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

**Minutes**

**Groveland Park Library (2045 St. Clair Ave, St. Paul) and** [**Google Meet**](http://meet.google.com/mge-wyxw-mmy)

**December 12, 2023 | 6:30 - 7:45pm**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Erin Jude, Lindsay Lowe, Sam Southgate, Laura Gordon, Trisha Whinnery, Sarah Craig, Ashley Azar, Jessica Ramstad, Hugo Bruggeman, Paul Nelson, Berglind, Leigh Nelson, Mary-Cate Cicero, Robert Clarksen, Anne Sinclair

**Updates**

* 5th Grade Widjiwagan Trip – Paul Nelson
  + 5th graders have gone to Widji for 25 years
  + We take every fifth grader every year regardless of ability to pay. In part because of donations from an anonymous donor.
  + Received a thank you note from a high school senior thanking Mr. Nelson for the Widjiwagan experience as a 5th grader
  + This year, fundraising was successful. There was a clear, positive direct ask in letter to families and there was an electronic option for payment. PTO helped by writing that letter.
  + At upcoming artists fair fifth graders will be displaying pictures from their trip. Ask to put the QR code on display there.
  + Funding comes from four buckets now, parent donation, YMCA discount, anonymous donor and line item in PTO budget.
* Centennial Legacy Project: Outdoor Classroom
  + We raised $50,000 for this project, plans to construct it starting summer 2024 in conjunction with accessibility project for the same corner of the school
  + Council Member Tolbert and Jalali asked PTO to reapply and it was approved by City Council on Wednesday. The whole project can be completed including rocks, construction, and landscaping
* Direct Drive
  + So far, the direct drive has raised about $4,000 in funds so far, we budgeted for about $8,000 to be raised through the direct drive
* St. Clair / Kenneth Crosswalk - Paul Nelson and Hugo Bruggeman presented slides
  + Many people drive through the crosswalk and flags when students are helping students to cross
  + Showed slides of the St. Clair street view. Visibility is low.
  + Bus, shuttle and car traffic and illegally parked cars fill the street and drivers can’t see the kids at the crossing. There is more bus traffic now than there has been in the past.
  + Children are the crossing guards, but it is difficult for them to manage traffic and it’s difficult for drivers to see.
  + Working with the city and SPPS to help kids cross more safely. Several changes have been proposed over the past several years to the city.
  + Want kids to be able to cross more safely, that busses can park seamlessly, with minimal teacher engagement.
  + Existing issues include topography and visibility, driver behavior and bus/transportation schedules
  + School leaders are working with Ward 4 leadership and Mac-Groveland community council and STAR program funds to make changes (e.g., remove 1-hour parking signs all the way down St. Clair between Kenneth and Cleveland, push button activated lights, marked crosswalk, bump out to prevent illegal parking)
  + Parents have been asked to drop off/pick up on Sargent instead of St. Clair.
  + Have you looked into the Minnesota Department of Transportation? They give grants for short term temporary builds on issues like this (Sam Southgate)
  + The crosswalk will be repainted in the spring, temporary bollards will be placed in the former bus stop (not sure about timing)
  + Asks to the PTO – recruitment of parents willing to monitor crosswalk during dismissal and arrival, letter writing and advocacy, calling the non-emergency number for illegally parked cars (651) 291-1111, and liaison for future work with ward and community council, there’s also a place to report concerns at the SPPS website

**Movie Night Input**

* Is there interest in hosting another event in the spring? It’s a fun community event and raises some money for PTO?
* Some interest expressed

**Student Directory**

* Returning families can edit now: [www.groveland.me](http://www.groveland.me)
  + Enter your email/password and then edit your family’s information
  + Email Adeel Ahmad [adeel.rb@gmail.com](mailto:adeel.rb@gmail.com) if you run into issues
  + If you are a returning family, you can enter your email and password to edit your child’s information. If you’re a new family, the website will be relaunched before winter break so you can update your information
* New families: instructions will come with the re-launch
* Re-launch through Panda Paws/text and Facebook before break

**Principal Points - Report from Sarah Lightner**

* SPPS budget
* ARP and ESSR funds are expiring in 2024. These funds supported intervention teachers, specialists’ time, and had more funds for teacher aides.
* This year SPPS is deficit spending in FY24, knowing that the deficit will grow in FY25. There will be a $150 million shortfall in 2025
* Engage in strategic budget decisions that adhere to fiscal constraint, align with SPPS strategic objectives
* School budget meetings and school allocations will happen in February and March
* SPPS is collecting input from families in a variety of ways including the SPPS budget website (Sarah will add to the Panda Paws)
* Q: How does enrollment play into budget conversations?
* A: We’ve been growing. Our classroom teachers, teachers’ aides and specialists are all allocated based on enrollment but funds often go to schools that demonstrate more need.
* Talent Development and Acceleration at Groveland
  + K&2nd graders take the COGAT each year which determines eligibility for Capitol Hill
  + The scores come out in early January
  + Want to improve how we communicate with families why families choose to stay at Groveland even if their child qualifies for Capitol Hill
  + Ask for parents to help improve communication about staying at Groveland even if your child is identified for eligibility at Capitol Hill
  + 8 kindergarteners left last year after they had been identified as eligible for Capitol Hill

**Groveland Mission and Vision Input**

* Proposal to update mission and vision
  + What do you like about current mission and vision?
  + Like community component, like “every child”, cross grade interaction is unique here, children feel empowered here, giving them autonomy, mutual aide, inter-grade relationships
  + Suggestion to put form into panda paws and ask students for their perspective
  + How is the mission/vision used?
    - A: I use it to recruit families and it helps us to drive staff decisions about scheduling, budgeting, class rosters, it all comes back to what we want students to have and how we want to move forward.
  + I choose Groveland because…
  + I want Groveland to be a place…
  + What would you like our school to become?
* A temporary TA has been hired for the library for the rest of the year. Library schedule is back for the rest of the year starting this week. Plan to spend some funds to buy books for the library

**Specific Volunteer Opportunities**

* **Yearbook** (Email Erin Jude/Lindsey Low @ [groveland.pto.pres@gmail.com](mailto:groveland.pto.pres@gmail.com) )
  + Lifetouch liaison and sales set up
  + Photo selection/organization
* **January 12 - Ice Skating Party 4-6pm** (Email Trisha Whinnery to volunteer: [trisha.whinnery@hotmail.com](mailto:trisha.whinnery@hotmail.com) )
  + People for set-up and handing out snacks/hot cocoa
  + Anyone with access to hot beverage dispensers

**Open Agenda**

* Questions
* Areas of Interest for Future Meetings

**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 / SHORT TERM SUPPORT**

* Yearbook Coordinator
* 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 SUPPORT**

* 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