

March 2, 2021 PTO meeting (6 pm, Zoom)

Attendees: Veronica Galvan, Divya Kolar, Shauna Rakshe, Anne von Haartman, Wendy Bernard, Joan McFadden, Allison Guilfoyle, Lori Near, Cara Coates, Sonia Lall, David Conlon, Esha V, Radha, Tanuja, Kal Vuppamandla, Atsuko Hiramatsu, Dinesh, Karen Ho, Nishanth Karnaty, Tomoko Tokunaga, Shivaansh Behl, Tom Pinit, Swapna Mulapudi, Loretta Louie, Hiromi Okazawa, Hongwei Liang, Himanshu, Ankit Shah, Karyn Rode, SB, Deepa Natarajan, Venkat Gogireddy, Nelson D'Souza, Alexandra Yau, Viswakanth, Sara, Akshara S.

-Presentation by Veronica Galvan, Stoller MS principal

- Middle school is a huge transition. Kids don't necessarily want parents volunteering in class like they do in elementary school, but parent volunteers are still needed! Stoller PTO runs school dances, picture day, teacher appreciation day, run calming room, emergency supplies in case of lockdown. Current PTO board will all be leaving (except one parent) next year so need new board members.
- Stoller is largest middle school in OR. Can be a little overwhelming for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Next year will be smaller because Findley and Rock Creek ES will leave, but will still be very big. Teachers and counselors try to support transition.
- Q: What is AVID program and how does it work? A: AVID is an elective program meant for kids who are in the middle of the road and need a little help with study skills, peer tutoring etc. AVID teachers help with tutoring and organization. There's an application and interview process.
- Q: Is there going to be any orientation or buddy system to help kids before first day? A: Normally yes. Right now trying to figure it out; will do something even if it has to be virtual.
- Q: Can you address crowding situation now that boundaries have changed, and what we should do to prepare kids? A: It is overwhelming. Can't tell you exact numbers. Before lockdown last March, we were around 1600 students. Now, around 1300 (many left for FLEX or homeschool). Projections we're getting for next year are around 1200, but possible FLEX/homeschool students may come back; there also may be some "legacy" 8<sup>th</sup> graders. So this may be a couple hundred kids more. It will feel overwhelming the first week because so many kids. Tell your kids to find an adult; teachers try to make sure the kids have lunch buddies, etc. Will know numbers more concretely in April/May.
- Kids' biggest concern is often how to open a locker. If you can practice opening a lock at home, it reduces stress a lot.
- Electives: 5<sup>th</sup> graders will forecast for their elective choices in next couple weeks. Visitors will come to classes to talk about electives this Thursday.
- Q: Will kids still be assigned to one hallway for core classes? A: That's the ideal.
- Q: Will the common middle school experience rules end up shortening humanities classes? A: Yes, at Stoller humanities was a combination that was 2 hrs long. Now the classes are separated and will be shorter.
- Q: What have been the difficulties being Stoller principal, and how do you see things evolving in the next few years? A: The most difficult was overcrowding; will see if this is better next year. One of the amazing things about Stoller is the diversity. We need to celebrate this more.
- Q: Are there school sports teams or clubs kids can join? A: Unfortunately most school-based sports are at high school level. Sometimes teachers volunteer to run soccer, chess, etc clubs but

it depends on teacher. We have a lot of academic teams but we're hoping PTO parents will help promote sports clubs.

- Summa testing: 5<sup>th</sup> graders who are TAG but not SUMMA eligible will take CogAT and ITBS in late spring/summer. 5<sup>th</sup> graders who aren't TAG identified can also take these tests in late spring/summer. So testing opportunities are coming.
- Q: How are kids from different elementary schools distributed into middle school groups? A: We partner with counselors, elementary schools etc. and try to balance all demographics. Parent suggestions: keep JW-Sunset bound kids together; try to invite clubs, etc from other middle schools so that sunset-bound kids will meet
- Q: Are kids allowed to bring phone or other devices to school? A: Yes and no. They can bring a phone, but it has to be off and away the whole time during school.
- Please email any questions!

--Joan McFadden: Please everyone, read the latest JW journal about the hybrid model change. It's pretty significant change, but kids will stay with their teachers. There are limited spaces available if any more kids want to switch from CDL to hybrid. Deadline to request is March 9<sup>th</sup>. There will be a lottery for available spaces. If questions then please email me or Wendy Bernard.

--Lori Near (Eagle Run):

- Thank you to Joan, Wendy, PE teachers especially for helping sort plans out
- Eagle Run date is changed to make hybrid transition less stressful for everyone. New date is May 17<sup>th</sup>. Actual event is during PE time that week.
- Working to make a calendar of events: assembly, spirit days, etc.
- Working on getting prizes, etc. Currently have received \$11,000 in donations. Parents, please pay attention to corporate matching—it's really important and a lot of our PTO funding comes from matching funds. Sponsorship has also been really good this year.

--Cara Coates (acting Treasurer for Shalini):

- Teacher reimbursements due by March 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Running low on checks; may need to order more if Shalini doesn't have more.
- April PTO meeting, we'll discuss the budget. Vote on any changes in May PTO meeting.