

Wednesday, September 16th, 2015

Allen Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Caitlin Rowe, Victoria Madura, Ben Dantzer, Adrian Dantzer, Fijun Chen, Mike Solomon, Heidi Harris, Leticia Faber, Cabria Culp, Amy Rodriguez, Michele Barkoot, Lisa Querijero, Andy Baker-White, Ru Guo, Sonia Abbas, Camille Allen, Noureen Vaid, Natalie Norman, Luai Al-Zoubi, John Turner, Laura Turner, Rebecca Ellis, Scott Ellis, Kelly Faunce, April Mulkey, Vidya Guruprasad, Emily Lipp, Kerry Beal, Laura Wolf, Marie Lemmer

5:30: New Parent Orientation

6:00: Call to Order

Introduction of Attendees – Share a favorite memory from Elementary School: Many included recess fun, field trips, and some consequences of poor-decision-making.

- Heidi Harris is one of the PTO Council representatives from Allen Elementary. Heidi shared information on “What we do” as the Parent Council.
 - We fund field trips, extracurricular activities, minor grounds maintenance (pulling weeds), after-school activities, Think-Stretch books.
 - We are advocates for things such as getting playground time extended, more exercise for the kids, celebrating teachers, finding ways to help the teachers, provide luncheons. We are advocates for ourselves and our students. We are present at school when time allows. We are advocates at a state level for more funding for our schools.
- Beth Chapman is in a new role at Allen this year, which is the liaison and representative from Allen to the Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education (AAPAC), which is a group of parents whose focus is on supporting children in Ann Arbor Public Schools who have IEP's or 504 Plans. It is sponsored by the district, but run by parents. Meetings will be held at Tappan Middle School, 2251 E. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103 in the Media Center (2nd Floor) on the first Monday of the month. From 6:15 - 6:50 p.m. the Student Intervention Support Services Team meets with individual parents. From 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. is the General Meeting.
 - Beth can be reached at chapman.elizabeth@gmail.com by any parent whose child has an IEP or 504 plan for help or assistance.

Introduction of Officers –

- Elections will be held during the next PC meeting. Feel free to put your hat in the ring if you are interested!
- Heidi Harris and John Turner are the PTO Council reps to the district. This is not an official PC officer position, but they are liaisons between Allen and the district.
- Caitlin Rowe is the current President
 - Grade level fun nights. If interested in volunteering, coordinate with Caitlin and Mrs. Meade.
 - Backpack mail sent home with information on committees and Parent Council.

- Anathea Collar is the current Vice-President
 - Assists the President
 - Talked about the Country Fair which is the last Friday before school lets out
 - Movie Nights (usually have free popcorn with the donation of books)
 - Book Fairs – we have two. First is at Barnes & Noble December 5th, 2015, second will be at school March 22-24, 2016
 - Spirit Wear, which will include the 2015-2016 Superpower tee
 - Classroom parents
- Mike Solomon is the Treasurer
 - Communicates budget
 - Also runs Science Olympiad, which will be held at Pioneer High School, May 14th, 2016. There is a need for parent coaches and volunteers for those interested.
- Michele Barkoot acted as Secretary for September's meeting.
 - Michele and Lisa Querijero are coordinating the 2015-2016 Allen Fun Run partnering with the Get Movin' Crew. We do not ask parents to raise funds by selling items such as candy or wrapping paper, so the Fun Run is our main fundraiser for the year. The kick-off is 9/23 from 3:15-3:45 PM. Flyers will go home that day with the kids. Parents/kids will register and fundraise mainly online, and there will be different prize levels and incentives for the kids. The Fun Run will be held on 10/21 from 1:00-3:00 PM. Note: sponsors donate a flat fee, it is not based on laps or distance run.
 - Parents are welcome to the Kick-off and the Run. Please park in a designated parking spot or on a street where allowed. Do not park in the loop and leave your car.
 - Volunteers welcome, please sign up using the online form at <http://www.allenpc.org/>.

Introductions of Staff/Faculty Present

- Kerry Beal – Principal
 - 2nd year at Allen, 24th year in teaching and administration
 - PC does great things for the school, multi-cultural night, Country Fair, pulling weeds, refreshments on first day of school. Thank you for all you do!
 - Dismissal process had some hiccups, but is running more smoothly now, and will continue to do so.
 - Feel free to contact Kerry – can be found in her office, by phone, email or throughout the school.
- Marie Lemmer - Kindergarten
- Laura Wolf – 4th Grade

- Amy Rodriguez - Media Specialist

6:20: What is Parent Council? Why not call it PTO?

- We are not a PTA, which pays into a national group.
- We are a PTO, but didn't want teachers to feel obligated beyond all the other duties they perform (although they are always welcome!)
- We are a parent-driven group with a common goal to enrich the lives of teachers, students and community.

6:25: Parent Council Goals for 2015-2016

What do you want to see happen this year? Next year? In 5 years? 10 years?

- Spruce up the outdoor classroom area. Caitlin is putting together a grant proposal to Lowe's.
- Caitlin gathered ideas from each table. The suggestions follow. Information in *italics* highlights follow-up conversations with Mrs. Beal regarding implementation of the recommendations:
 - Service-based sponsorships: if your class meets goal gets to sponsor a family at Thanksgiving
 - *This type of sponsorship would be difficult for teachers to track and follow through. Parent Council WILL support Pride Teams in their citizenship efforts and endeavor to engage the Allen community in service-based activities.*
 - *Other organizations do come into the school for Thanksgiving Food Drives, etc. Parent Council will ask to be included in such activities.*
 - Coat Drive
 - *Parent Council is welcome to sponsor a coat drive for in-school use and/or community donation. Contact [Caitlin](#) if interested in coordinating.*
 - Anonymous Wish List for book fair: Buy a specific book for a family in need.
 - *Since tracking such a wish list and maintaining confidentiality can be difficult, we will encourage interested families to purchase a new book at the Barnes & Noble book fair to donate to the "Free Book" cart at our March book fair.*
 - Geography Club: State of the week. US map for each classroom. World map for the building. Engage children with the world around them.
 - *Adding maps and curricula to our teachers' already-busy schedules is not feasible. Mrs. Beal is looking for a location for a world map to showcase our diversity. Researching a possible "Globe Trotting" activity at Multicultural Night*
 - Sandbox in 1st-5th playground.

- *Per the district, we are not allowed to install a permanent sandbox. Mrs. Beal has purchased a portable sand tub. PC can purchase additional tubs so they can be brought out during classroom recess and lunch recess. We can also include a raised sand table as part of the outdoor classroom design.*
 - Become better parent advocates. What can we do on the state level? How do we find out what the teachers need?
 - *Our building teacher representative will get back to Caitlin with some “talking points” for letters directed to our state Representatives. Many people are willing to write letters, but often don’t know what to write about. Hopefully the information provided by our teacher rep will help.*
 - Helping Hand Household: Information about this program, in which responsible adults are identified throughout the school neighborhood as a safe place for children to seek assistance. More information about this program at work can be found here [Helping Hand Households](#)
 - *Vetting safe houses becomes challenging for the school and Parent Council with significant liability concerns. The program in Illinois is run through the local Police Department. Parent Council can contact AAPD and City Council members for assistance getting a similar program started locally.*
 - *In the meantime, we can encourage neighbors to be vigilant - looking out their windows at dismissal time and being aware of goings-on in the neighborhood.*
 - *Contact [Caitlin](#) if you are interested in further pursuing this project with the AAPD and Council Reps.*

6:45: New Business

7:00: Adjourn

Reminders until our next meeting:

- Parent Council sponsored assembly for the kids, Magic of Math, is on 9/21 from 2:45-3:45 PM.
- Curriculum Night is 9/21/2015 from 6:00-7:30 PM (No child care provided, please make other arrangements)
- Think Stretch Assembly is on 10/2 – medals awarded
- Count Day is 10/7
- Join the PC Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AllenPC/> Spread the word to other families that haven’t joined yet.
- Check out the website – <http://www.allenpc.org/>

The next meeting is Wednesday, October 14th, from 5:30-6:30 PM in the Allen Media Center. All are welcome!

Free childcare for school-aged children provided.