pm by the president.

Welcome and Introduction

President Kristin Fischer Rosel welcomed all attendees and the PTA executive board introduced themselves.

Kristin Fischer Rosel, president
Katie Russell, vice president
Katie Stromberg, treasurer
Autumn Hubbell, secretary
Tim Williams, principal
Beth Tierney, third grade teacher

Kristin shared information about the purpose of the PTA and directed parents to website for further information and guiding documents. RHS PTA is part of the larger PTA umbrella. Contact information can be found on website. Parents should feel welcomed to reach out with questions or concerns.

The focus for the PTA last year was community building and support, and this will continue to be the case this year.

Principal's Update

Principal Williams provided an update to the PTA on the start of the school year. It has been a good start to school and a busy one. The building is full, given the additional support staff hired due to ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Relief) funding. Ms. Sturm and Ms. Fitzgerald are in intervention specialist roles, with Ms. Eisele in the TDAS role, and Ms. Moore and Ms. Meier in the Makerspace. These staff are helping provide support to address potential learning gaps created by the pandemic.

Schedules have been a challenge still due to pandemic requirements. Lunch logistics are changing to better address needs, starting 9/22. Existing schedule mostly remaining in place.

Still dealing with shortage of workers (bus drivers at forefront). In addition, cafeterias are short-staffed. Principal Williams is serving lunch most days due to shortage. This is not local to SPPS. Shortages exist across the country. Schools are anticipating that some supplies may continue to be in short supply (e.g. furniture).

Enrollment looks good. Waitlist of around 30 for kindergarten. 5th grade is full, 4th grade is full, 1-2 spots in 3rd grade. 1st has room, 2nd grade has room. In addition, a few students from RHS decided to enroll in online school.

COVID measures:

Similar to last year's protocols, students are asked to remain physically distanced from one another at 3 feet and masked. Contact tracing has changed from last year and from summer. Policies and procedures in place follow MDH and CDC – some of the guidelines leave decisions to the district and their interpretation.

RHS trying to maintain 3 feet distancing. It is not possible at all times. Classes are staying in pods or cohorts, which is helpful. Not splitting up at end of day (walkers, bussers, etc.), instead classes are staying in cohorts. Assigned seating during day and at lunch. These are similar measures as were in place last year. Water bottles are being used instead of drinking fountains. Parents encouraged to double-check that students have full water bottle (school also can provide as needed). Hallways are no longer one-way.

For recess teachers and classes can stay in cohort and remain unmasked, rotating through "play areas" on school grounds. Or teachers within one grade could choose to have students mingle and play in all areas, but with masking required.

Lunch:

Lunchrooms only fit 6 students per table if socially distanced. This worked last year due to smaller classes due to distance learning and extra classrooms (which became additional lunch spaces). Not an option with full building. And with full building, lunches would have had to serve lunch from 11-3pm. The original plan was utilization of plastic dividers between students. Vetted through COVID and district Facilities department. That allowed for 6 classes in lunchroom with plastic dividers. While this worked in theory, it did not in practice. Students were too close and would lean around dividers. 7 minutes between lunches didn't allow for sanitizing of dividers.

Changes starting 9/22 – 6 teachers volunteered to eat lunches with classes in classroom (taking pressure off lunchroom). 100 students can fit in lunch room at 3 feet apart. Tables can be sanitized, the students are further apart (3 feet between students, 6 feet between cohorts). 2 teachers/classes from every period will eat in room. No dividers.

Regarding eating outside, sources don't exist to monitor and supervise outside lunches. No ability to hire external lunch monitors. Weather will be shifting soon as well.

Consideration of parent volunteers. There is currently a holding pattern for now with the district. Will review but won't likely bring in volunteers until at least October 15th (when vaccine mandate is in place). Currently rules exist so parents can't be in building for more than 15 minutes. Principal Williams will check on whether these restrictions apply to volunteers outside of the building. District may relax volunteer restrictions when students are able to be vaccinated.

COVID notifications:

Principal Williams is currently clarifying guidelines with district, but currently following guidelines on notification. Which indicate that unless a student has been in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID, parents won't be notified. Close contact is defined as a student who has been closer than 3 feet with an individual positive for COVID, for longer than 15 minutes, and unmasked.

On the question of why can't parent notification occur when there is a case in classroom. Asking for more clarification, if RHS could decide to notify, but currently that is not district policy. Could there be a flyer, similar to those sent home for lice or strep throat? Principal Williams is clarifying with district. Currently, RHS does need authorization from SPPS to send notifications about cases in classes.

RHS has had 5 cases, most of which came from outside contact or community spread. One class was quarantined because it appeared transmission may have happened within the class. The number of cases was small but the decision was made to quarantine the class. No new positive cases since this quarantine.

Testing:

PTA asked if RHS could provide testing. Principal Williams stated this would be a district decision, there is currently no process or way for a specific school to choose to do so. There have been conversations between district and department of health. Once vaccine mandate goes into effect, there will be testing for staff. Question remains as to whether they could implement testing on larger scale.

Principal Williams will provide any updates in his newsletter as they occur.

Focus 2021-2022: Get Back on Track

Kristin shared that there are many volunteer roles, for any interested parents. Reach out to the board as interested. There are few fast-approaching opportunities:

- *Boo Breakfast* was successful – outside library, well attended.
- *Water Bottle Stickers* were distributed, and well received.
- *Directory* is opt-in. Google link will be provided. Amber and Jonathan Waldo will be coordinating.
- *Spirit Shirts* are being ordered. Each student will receive spirit shirt in October.
- *Fun Run* will be happening in October. It will be run internally this year, a different model than contracting with Apex, as in years past. Currently looking at October 8th as kickoff date, with fun challenges to train for. October 20th will likely be fun run date. Rain date potentially a day earlier. Watch Facebook and website for more information. Volunteers will be needed. Laura Pinsonneault will be coordinating.
- *Fall Festival* is TBD, but unlikely to be indoors.
- *Front Entry* potential with art wall and RHS history

Treasurer's Update:

Kristin posted end of year financials and proposed budget on website.

Treasurer Katie Stromberg shared a few highlights from end of year financials. The plan for last school year was to spend down savings by about \$15-16,000, hoping to give back to community, family, and schools. Due to unanticipated revenue and fewer expenses that didn't occur. For the current proposed budget, the hope is to again spend down the savings this year, starting at \$69,000 between savings and checking. \$10,000 is allocated to read-a-thon from last year to teachers for their spending. So working with around \$59,000 this school year.

At a high level, we're hoping to fundraise \$40,000 this year. Biggest difference is that we will have fun run this year, which is where most of the funds come from. In addition, direct appeals and read-a-thon are the other big fundraisers.

Budget shows anticipated expenditures. Each teacher gets a grant at beginning of year, administrative fees, will draw down budget.

Question before the PTA is how to use the funds that are raised. Additional questions about what restrictions on spending. PTA members expressed interest in a meeting to discuss this more fully. Would we be able to share funds with other schools? Precedent with money given to Maxfield PTA to help seed and start their PTA. Suggestion made to use donors choose to fund projects at other schools.

Kristin will add this conversation to a future agenda. With current realignments at district level, will have to ensure funds are going to programs that will exist in future years.

PTA member asked the question of how does PTA deviate from approved budget. All members at PTA meeting where topic and potential expenditures are discussed would vote. There are rules about what PTA can fund. In years past, there was mixed reception to funding other schools' projects.

Question was asked regarding Artist in Residence and whether that was happening this year. There is budget for it, but unsure of COVID protocols at this point, so will watch as year unfolds and protocols change.

Budget Approval:

Motion made to approve 2021-2022 budget was made by Amber Dallman, seconded by Amber Waldo. Motion passes.

Board Elections:

Motion to elect nominee Katie Russell as vice-president was made by Amber Waldo, and seconded by Amber Dallman. Motion passes.

Motion to elect nominee Autumn Hubbell as secretary was made by Laura Pinsonneault, seconded by Amber Waldo. Motion passes.

Discussion: Eagle Bluff and Camp St. Croix

Per district policy, there are no overnight field trips allowed. Staff went on team building retreat at Camp St. Croix this summer and had good experience. Fifth grade team interested in potentially doing 1-2 day trips to Camp St. Croix in lieu of Eagle Bluff this year. It is more affordable. Scholarships would be needed. Principal Williams will reach out to Camp St. Croix to determine if possible to schedule the day trips. PTA very supportive of idea.

Discussion: Parent Connections

Parents present introduced themselves and discussed potential opportunities for social gatherings.

Amber Dallman presented on walk to school day, which is October 6th but could be scheduled for different date. Discovery Club walks kids to school, and busses drop at Edgumbe for walk to school experience as well.

Wrap-up:

Kristin thanked members for attending and for their feedback and ideas. Next meeting will be October 19th at 7pm in Zoom format.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.