

PTO Meeting Minutes: February 15th, 2018

Present: Marjorie Bequette, Sarah Murphy, Kerry Furtney, Amy Geisler, Alicia Pursell, Sarah Craig, Jeff Sambs, Becky Pedersen, Roopali Phadke, Regan Fox, Sye Tomczak, Erin Jude, Kathryn Wegner, Brandy Norman-Wiebenga, Hrithik Guardhan, Robert Clarksen, Shanna Setter-Clarksen

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Vote to Approve January Meeting Minutes and Today's Meeting Agenda. January minutes are available at: <https://www.spps.org/Page/32630>

We have shifted the balance this year to less review of previous month's minutes. If you would like for us to review the past month's meeting in more detail in future, please let us know. Minutes are available online at the Groveland website. Motion to approve and second of January Minutes and February Agenda.

3. Discussion on Pros and Cons of having a Science or Music Specialist

*** Parents were asked to jot down ideas on post-its; these were collected at the end of meeting. In order to ensure everyone's voice is heard, these notes are included at the end of the Minutes.**

Chance to discuss not individuals, but about having each specialist available at Groveland.

Question: Why are we considering these two? Each school has 3 specialists, are we required to have certain ones? Could we consider replacing visual arts?

Ms. Pedersen: We are encouraged to have P.E. It is also based on # of students we have. If we had a larger student body, we could have more specialists, but each child wouldn't receive more time with specialists.

Question: How does the school teach the standards if there isn't a specialist? Teacher: It is expected that classroom teacher will teach the content. It may look different in different grades. Teachers look for opportunities to integrate it. To be honest, without a specialist there are things that are left off the plate.

Question: Which of these are tested at the state level? Ms. Pedersen: Math, Reading, Science are the only courses tested at state level.

Question: My son loves Science and is coming home saying they are just coloring in Science class.

Question: Is there an opening to hire a consistent person next year? Ms. Pedersen: HR decides this.

What we see when we have a consistent specialist is a great program.

Are these specialists full-time jobs, full time salaries? Yes

Parents talking about the importance of a science or music teacher staying for many years, building relationships with students, parents, teachers.

Question: I am curious about teachers perspective about whether science is easier for them to teach? Teacher: I think it depends on the teacher. I've integrated both music and science.

Teacher: Seems to be a split between primary teachers and intermediate. Primary teachers thought they could integrate science with standards. Intermediate teachers thought it was more specialized and more difficult to teach/fit in. Teachers thinking about what grades need which specialist. 5th grade MCA Science test evaluates everything learned K-5. Maybe an integrated program needed to address this? Marty Robbins (district Science lead) shared ideal science instruction--this may be not what is happening in most elementary schools. Finding the person who can do that job really well is hard.

Question: Why did we have 2 science specialists at one time (in past)? Ms. Pedersen: Professional Learning Communities were integrated into teacher's day, had another specialist. This was before budget cuts came to district. At that time science specialists did K-2 and another person did 3-5.

All elementary teachers are licensed to teach both science and music. Groveland has physical supplies for both. But when there is not a person responsible for that it is hard.

Ms. Pedersen: It would take some work to get supplies out to classrooms.

Ms. Pedersen: Which specialist do you think would support your students' learning?

Parent: Science would probably prepare them for middle school, even though my heart says music.

Question: Would we still have EDL music 4th/5th if had a music specialist? Yes

Question: Can we talk about option of having a gifted and talented specialist? Ms. Hyatt used to be this role and it was wonderful. Ended 3.5 years ago. She supported many students individualizing and enriching.

In St. Paul, have asked for science license for science specialists, but technically can be just licensed elementary.

Parent: If we are gathering information, looking for parent feedback, need to add a lot of context. I would like to see all 4 specialist roles considered and gather feedback on all. I would like to see music, proven benefit of impact on whole brain activity. I oversee a music residency that comes into schools, hear from teachers that they don't feel comfortable teaching music. If you haven't had early exposure to music, becomes harder in middle school and high school to be in choir, orchestra, band.

Parent: How can we best serve our kids at Groveland? What is our percentage of English Language Learners and does having music support ELL kids? Shouldn't we be doing everything we can to set those kids up for success?

Question: Would district hire person or would school? Ms. Pedersen: Kind of both, sometimes can't choose, it is tricky timing of hiring.

How could/would parents support Music or Science Specialist?

Residencies for both. Volunteers.

Parent: Where she teaches, 5th graders volunteer helping out, retired teacher helps in science classroom.

Thoughts on gathering feedback from teachers and parents

Idea for teachers to ask parents at conferences.

Or having survey out at conferences. Translate into languages.

Are people who come to conferences an accurate representation of community? Ms. Pedersen: Yes, we get 95-97% of families at conferences.

Comment: We need to survey the teachers. What would we ask them? Which one they feel qualified to teach.

Who will ultimately make decision? Ms. Pedersen: we all make decision together, teachers, PTO, what we think would work best.

Comment: The quicker this could be determined the better, because job announcements are posted internally first, we might get good candidates from other SPPS schools if we posted in March.

Need to commit early, sell if to that person--why would a person want to teach science at Groveland? If someone knew the full power of the PTO was behind the science program, might encourage someone to come.

Question of timing--when do we need to make a decision?

Parent: I'm always impressed how many parents we have with lots of skills. Can we get parents to be helping to support for the rest of the year.

Teacher: if we are going to survey we should open up to offer viewpoints on all specialists

Ms. Pedersen: We do have a long call sub in science for the rest of the year, who is planning and taught science here last year.

4. Updates on Groveland Events and Fundraising

- A. **Past events:** Open House/Science/Inventor's Fair, NAAPID, Ice Skating All-School Classroom Villages, Parent social at Blackstack Brewing
- B. **Upcoming Events:** Groveland Gathering: Mom and Son Sock Hop, Friday, February 23, 6:30-8
Scholastic Book Fair March 21-23

C. APEX Fun Run--Coming soon! February 26-March 9

The theme this year is **UNITED!!**

Apex is an amazing opportunity for kids to not only raise much needed funds for their school but to learn valuable lessons in leadership, empowerment, anti-bullying and team building! The Apex team are with us full-time for two weeks, going to every classroom to connect with students on these very topics and more! Every student participates in these lessons and has the opportunity to run whether they have raised any pledges or not. We will need parent volunteers to help give high-5s (more information on that later!) and help their child's class on the day by marking runners' t-shirts. Keep an eye out for more information to come over the next couple of weeks!

D. Pandamonium: Groveland Carnival, May 4th Updates

First ever Groveland carnival. This event is shaping up to be pretty spectacular! There will be an array of classic games and activities as well as some new twists on classic carnival fun! We will be sending out more information on supplies to donate and parent volunteer needs soon, so stay tuned!

E. Update on Tech and online fundraising opportunities--Adeel Ahmad

New online store is live: grovelandgear.com

Ms. Pedersen will be testing the "Lost and Found Cam": groveland.me/found

Text a picture to a number

Setting up:

Amazon Smile

Amazon Affiliate

Facebook Donate

Shutterfly Affiliate

Ways to get money for our school, they take no fees.

Coming up:

Chabot

Newsletter improvements

New socials:

Instagram @grovelandpark - text me pics 415-205-0274

Twitter @grovelandpark

Suggestion box: groveland.me/ideas

Comment: Can we give a sheet with this at conferences to give out to all families?

5. SPPS Superintendent Dr. Joe Gothard is Coming to our March 15 PTO Meeting

- A. **Parent Feedback: What do we want to discuss with Superintendent? Questions?**

- B. What do we want Dr. Gothard to know about Groveland?**
- C. How can students be involved to share about what makes Groveland special?**

Related to SPPS enrollment issues, having parents talk about why they chose Groveland, maybe could be concerns/considerations too.

Structuring it is a really good idea

He needs to hear about discussions like this one--having to decide among specialists

Voice of schools vs. district making top down decisions

We want to be involved in decision making

SPPS Site Council (this was what schools had in past) we were allotted the entire budget and got to decide what to spend \$ on, how can we do things, often found creative ways to fund priorities. Site based decision making. Who's making decisions, who is best equipped.

We need to pack the cafeteria.

Keep pressing him to be a more vocal leader about budget. What's the plan? How are you advocating for SPPS at the state level?

Last NOV Los Angeles Superintendent released a statement saying they set a goal to double per pupil funding by 2020.

Would love to see him set a really high bar for what we need for our schools.

We will send an email to everybody, notes home to kids, structure time, open with students, email us.

What makes Groveland great, but this is what we need to keep working on. Share our vision. Hear his vision.

6. Principal's Report- Ms. Pedersen

Year is moving so quickly, seems like one event after another. Really good stuff, kids active and involved. If there are specifics that you want to know more about, please let me know. Pace is very fast.

Marjorie: Wanted to thank everyone for their work during this week with possible strike. I was so proud of this community, with parents and teachers organizing to make sure kids safe in event of strike. Thank you to everyone who helped. The way to make long-term change is to keep being voice for our students.

7. Motion to end meeting, vote to end meeting.

Please join us for the next PTO Meeting on Thursday, March 15th, 6:00-7:30

Groveland PTO Executive Committee

Marjorie Bequette, President groveland.pto.pres@gmail.com

Sarah Murphy, Vice President groveland.pto.vicepres@gmail.com

Heather Allison, Fundraising Chair groveland.pto.fundraising@gmail.com

Kerry Furtney, Treasurer groveland.pto.treasurer@gmail.com

Please contact us with questions or if you would like to get involved with Groveland PTO!

Post-it Note Comments About Specialist Classes- Science and Music

- Let the teachers decide.
- Do 4th and 5th grade teachers trade students to do specialized lessons? Ex. one teacher does Science for 4th and 5th, another does music or math?
- If we can only have one, in which subject is it more likely that we can get a high quality teacher?
- What do the teachers think re: absorbing Science in the mainstream curriculum? Do they feel prepared to teach Science?
- We should bring Music back. How many elementary schools do not have a dedicated Music teacher?
- Pushing Science into classrooms--can we still meet standards?
- How much of PTO \$ has supported Music residencies this year?
- It's not so much about programs. The quality of student experiences is largely based on the quality of the people. Which is hard to control for. People > program choice
- In taking it to broader parent community--I think all options should be on the table: P.E., Art, Music, Science. Get a full spectrum opinion with good contextual background.
- Art/Science currently switch years for fairs in gym. Could we switch off specialists year by year this way?
- Can Science be taught by classroom teachers? Seems possible, but harder to teach Art or Music in the regular classroom.
- Most parents can support Science at home, but less possible to support Music training in the home.
- Science: too much for prep teacher to teach 5-6 grades a day, so much equipment?
- Can we do Music K, 1, 2 and Science 3, 4, 5?
- Music: less realistic that teachers can include?
- Reasons to have Music: some kids may only get exposure to Music ed at school; brain/learning benefits, teachers may feel less able/qualified to teach in regular classroom
- Science can be better integrated into classrooms (I understand that that can be a lot of work for teachers). Music is more whole-child and is more accessible to families. Performances is what brings families in, celebrates students, and strengthens community.
- Seems easier to teach Science in classroom. I question whether music is being taught at all in classrooms this year. Having a music program seems like it would make Groveland stand out among schools these days.
- I think Science should definitely be taught and emphasized since it is an area kids are tested in and is so important in this day and age.
- We should create a PTO position that specifically supports both areas, especially the one not being taught by a specialist.
- We have an expensive computer lab. How is the district using these labs? (Teacher training on coding....)
- Pros for Science: expensive to supplement privately. Interest now can help girls make a career later.
- Music pros: Early exposure opens more doors--harder entry later (choir, band, orchestra); proven impact on whole brain activity; harder to integrate by homeroom teachers
- Science pros: Girls especially need this option; testing standards; hard to implement (equipment)
- Would advocate for P.E., Science, and Music--because Art and Music are both fine arts.
- Music provides opportunity for community events (concerts etc.) vs. visual arts that are more internal
- It would be interesting if there could be analytic aspects to teaching music, in effect a Science/Music Theory class
- Music is proven to impact language development. English Language Learner population at Groveland highest compared to Horace Mann, Randolph Heights, Expo--Kindergarten is like 30% ELL

- Worth looking into different specialists for different grades (e.g. K-2 Music and 3-5 Science)
- Within program selection, there are components like schedule, supplies, logistics of prep time that also play a role in success
- How are the standards being met? Are our children's knowledge base lower than that of students from other schools?
- Music: a music specialist is a big draw for our family, but not sure how widespread that is. I wonder if supplementary Science \$ is easier to find than \$ for Music
- Science: would kids get more Science content overall without a specialist? Are other schools in the area going without a Science specialist?
- Science specialist pros: it is tested at state level; materials management. Cons: Could classroom teachers teach Science? When I taught in Bloomington Public Schools all Science taught in regular classroom.