**MINUTES OF WOODLAND PTO MEETING**

**THURSDAY DECEMBER 9, 2021**

The PTO meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Dana Marucci.

**HOUSEKEEPING RULES—DANA MARUCCI**

* Thanked everyone for coming and expressed appreciation to the fact that attendance shows commitment to Woodland, the PTO and most importantly the kids. Also thanked everyone for their volunteering efforts.
* Stated that while we have the best interest for our children and want to provide them with the best experience, we need to operate under set rules and guidelines that are provided to us as parent volunteers in order for us to make this work. If we don’t abide by these rules, we risk food not being allowed in the classroom and volunteers not being allowed in the building at all.
* Stated that our PTO is governed by By-Laws which are on the PTO website but haven’t been updated for about a decade and due to the fact that we have lost a lot of institutional knowledge and gaps in terms of rules, stemming from the fact that parents haven’t been in the building for over a year and a half and parents who have been at Woodland for a long time and have graduated to middle school it was decided to update the By-Laws. Hard copies were provided and essentially outline what the rules and regulations are for the different positions and what we need to abide by so there is no confusion or contradiction and we have a road map in place for future parents.
* Stated a few main takeaways from the updated By-Laws:
1. Homeroom parents are required to join the PTO and serve on 2 committees.
2. Chain of Command needs to be followed for communication regarding classroom parties and communication that the school wants to send out to the classes via the homeroom parents. The principal would contact the PTO President who would contact the leader Grade Level Representative who would contact the Grade Level Representatives who would contact the homeroom parents who would then email the classes. We would like to avoid people circumventing from this as it leads to confusion and things not being in uniform. The chain of command will also be followed in the opposite direction as well. The homeroom parents would contact the Grade Level Representatives who would contact the lead Grade Level Representative who would contact the PTO President who would contact the principal.
3. Grade Level Reps are responsible for contacting the teachers and providing information to the homeroom parents who then provide it to the parents in the classes. Homeroom parents need to make sure to work closely with their GLR to organize class parties and events for the class.
4. Substitutes for class parties can only sub one time for a class for the year. If you can’t find a sub you will contact your GLR who will help in finding a sub.
5. A budget is set in place for the year for class parties which is a specific dollar amount per student. Grade level reps are expected to stay within their allocated budget in order for there to be equity between the grades. Please do not supplement out of your own pocket. Parents can donate food items or items that are requested by teachers for service projects or decorations for events.
6. The district -wide approved food list needs to be followed and there are no exceptions.
7. Regarding confidentiality, volunteers should not be sharing any information about students or things that they might see here at school.
* Stated that we are happy to be in the building and have all of you here and to help give our kids a good experience. We updated the By-Laws and we hope that they are outlined clearly and there is no confusion going forward or in the future when parents may want to step into a role that they haven’t had previously.
* Asked everyone to reach out if they had any questions or concerns.

**TEACHER LIAISONS—MRS. RZASA & MRS. LEONARD**

* Expressed thanks for the PTO luncheon at the beginning of the year, the Scholastic Book Fair, Trunk or Treat and the assembly for tomorrow.
* Stated that we appreciate all your hard work. We know that fundraising these past couple of years has been difficult and it has put a strain on the PTO but we really appreciate all your efforts and for all of you coming into school and volunteering.

**MR. HEANEY**

* Stated that the holiday gift fair was fantastic. The kids absolutely loved it. It was quite stressful but in the end the kids had a really good time. It was a really special moment seeing them come in and purchase something for a family member.
* Recognized Miss Traynor as the recipient of the Woodland Teacher of the year in 1st grade and Mrs. De Carli as the recipient of the Education Service Professional and Provider award in 5th grade. Expressed congratulations to both of them.
* Stated that we are in orange and that our numbers are going up. It is very critical that we fill out the Covid form each morning and we don’t send our kids to school if they are not feeling well.
* Stated that a 3-foot meter stick is used to measure how far students are from each other to determine close contact. If the student was closer than the stick in the classroom, they are on the quarantine list. In the lunchroom if they are closer than 2 of the meter sticks, they are on the quarantine list.
* Stated that quarantine is a 14-day period without the ability to test. When we are in yellow you can test on the 7th day and return on the 8th.
* Stated that we really need to be cognizant of keeping our kids home when they have any symptoms that might be covid related. We have two nurses currently as Ms. Taggart is out on maternity leave and they are sharing the load. They are checking kids each morning whose parents may not have completed the covid form but also going around and screening kids which can be as many as 20 kids but then they also have to check food and check kids who may come down with a belly ache and make a decision on whether it can be covid or they are just trying to get out of class which is a tough call for people in this climate.
* Presented a slide show about volunteering and expressing the fact that we need you, we love you and we appreciate you. It is fantastic seeing you back in the building for lunches. Mrs. Fazio and Mrs. Baechtold are our life savers this year with the lunch program and they make sure that every kid is fed but this is not an easy task.
* Stated that many years ago when we won Blue Ribbon, we had to do a full application and we said why Woodland was Blue Ribbon and it was about the triangle of what Woodland is; parents, staff and kids. We all work really well together and that’s what makes this building so special. We have to continue to keep our focus on the kids.
* Stated that there will be times in the PTO where you don’t agree or there is going to be times when you think that something in a party could have been better or worse and we have to be adults and put that aside and think about ways to make it better.
* Stated that we are planning to do Young Author’s Day, International Day, Bingo Night, Parent/Teacher Basketball & Volleyball games and Field Day. There is however a district-wide policy that if we are in orange, we cannot do anything outside the school day that brings in spectators. We will be pushing the volleyball/basketball games to when we are in yellow hopefully by spring.
* Stated some important tips for volunteers:
1. The faculty room is reserved for staff.
2. It is important to take direction from staff if you are unsure of something when you are volunteering.
3. Do not discipline students. If you see someone doing something wrong, please report it to a teacher or myself.
4. Do not talk about incidents that happened in school with other parents.
5. This is a time to allow kids to develop their independence.
* Stated that we do 2 drills per month. One is a fire drill. We also do active shooter drills, though we don’t use that terminology in school and say that it’s a lockdown drill. We also did a lockout drill where everybody from outside comes inside and the reason for this is if in the event, we saw something outside that didn’t look safe. We practiced a drill where we told kids that there was an animal in the woods and we needed to get inside. We also do bomb threat drills and shelter in place drills if for example there is a tornado threat in the area. We also do a medical emergency drill in the event someone needs the AED machine.
* Stated not to give kids food during lunch. Please check with Mrs. Baechtold or Mrs. Fazio.
* Stated that you should not be unsupervised with students at anytime because a criminal history check is not required for volunteers.
* Mentioned HIB (Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying) and to not get involved if you see something and to report it to me.
* Mentioned FERPA (Family Educational Rights). If you share something about a student that is a violation of their privacy.
* Stated if you take pictures during an event, please only share them with me or the people in charge of the event instead of posting it on social media. If it’s your own child, you can certainly post it but if it isn’t your child, please talk to me first.
* Stated if you see a student needing medical attention, please report it to a staff member.
* Stated that one of the big takeaways is if we can be doing things better let’s talk about it. Let’s grow together as a big Woodland family.
* Stated that the kids love classroom parties because it’s a break from the day and we want to give our kids good memories. GLRs should be discussing parties with the teachers and getting feedback from them. Parties across grade levels should be consistent.
* Stated that we must followed the district approved food list.
* The GLRs are: 5th grade-Andrea Fazio, 4th grade-Denise DeCorso, 3rd grade-Anna Mohallim, 2nd grade-Kerryanne Holliss, 1st grade-Sarah Vespucci, K-Stephanie Lindy.
* Our next Book Buddies event will take place on Dec. 23rd where the kids can where their pajamas and “cozy up to a book” and the younger kids can bring in a stuffed animal. We will also be handing out hot chocolate and a candy cane. A google form will go out asking parents if they give their child permission to have the hot chocolate and candy cane. Parents can send in an alternative option or we can offer them juice. The fifth graders are paired with the kindergarteners, the second graders with fourth graders and first graders with third graders. The first one took place last month where they interviewed each other to learn a bit about one another, they read a book and created a piece of a quilt that symbolized what they learned from each other.
* Reminded parents that tomorrow is pajama day. Students can wear winter/holiday pajamas but no slippers.
* Thanked the PTO for the sponsoring the assembly for tomorrow. It’s a basketball assembly where Basketball Jones will be coming in to do some cool tricks and talk about goals, dreams and having perseverance. K-2 will have it from 9:30-10:15 and 3-5 will have it from 10:30-11:15.
* Asked parents to follow me on Twitter @PrincWoodland.
* Asked parents to vote on Tuesday regarding the referendum that has a huge impact on Woodland. One is to install air conditioning in the gym and two is to install a security vestibule in the lobby. Also, we want to upgrade the fire alarms and get a new boiler. There is no tax impact with this because the state is funding some of this and there is some reserve money that is available.
* Stated that the district has provided us with money for taking care of events since the PTO doesn’t have funds like it had in the past. If you want to do certain events, make the proposal to Mrs. Marucci and she will come to me to discuss it.
* Stated that if you are having a good experience, email your child’s teacher to let them know. There is nothing greater than getting an email saying that you are making a difference.

**FUNDRAISING EFFORTS—ASHLEY ABINES**

* Thank you to Brooke Ditta for running the holiday fair and to everyone that made purchases. To Dana Marucci for the Lynch Creek sale and to everyone that purchased. To Anna Mohallim for organizing the Square One art fundraiser.
* The on-going fundraisers are the Fun Pasta, Driven Coffee and Chimney Rock pizza.
* Bingo night will be rescheduled to where we can have it outdoors.

**PTO AGENDA ITEMS—DANA MARUCCI**

* International Day will be held this year. The Signup Genius will be going out tomorrow asking for volunteers and there will an opportunity to suggest possible countries. Roula Ioannou, co-chair briefly explained that International Day is where a few countries are selected and co-committees and volunteers for each country work together to present information about the country through presentations, crafts and activities.
* Tricia Patricco touched on mom’s night out and dad’s night out. MNO will be a brunch on Sunday, Jan. 16th and DNO will be a craft beer event on Tuesday, January 26.

**THANK YOUS—**To Ashley Abines, Denise DeCorso and April Pearce for Trunk and Treat. To Brooke Ditta for the Holiday Gift Shop. To Mr. Heaney and the staff for their support.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

* The minutes from the October 21, 2021 PTO meeting were submitted for approval by Sumitra Nicholson, approved by Melissa Frega and seconded by Denise DeCorso.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.