

PTO Meeting
16 February 2021
Via Zoom

Attendees: Samantha Eads, Jen Rhoda, Rachel Voorhies, Kori Renn, Rachel Guthrie, Leah, Dinorah Sapp, Glen Hopkins, Maggie Sher, Bitia Zakeri, Hopi Stosberg, Brittany Todd, Heather Holmes, Oniffe Grizzle, April Stilwell, Willa Tavernier, Leah Sinn Iverson, Lauren Bray, Jennefer Neolan, David Cartledge, April Stilwell

I. Agenda Presentation

A. Samantha Eads presented the agenda for the meeting

II. Principals Report

A. Glen Hopkins stated that UES, and MCCSC as a whole, will not be using the new state guidelines of 3 feet of distance between students. Six feet will continue to be the standard. No new cases of COVID have been reported in the school since school resumed after winter break. All are doing well in and out of school, which illustrates that UES families are being responsible

B. Lunches with online students will be starting soon and Glen is very excited for that

C. First grade teacher Mrs Harpring has been recognized as a Teacher of the Year, and he showed his appreciation or her continued dedication to students

D. Read to the Final Four continues in the third grade. Ms Breeden's and Ms Wiggins' classes are currently ranked number 2 in the state for their accumulation of reading minutes. Kudos!

E. Kindergarten registration has begun and 12 families have already enrolled, putting UES ahead of school of schedule with enrollment

F. Brittany Todd asked if students who changed their learning model from online to in-person are adjusting well, and Glen affirmed that the uniform style of the school year has helped the transitions go more easily, as has the dedication of the staff to ensure student needs are met

III. Events Committee

A. UES Teacher/Staff Appreciation video: Rachel Voorhies reported that responses have begun to come in thanking teachers and staff for all they do. Responses are still being collected, and an email was sent to families with the link to make a submission (the link can also be found on the Facebook page). There are four fill-in-the-blank questions that students can choose from to express their gratitude. The goal is to have the video complete by 2/26, and submissions should be in by 02/21.

B. IB Learner profiles: The SEL committee is looking for parent video submissions to be shared with students. Last week, the learner profile was Mindfulness, and the videos that were made were given to teachers to share with their students. This month, the profile is Caring, and the committee is looking for videos from parents on this topic. The video does not have to be long or complicated, and can simply highlight caring in action for the students. Rachel Guthrie asked the fourth graders to generate questions for parents to address in the videos. Samantha Eads expressed appreciation to Oniff Grizzle and Brian Boland for their videos on openmindedness in January. Videos on Caring should be submitted by the end of the month to Rachel Guthrie

C. Foundation of Monroe County Schools Night of Pizza and Stories 03/30: Maggie Sher reported that Cyrilla Helm at FMCS is planning this event, in partnership with multiple pizza places in town and our local storytellers guild, to provide a virtual evening of fun. Volunteers should contact Cyrilla at FMCS for information, and all are asked to help spread the word

IV. Equity Sub-Committees

A. Welcome Table: Samantha Eads and Dinorah Sapp reminded everyone that pilot listening circles are beginning February 17 and February . These are an opportunity to get to know one another more and recognize commonalities, as well as discuss tangible ways to reflect equity in our work at UES. The listening circles will be very structured in order to allow everyone the opportunity to share. Eventually, this is something that will hopefully be shared with the PTO as a whole, and the faculty as well

B: Parent Guide Development: Jen Rhoda reported that the purpose of the guide is to provide families who are new to UES with a handbook that will explain commonly used abbreviations, procedures, events, and traditions at UES. This sub-committee has drafted a survey that will be sent to families to ensure that all necessary information is included in the guide. The survey will be issued after spring break, and the information that results from it will be used to compose the handbook. The committee plans to have the handbook ready for distribution/use at the start of the 2021-2022 school year

C. Equity Ally Website Development: Willa Tavernier shared that an IU intern continues to work on the site, which will be focused on how to be an equity ally. The corporation already has a similar site, so the committee is not looking to recreate that, but its goal will be a more localized site , where parents can share good anti-racist websites they have found, podcasts, etc.

IV. Treasurer Report:

A. Rachel Voorhies reported for Kerry McGarry that the only payment made over the last month was to the literacy coach. A payment of about \$700 was received from Kroger, down from its usual amount of about \$1100. Some money needs to be tranferred from the Fall Campaign Paypal into the checking account. Income is down, but needs are being met, and spending is down as well, so there is balance to the

budget, overall

1. Hopi Stosberg asked why \$4000 was removed from the project fund, and Samantha responded it was for IXL licenses at the beginning of the year

2. Leah Sinn Iverson asked how much lower the income is this year, and Samantha explained that the Fall Campaign was down about \$6000, and that the income from Dine and Donate events has also been significantly lower. Hopi pointed out that the Kroger checks have been lower for awhile, basically since the East Side Fresh Thyme opened, along with Aldi. Samantha shared all of the “passive fundraising” opportunities for supporters to contribute to UES PTO. They include Box Tops, Amazon Smile, the Kroger Plus Shoppers Card Link, and Pizza X Pops. Information on these programs was shared in the chat feature

3. Hopi shared that she will chair the fundraising committee for the rest of the year. The Fall Campaign is typically the school’s biggest fundraiser, and - as stated previously - it was about 6k lower than a typical school year. This was not unexpected, given the current climate of the world. Hopi expressed gratefulness for how successful the campaign was in light of that fact. The status of the Learning Festival is definitely in question, so she will be trying to figure out other fundraisers, such as a big Dine and Donate event, a food truck social, or an online auction. Since expenses are down, finances are not in bad shape, all things considered. Glen reported that the print shop will print fundraising cards to be sent to all families detailing all of the passive fundraising opportunities available to UES families

4. Samantha reported that the student needs account managed by Kerry McGarry (Treasurer) and Monte Simonton (Social Worker) is supported by the PTO. The PTO helps fulfill student needs identified by Mr Simonton. Next month, the PTO will be looking at moving a decent amount of money from either Teacher Grants or Miscellaneous to help with those needs. A vote on how best to approach this from a budget standpoint will be conducted.

V. Testing Report

A. Glen reported all buildings must test. IREAD 3, a basic reading proficiency test with fixed questions for third graders, will begin on 3/8. Letters will be sent soon to 3rd grade families regarding testing procedures. ILEARN begins the week of 4/19 and it will be a three week window. It is a computer adaptive test for grades 3-6. it is scaffolded in order to hone in more specifically on a student’s specific skill set. English Language Arts and Math are first given in third grade, science is added in fourth grade, Social Studies is added in fifth grade, and science returns in sixth grade. The tests include performance tasks that require students to read passages and pull evidence from articles to support their answers. It takes multiple days to complete this process. For in-person students. this will happen over a period of five days. Schools must have 95 percent participation for full funding to occur next year.

B. This test is absolutely required by the state. This requirement is complicated for online students, because there are no opt-out procedures. As a result, students will need to come in to the school building to take it; this is the black and white answer from the state regarding testing requirements. Glen does not want online students to have to come in to the building for five consecutive days. Online students would test in the cafeteria and gym, and they would be spaced a minimum of 12 feet apart. In the gym, 42 kids can easily be spaced 12 feet apart from each other. In-person students will not eat lunch in the gym or cafeteria during the testing window for online students, and there will be designated restrooms available for online students to use exclusively. The testing arena will be a closed environment with no mingling of online and in-person students.

C. Glen wants students to come in and test, because he would like the information and data that comes from those tests. At the same time, he and Mrs Guthrie will not strong arm anyone and force them to come into the building. Families need to make the decisions that they need to make for the well being of their own families. They will reach out to all families to communicate all of the safety measures that will be taking place, but if parents are not comfortable with their student(s) coming into the building to take the assessments, they will submit their name and the school administration will move on, because creating stress is not what is best for our kids. Nothing will be forced upon anyone in this situation. That being said, school administration is still looking at the safest and fastest way to test online students, and it will likely require three days; to complete the entire test in less than two days, students would likely have to have a second testing day that would last continuously from 9-3.

1. Samantha acknowledged the awkward position that the state has put schools in during such a hardship year

2. Kori Renn showed appreciation for Mr Hopkins' leadership in this initiative and for how much he has helped online students in general. She asked how many students are currently online, and Glen responded that 186 students are online learners.

3. Fourth graders who missed IREAD as a result of the shutdown last spring will not have to make up the test this year. If this year's third graders do not take it, they will be required to take it in the summer or next fall; essentially, all kids must take IREAD from this point forward

4. Issues regarding eating and transportation for online students on testing days will still be addressed. Glen noted that online families are the top priority as far as accommodations

VI. Masks

A. The supply of spare masks available for students is getting low. At the beginning of the year, a parent and a grandparent made a lot of fabric masks for the building, but the supply is down to about 50. More disposable kid-sized masks are needed as masks are often accidentally thrown away or break during the school day, or students are unable to wash cloth masks daily. Fabric masks often become single use masks for multiple reasons, so whatever is cheapest as far as child sized masks is probably best. Rachel Guthrie estimates that about 5 or 6 kids need one every morning, and there are about 85 school days left resulting in a need for about 500 additional masks; that estimation does not account for kids who come to the office for a new mask during the day for whatever reason.

1. Hopi asked if teachers need more masks as well. Rachel responded that it appears most teachers are good on masks - there are still extras on the welcome wagon cart available to them, and there are several boxes of disposable adult sized masks available as well. Leah Sinn Iverson wondered if a survey might be sent to teachers to see if they feel safe or if they feel they need more protection, especially in light of recent advice on the benefits of double masking and/or surgical masks. She and Jen Rhoda agreed to work together on a survey to the faculty on this topic.

VII. Meeting Adjourned

A. The next PTO meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9, 2021, via Zoom