

October 17 meeting

Location: GPE Library

Date: 10/17/16

Time: 6-7:30

Attendance: 19

Welcome and PTO Purpose

- We are all here to focus and work together.
- Review of the purpose and guidelines of the PTO.
- Our meeting ends at 7:30.

Committees Overview

- The PTO/FOG Committee Updates document is a great resource for all; there are paper copies, it will go in Panda Paws, and it will be online at the Groveland website in the near future.
- There are open positions in several committees. Please look at the opportunities. Contact Neha Lang at groveland.pto.pres@gmail.com if you are interested.
- There are also several Classroom Villages positions open. Ms. Fox 1st Grade ■ Ms. Johnston 1st Grade ■ Ms. Martin 3rd Grade ■ Mr. Lish 4th Grade ■ Mr. Gunsten 4th Grade ■ Mr. Gunsten 5th Grade ■ Mr. Nelson 5th Grade ■ Mr. Sambas 5th Grade. To volunteer email: groveland.pto.cv@gmail.com
- Equity and Inclusion committee has grown from the work last year by the Families of African Descent group. Working on strong curriculum, EDL for early years, and more. This group is open to all. Contact Sarah Atunah-Jay satunahjay@gmail.com and/or Daniel Atunah-Jay atunahjay@gmail.com if you are interested. There will be some meetings but work will also happen through email.
- The Noice Family with the help of the Gardening Committee installed a new Little Free Library outside of school. There will be an indoor station (in the school library) to collect books. Three boxes of books have already been distributed so please bring more.
- No Cuts to Kids is a cross-district group of parents and others who want to work with the school board to make the best budget choices. There is a Facebook group that is easy to join.
- Family Directory: please confirm your information if you have not done so already.
- School supply kits were a new initiative this year. In order to do this again next year, we need a volunteer to work on this; contact Neha (groveland.pto.pres@gmail.com) by 11/1.
- Groveland After Dark: on 10/27, 6-8pm, this great event will have a similar format as last year, new play. There are lots of opportunities to support this event -- you can provide materials, volunteer your time. Contact Jessica McDonald at Jmcdonald321@gmail.com if interested in helping out.
- Girl Scouts 3rd graders are doing a food drive the night of Groveland After Dark: non-perishable bring canned, bagged, or boxed goods to the event.

Principal's report

- School numbers: Groveland was projected at 508 and is now at 489.
- We still have four kindergarten classes that are really nice sizes.
- Most other grades are below the required class sizes.
- Staffing is different this year. DCD (Developmentally and Cognitively Delayed) program has four teacher assistants who have all been hired. We are still looking for one more teacher licensed in special ed to support that program.
- Hiring for Library position -- lots of applicants; hiring for ELL permanent long term sub (licensing needed); found a long term sub for science
- Music: we have a PT music teacher (0.4 position, in the afternoon). She takes the students in 12 week segments, 30 minutes 2 or 3 times a week. There are three sessions over the course of the year.
- MCAs: Groveland did quite well compared to other SPPS schools. Our scores have increased every year (except the years that the test changed significantly). 77% of students are at grade level in reading. Nice work teachers, nice job parent volunteers! Math scores were slightly lower but still

very strong. Principal Becky Pedersen is available to discuss these scores and their meaning in more depth with those who are interested. We still have a large gap in scores between white students and students of color, and the staff work very hard on how to continue to address that. They are looking at curriculum, supports, Title I support. Ms Pedersen suggests using language of opportunity gap is better than achievement gap. We want every child at Groveland to be reading at grade level. SPPS has an equity policy and training to support all staff, to have the best curriculum, how to support all students. This is a constant effort.

- Panda Packet: has instructions in each packet for how to submit information for the next distribution.
- Discussion about the opportunity gap and how parents can support work on this. How can parent volunteers be more involved? What is the best way for this support to happen? What other opportunities exist? Can Minnesota Reading Corps be involved, how much do they cost?

FOG: Friends of Groveland

- FOG is a separate organization from PTO; it is a fund-raising organization for Groveland
- FOG funded a library overhaul; new books are ready to be unpacked
- Teacher grants given by FOG each year
- Book fair this fall raised \$1300 this year.
- The annual Direct Drive is underway -- please donate, and don't forget to include employer matching
- Box tops program will return this year.
- Apex Fun Run will be two weeks later this year: 2/27-3/10/17.
- Congratulations to Ms Tobie Vickers-Lee, art teacher, and Christine Melcher, parent, who were awarded a grant from EcoLab for Culturally Relevant Learning and NAAPID events. Our congratulations also to Ms Jody Murphy, grade 2/3 teacher, who was awarded an Ecolab grant for reading materials. Mr Paul Nelson, grade 5 teacher, received a First Place Award for the THrivent Financial sponsored Personal Finance Educator Awards. The award was through a workshop Mr Nelson took with the Minnesota Council on Economic Education. Mr Nelson will be honored at a celebration held at 3M in Maplewood.
- Expenses keep going up. The FOG budget this year is about \$48,000. Thanks everyone for your continued support of FOG.
- Celebrate Groveland is 11/12 at Macalester. The committee always needs help! Groveland Gatherings are lots of fun; think about offering one. There is a link online to sign up. Wine donations are welcomed; St Thomas and Ale Jail both have a system to do this really easily.
- Celebrate Groveland needs a new Co-Chair!

Announcements

A small group of Groveland parents visited the RACE: Are We So Different? Exhibition at the Science Museum in August. If other parents are interested in visiting, or bringing older children (it has a lot of reading), please contact Marjorie Bequette at bequette@gmail.com. It would be nice to have more groups from Groveland see this exhibition.

New and Events

- School Board meetings are very informative for all of us -- find the agenda online at <http://www.spps.org/boe>. Learn about the budget, transportation plans, changes to start times, and more. The next meeting is 10/25. Meetings always start with public comments; register ahead of time if you want to speak, especially if it's a night with controversial topics.
- There is currently one open seat on the School Board with many candidates. Highland Park Senior High is having a forum to hear from the candidates: Highland Park Senior High School PTSA - Candidate Forum on Tues. Nov. 1st. 7-8:30pm
- There is a proposal to change all SPPS start times. Groveland's start time could change to 7:30. Learn more and comment on school start times at <http://www.spps.org/starttimes>. Vote is on 11/15 at the Board meeting; comment at the meeting (sign up ahead of time) or online before that date.
- Social Justice Fair on 10/21: <https://tcedfair.org/>. Several Groveland parents are presenting or helped organize the event. There is donation-based registration, child care, students and adults are attending and welcomed, food provided, at Patrick Henry in Minneapolis.

Review of Past Events

- Open House before school
- Kindergarten Coffee Hour
- New Family Pizza Orientation Night
- Pizza at conferences for teachers and staff
- Goal setting conferences: PTO will review later this year
- At PTO Meetings: Snacks will only be provided at the first and last meeting for adults. Kids will always get snacks.
- All these events are funded by FOG. All PTO events are funded by FOG.

Parent Comments

- FOG is working towards more clarity and transparency about what it funds. All PTO events. Many of the student enrichment events. FOG wants people to know what the money goes to and how it supports every student.
- New parents at the meeting reported that the events were very welcoming and well planned.
- Questions about the Apex Fun Run -- how much did we raise and how much went to Apex/went to Groveland. 52% of the funds went to Groveland and 48% to Apex (this is good for a fundraising/event organization); they were here for two weeks and there was minimal involvement from parents. We made \$25,000 at Groveland. All students ran it; 80% of students raised money, which is much higher than other fund raisers.
- One parent made a video with her child last year that was good at raising money on Facebook for the Fun Run. Maybe also use video to explain what Celebrate Groveland is as well. Other suggestions (a coffee fundraiser?) was suggested for CG as well.

PTO's Environmental Thought:

- Does your child get breakfast at a school? If so, talk to them about whether or not they need to use a plastic bag to hold the food they collect. Some students grab just one or two items which they might easily be able to carry in their hands. Fewer bags used at breakfast will help the environment and saves money for our school.

PTO's Community Building Challenge:

- Make eye contact and smile with at least 1 person you don't know every week.

Please join us for the NEXT PTO meeting Thursday, January 19th from 6-7:30pm.