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Sargent PTO Meeting #7

April 15, 2021

Minutes

1. **Principal’s Report**

* BrainPop
  + 14 of 19 classes say they are using it
  + Next year will be purchased by district or building
* PTO scholarship review: Several teachers are interested – Erin will reach out. Parent volunteers: Ryan Biracree, Laura Roan.
  + Update after the meeting: Ms. Stickney & Ms. Silverman will help.
* “Reopening” update (transition back to 4 days/week): So far very positive. We’re down to 10% remote (started the year at 30-35%). Dividers up in cafeteria. Today started letting kids walk through the line to get their food hot. Wellness Committee met last week, focused on state of kids and teachers. Coming back has been wonderful for kids, wonderful for teachers. Very refreshing. Very efficient, wish we had done it 2 months ago. It was so easy.
* Building Leadership Team – latest meeting addressed use of Rescue Funds, Capital plan.
  + Rescue Funds – federal government is giving money to school districts to help kids who are behind due to Covid – we’re thinking a summer program. Other ideas from Sargent BLT ideas: more robotics, more field trips, more clubs.
  + Ideas for Capital plan – moving library out of basement to first floor and make it a focal point. Bathrooms in basement are antiquated. Want to make bathrooms gender-neutral. Stairway to playground needs to be replaced. Walkways and blacktop at basketball courts need to be replaced. Irrigation on auditorium side needs to be redone. Plus cosmetic things.
* Capital Project team:
  + Will meet 4/19.
  + Parent reps: Lori Merhige, Kundi Glasson, Raquel Verdesi.
  + Teacher reps: Ms. Stickney, Ms. Ferrara, Mr. Carpenter.
* NYS ELA testing happening on 4/19. This year it is opt-in only. 4 kids have opted in grades 3-5.
  + Sargent is good at working with IEP kids – we like having them here, it adds to our richness, and we’re proud of it. In some of our grades we have all of Sargent’s elementary students with IEPs (not just those zoned for Sargent). However, that affects our data. (Misuse of testing.)
* Moving up ceremonies: CDC guidelines are creating some complications. Have to show proof of vaccination, even to be outside. Same for high school. Principals’ meeting on 4/19 to see what to do. Currently the plan is:
  + Pre-K ceremony on Monday, 6/21 at 10 am on the hill. Bring blankets or chairs, spread out
  + Kindergarten ceremony Tuesday, 6/22 at 10 am
  + 5th grade Wednesday, 6/23 at 10 am
  + Parent mentions Excelsior pass (on phone).
* Activities:
  + Hoping to organize Sharpe day – either go there or have Sharpe come to us.
  + 4th grade is organizing Colonial Day.
  + Hope for a celebration/virtual field trip for other grades too.
  + Calico ball for 3rd grade – we are organizing as a virtual presentation by each school/classroom. Art and music will be organized for it too.
  + Parent asks about incorporating 4th graders into Calico Ball this year, since it was cancelled last year when they were in 3rd grade. Answer: Right now that’s not the plan. Already very complicated to organize.

1. **Announcements and Updates from PTO**

* Girls on the Run and Club Triton
  + Mr. Archer and the Deputy Superintendent are allowing the running clubs to take place on Sargent grounds. District is covering the insurance.
* Wish Wednesdays for teachers – still going, parents/community members can make purchases and have them sent to teachers. PTO hopes to fund all remaining wishes ahead of Teacher Appreciation week in May.
* Spring fundraisers
  + Restaurant fundraisers: no national chains are doing fundraisers right now – no Chipotle, etc. – we must have gotten lucky in the spring. Will try for a Main Street business. Spread it out over a few days?
  + Seed sale is still going. 30 types in stock, including seeds that are sold out on HV seed co website.
  + Interest in spirit wear for spring/summer? Will try Joker Ink for good quality this time.
* Anti-racism books and colors of the world project
  + PTO is assembling book bags this weekend. 3 different books depending on grades. Crayons for younger kids, colored pencils for older kids. New Sargent tote bag for everyone at Sargent including teachers, staff, etc. Everything will be delivered to school next week to go home in kids’ backpacks.
  + We can continue this initiative for various underserved groups. Scholastic “FACE” gives 62% off books when they are given away to students. Great selection.
  + Idea for a “birthday book” program at school. Go to principal’s office to get a birthday pencil and pick out a book. Mr. Archer says this would be great, there is already a birthday board by month. We can use half-birthdays for July and August kids to pick out books? Let’s start it September 2021, “welcome back to school.”
* Teacher Appreciation week (early May)
  + Discussion of what teachers would like. Mr. Archer suggests lunches and appreciation videos, as they enjoyed them last year when everything was remote.
  + PTO will purchase the wish list items not fulfilled yet.
* Earth Day clean-up at Sargent Saturday 4/24
  + Sargent and JVF are city clean-up sites this year (first time). Facilities and principals have been supportive, providing supplies, will pick up the trash afterwards.
  + Mr. Archer notes that the garden program started up this past week with the kids.
* PTO scholarship ($750 each for 2 recipients) – we’re looking for teacher and parent volunteers to read great essays and applications from high school seniors who went to Sargent for elementary. We have updated the system to be clearer about judging criteria. Applications due May 24. Will announce recipients June 11.
* 5th grade Tile Project: Ms. Costello is not at Sargent anymore, so we need to see how we can start to get the 5th graders started. And the tiles from last year are not yet up.
* District is putting together a professional development committee – seeking parents to join and give input on priorities for staff development. In the past they have initiated responsive classroom, democratic engagement.
* Environment club/advisor: There is a staff person who has been attending the BOCES events, Mr. Archer hopes to get this on the BOE decisions this week.

1. **Open Discussion**

Parent questions:

* Air conditioners for classrooms? Could be part of Capital project, but not sure since we’re not open in summer.
* Outside tenting? A permanent gazebo is getting constructed on Sargent grounds, in the courtyard above the US map. Working with an architect. They’ve chosen the location. Each building will have one.