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**Groveland Park Elementary Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

**AGENDA**

**Groveland Park Library (2045 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul) and** [**Google Meet**](https://meet.google.com/jvn-fwit-rnd)

**September 19, 2023 | 6:30 - 7:45pm**

**Welcome and Introductions**

* Attendees: In-person attendance
  + Jessica Ramstead, Ashley Azar, Tara, Laura, Kelsey, (others, difficult to hear online)
  + Online attendance
    - Kim Weldon, Anne Sinclair, Kathryn Wegner, Addisalem Barneh
  + Executive Committee:
    - Erin Jude, Lindsey Low, Sarah Craig, Sam Southgate, Robert Clarksen, Trisha

**All About PTO**

* Members of the PTO are all volunteer. There is time in every meeting for questions and suggestions for future topics. (Erin)
* PTO tries to build community, we do that through different events we help to sponsor, we also help raise funds to support teachers in the building. This year we’ll help to fund the 5th grade Camp Widjiwagan trip. We help with gardening in front of the school and keep those projects up to date (Lindsey)

**Principal Points - Report from Sarah Lightner**

* We’ve had a good start to the year. Multiple teachers have said that it “feels like a normal year.” Kids are excited to see their teachers.
* We’ve been growing. We’ve added a second grade classroom. That’s always positive. We’ve got a new art teacher.
* Hardest part of the beginning of the year is the buses. Principals are not in charge of bus routes. We are hoping the bus routes calm down in the first few weeks of the year. Let me know if you ever have a lost child.
* We’re doing a new math curriculum at Groveland this year. It has been a big undertaking for teachers. It’s ipad based. We need something more and we want to have a robust math program that prepares kids for middle school.
* We have a lot of new staff, counselors, social workers, art teacher, librarian. They’ve all told me this is a collaborative place and that there are very supportive teams of people working together.
* Fifth graders will go to Camp Widjiwagan the first week of October. PTO is instrumental in making that happen. Always good to hear the stories when they come back
* I really appreciate this crew of people and all parents for communicating about how things are going at school. Touch base with the teacher first. Then contact me if it’s more of a global issue. My door is always open. I try hard to be responsive and I care about your kids.
* Question – Jessica – Our third grader is separated from a lot of their friends during the day. I enjoyed opportunities for classes to meld in the past. Are there still opportunities to socialize across classes within the same grade?
  + A: We prioritize the academic schedule. We have a very small lunchroom. Most years we have a grade that’s not with all the other classes in that grade during lunch. I’m sorry that happened this year too. We’re hoping to create some Friday afternoon activities so rooms can join.
* Question – What are your priorities for this year?
  + A: 3 school and district priorities – get reading instruction around phonics really honed in. We changed our phonics curriculum last year. We want to make sure we are finding kids holes and getting them support. Our fifth graders are really good readers. 2) We want to get our math program up and going 3) We want more student voice at Groveland. We’re going to take the student survey very seriously this year. What else can we be doing to be more welcoming and allow for more student voice?
* Question – What are the math and reading curriculum? Do we get to see them?
  + A: I’ll look into it and share those resources in the Panda Paws. They will be open to everyone.
* Question – Should they bring their ipads back to school?
  + A: Ask the teacher it’s different by grade level. When it gets cold and wintery, we’ll make sure they get sent home if we anticipate a weather day.

**2023-24 Activity and Budget Overview**

* Budget tells us how we bring in and spend money each year. We’re going to tag team this a little bit and give you an activity and budget overview. PTO is the Friends of Groveland PTO, 501c3. We have to keep minutes, have a budget and vote on that budget. We do that in a relatively casual way. First we’ll talk about revenue then we’ll talk about expenses. Overview of budget items. Budget is available to any parent upon request. Passive income including interest grew this year. Expenses include enrichments for each grade level including field trips and Camp Widjiwagan trip, staff grants for supplies for teachers including specialists and the nurse. Centennial Legacy Project is a large line item for Groveland’s 100th anniversary that passed in 2021. We raised a significant amount of money for a large outdoor classroom project that has been held up for a variety of reasons. The goal is to put shovels in the ground Summer 2024, slated to be built on the back side of the building. Ten thousand dollars were added to this fund from PTO reserves. Operating expenses include insurance for the PTO (Erin, Sam).
* Activity / Expenses
* Fundraising / Revenues

**Action Items: Vote to Approve 2023-24 Budget, changes to the bylaws**

* Motion to approve the budget (Lindsey Low) Seconded (Anne Sinclair)
* Vote: Passed unanimously.
* Additions to the bylaws proposed. Two signatures required on checks over $5,000, removed specific references to both treasurers signing the check. Remove section 8 (maximum of 50% can be allocated to a specific cause). Add Section 9 – Requests for reimbursement need to be received by the treasurer by the end of the first full week of the new school year in September. Requests after this time will not be paid. Added exception for gifts to staff (tokens of appreciation with a value less than $100) (Sam, Erin)
  + Question: can we add “unrelated” to the two authorized signers (Section 3)? Answer: yes
  + Question: Is there a process to request gifts to staff? Answer: taken on a case by case basis. Anything under $100 is usually approved, not used often.
  + Question: Clarify Section 4.
* Motion to approve the proposed changes to the bylaws (Anne Sinclair) Seconded (??)
* Vote: Passed unanimously

**Volunteer Opportunities**

* On the back of the agenda, there is a list of volunteer opportunities. We do a lot of events that appear in the budget. We have several committees. It takes a lot of people and hands to accomplish these tasks. There are lots of opportunities to volunteer at events. If something peaks your interest, please sign up for areas where you have expertise or interest. (Erin)
* Question: Is there a DEI committee? A: Yes, the access committee. That committee needs a chair (Lindsey)

**School Community Information / How to Connect**

* Ways to get communication about PTO: Panda Paws, Main Groveland Website related to PTO, Facebook (main page for Groveland and a parent group), Instagram (needs content creation!)
* Groveland Gear – has been updated, more items have been added. A former parent is running and managing the Groveland Gear site. (grovelandgear.com)

**Open Agenda**

* Questions
* Q: What’s the family directory? A: The school is not allowed to distribute people’s personal information to the whole school. The PTO tries to do that for families for the purpose of connecting. It will be updated this Fall. It is password protected. Only Groveland families have access.
* Q: What’s the Access Committee? A: Plan and facilitate meetings to support BIPOC, LGBT, and members of the Groveland community with disabilities.
* Q: How do requests come to the PTO for funding? A: Example – Music teacher requested funds for instruments last year. Came through the principal to the PTO as a request and was funded.
* Areas of Interest for Future Meetings
* Next meeting November 15
* Adjourn.

**2023-24 PTO Volunteer Opportunities – Email** [**groveland.pto.pres@gmail.com**](mailto:groveland.pto.pres@gmail.com) **with interest**

**PTO EVENTS**

**October 13** Movie Night @ Groveland, **January 12** Ice Skating Party – Groveland Rink after school, **March** Scholastic Book Fair (at conferences), **May 17** Pandamonium – Groveland carnival

**COMMITTEES**

* Centennial Legacy Project
* Camp Widjiwagan Committee
* Access Committee
* Pandamonium Committee

**AS NEEDED SUPPORT**

* Garden Support
* Groveland Gear / Lawn Signs Support
* Family Directory
* Gertens Plant Sales (Fall and Spring)
* Direct Drive Letter/Distribution
* Read-a-Thon

**PTO SUPPORTED ACTIVITY**

* Nov 9 and March 28 Order/Drop-off Teacher Conference Dinners
* May 2 Attend Kindergarten Orientation
* May 6-10 Teacher Appreciation week
* Last week/day 5th Grade Doughnuts and Groveland Goodbye Support