

May 21, 2019 Meeting Minutes of the JDMS Parent Teacher Group

Location of Meeting: JDMS Cafeteria at 7:00pm

Present at Meeting: All Board officers, Mr. Andy Eldridge, Principal, Assistant Principal Kerri McKee, attendance sheet signed by attendees. The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Jean Leiker.

I. Special Presentation

Girl Scout troop 10061 - "Think Like a Programmer Journey" - action project. Kaitlin Hougland, Abby, and two more scouts discussed their proposals to the PTG. They are planning to make stress balls for students at JDMS. They need permission to do this, and need the school # of students to know how many stress balls to make. They will provide their own materials for the stress balls. They would like suggestions on how to distribute the balls equally among the students. A parent asked how are they made? YouTube videos taught them how to do this: balloons, cornstarch, rice. We have 933 students this year but this would be distributed in the fall – projecting between 900-915. Think like a programmer is the "Journey" they are on, and they need to complete their "Take Action" to complete their "Journey." The second thing: want to build a lotion library, like a little free library where if you take an item you leave an item – toiletries like shampoo, conditioner, etc. Looking for suggestions if possible and where to put it. Looking for a promotion about it in morning announcements and with flyers. How come up with the idea? One girl came up with it, plan to get donations, or pay for it with troop funds for the initial fill. Andy commented on distributing the stress balls – maybe at school store. Toiletries, don't put it out in public eye, maybe keep it more private. Maybe the counselor's office or the nurse's office. Both very viable and doable. More communication between them and school to follow.

II. Review of Previous Minutes

Angie Rigdon announced the minutes of the March meeting were posted to the PTG website for review and a few copies are present today. Jean Leiker and Jennifer Revercomb approved the minutes. Nothing went out for correspondence.

III. Review of 2019-19 Budget: Income and Expenses (Report attached)

Karen Baris reviewed expenses and income. Money came in for the 8th grade Dairen Lake trip from students, ticket sale deposit from 7/8 Musical, Book Fair \$ was deposited, NYSSMA \$ deposited, yearbook sales \$ in, Spring ASP funds were deposited. Paid for staff grants: capital contribution of library furniture, orchestra teacher supplement to their Musical Festival at Darien lake, paid for police security at Kaleidoscope. Spring ASP will have checks going out soon and still a Book Fair invoice to be paid in the next few weeks. Budget was approved by Jennifer Revercomb and Kelly Wichmann.

IV. PTG Activity updates

Book Fair: Micki Cooper and Lisa Patchen. Micki reported we improved on the past couple of years, worked on a less is more format, less money spent on it. Coordinated with Kaleidoscope, worried about State Testing one of the days affecting business but it didn't impact it. Thanked Melissa for all her help with volunteers and had a lot of volunteers. Lisa is wondering if there is anything that happens in the fall in order to run at least a one night Fair in the evening so we can have 2 fairs next year and benefit from better Scholastic Dollars back to the librarian. Have to have 2 fairs to do this. This will be discussed over the summer with calendar. Thank you to Micki for doing this so many years!

Teacher Appreciation Week: Karen Trivelpiece and Raphael Vaverchak. Kerri and Andy both thanked them to pieces. Raphael reviewed A World of Thanks, international feel. Front entry had a lot of thank yous. Food and décor brought multiple cultures: Asian, Italian, Mexican and French (LOTE). Thank yous every day to the staff –

got donations from all the restaurants noted in last months minutes and also from a LOT of families. Tuesday was a breakfast, Friday was the luncheon, Mon/Wed/Thurs got treats in their mailboxes. It was just a phenomenal event that will be hard to live up to next year. 😊

Final 5/6 Activity Afternoon: Gretchen Bliss. Kelly Wichmann reported for Gretchen as she stood in for Gretchen that Friday. Well attended. Explosions of energy from the kids. Additional parental support could be beneficial to help support the teachers. Table top games went to a classroom this time instead of the hallway. Used the gym this time also b/c the cafeteria was set up for other events.

V. Upcoming PTG Events

Awards Ceremony Refreshments 5/28/19 following 7p ceremony. Will be here at JDMS this year. Letters went out to families if their child is getting an award to alert them to come. We provide refreshments after it.

Transportation Breakfast 6/17/19. We collaborate with all schools in the District. Very well received, set up for them when they return from their routes that Monday morning. Committee in planning mode.

8th Grade Dance 6/21/19 7-10pm. Alison Kessler met with Student Council who chooses the theme. Alison has rentals all set, biggest piece still doing is getting her committee together. Has Sign-Up Genius for items needed and volunteer times. Reach out to Alison or Melissa if interested in planning or to volunteer the night of. No 8th grader really wants their parent there – 8th grade parents stay in the kitchen!

Volunteer Appreciation Event June 5 6:30pm-8:30pm at Pascale’s at Drumlins. Cash Bar but we will provide appetizers. You’ll get an email invite.

VI. BLT Meetings Summary

Rachel Wagner-Gilcrest, have one more meeting in June left. Schools to Watch is continuing. Teachers are in the middle of their dry run of filling out these rubrics. Lots of questions. Group is “practice” answering this first, then we will do official submissions once we really figure out how much time it takes to complete these questions. This is a really good self-evaluation process, we get tough on ourselves. Lisa Patchen asked how we came to the “Schools to Watch”. Rachel explained how it was chosen beginning of the year. We chose to do this, we weren’t chosen. Noone in CNY has received the Schools to Watch award. Its intense, and this is a continuous process, not one and done. Encompasses the 7 principles of Middle School, helps us to continually be evaluating ourselves and improving our practice.

VII. Grant Updates

Budget = \$15,000

| Grant | Grade Level | Cost | Theme/Notes |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------|--|
| Classroom Wall Mount Fans | All | \$2,171.70 | Infrastructure; 90 fans |
| Veteran's Day Ceremony | 5th | \$86.22 | Recognition ceremony with flowers and refreshments |
| Red Ram Café | Special Education | \$80.71 | Funds for start up costs for the school year |
| Student-led Conferences | 7th | \$145.58 | Funds for refreshments to be served during the conferences |
| JD T-shirts for Students in Need | All | \$523.77 | Funds partially replenished by teacher fund-raiser |
| Potsdam Performance | All | \$600.00 | Holiday Music Performance |
| Library Furniture | All | \$5,938.10 | Library reading chairs - revised 2/6/19 |
| Vanessa Johnson | All | \$600.00 | African Story Telling Sessions |
| Marion Blumenthal | 8th | \$0.00 | Holocaust Survivor - Messages of Hope |
| Positivity Project Breakfast | 6th | \$308.98 | Breakfast for award ceremony |

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| Salat Ali - Lost Boy | 7th | \$300.00 | "Water is Life" themed speaker |
| Headphones & CD | Spanish | \$584.50 | Headphones for Spanish listening & practice CDs |
| T-shirt for 4 Fullbright scholars | Special Area | \$0.00 | T-shirts for visiting international teachers; donated by Booster club |
| Crank stand system for lighting | Musicals | \$678.46 | New light stand system for the lighting trees |
| Student Council Store | 7th | \$219.33 | Start up funds for a school store |
| Flexible Seating | 5th | \$464.82 | Flexible seating for 5th grade classroom |
| Orchestra Trip | Orchestra | \$2,310.60 | Transportation, 1/2 t-shirts, 1/2 admission |
| Spring Reading Challenge | 6th | \$200.00 | Funds for book giveaways to promote reading |
| Poem Frames | 8th | \$80.00 | Frames for 8th grade before/after poems |

TOTAL = \$15,292.77

2018-19 BALANCE = (\$292.77)

Bottom four items are approved to occur but funds haven't come out yet. Marion Blumenthal was cancelled last minute due to her husband being ill. Question regarding 5th grade picnic for next year – do we have the date set yet? We are drafting a letter personally inviting 5th grade families to the picnic. Andy is brainstorming possibly a new idea for this so he will be in touch with Raphael.

VIII. School Business

Andy purchased a Gaga Ball pit. He has never seen kids so happy with this thing. Its huge, 27 feet in diameter and its out on the tennis court right now. Student government came up with the idea. Must weigh about 2000 lbs but it is portable supposedly. Want to bring in the large conference room in the winter. Concert season is coming up, so stay tuned. Teacher Appreciation Week was just amazing, it was above and beyond. Paul Fisci went to Geography National competition. Sehej Bawja goes to the National Spelling Bee in Washington, DC next week – good luck! Security update: meeting with Chief Anton and Dewitt police this afternoon. We saw the threat on a ceramic tile in 8th grade bathroom discovered during 8th period about 2pm. Immediately called police. Saturday spoke with parents on the phones and with Sargeant Kurgan. Sunday Andy sent an email blast before kids returned to school Monday to alert families of what has transpired. Monday started with a faculty meeting reviewing what the plan was: short-term plans and long-term plans. Short-term – procedures changed: backpack policy in lockers, pass use signing in and out of classrooms. Those things had gotten lax because we have great kids, but we need to stick to our policies on this now. Andy and Kerri meeting with Crisis team daily. Talking through how do we make sure kids feel comfortable to come talk to a counselor about this stuff. 2 police officers have been attending and helped with some discussions with students. A lot of plain clothes people on patrol as well as officers. Today met with more students, met with police again, lot of discussions. Non-credible threat was determined by Officer Anton - non-specific term threat. Even though the writer wrote "Friday", they think it could've been there longer than we know, it was in pencil. There was no further follow-up in social media from students that they saw. All tips have been followed up and nothing else seems to be present. They don't see any other chatter in their evaluations so they feel this isn't a credible threat. The pattern in how things were written and the lack of talking, they feel this isn't in the pattern in things that have happened in media/public. Andy discussed on announcements the idea of citizenship with students and that this wouldn't be tattling if they had information that they should report it, and today also announced a Tip Line. A couple of kids reached out to the tip line and they followed up on a few things that were not related. Andy is trying to be transparent with email communications to parents so everyone knows where we are at, and so they aren't left in the dark. They will get emails as long as they are signed up for the

Blasts. Our investigation is not over, we really want to know who wrote that so we can help that student. Kerri wanted to add one thing. Every kid that they spoke to identified at least one adult they felt they could come to talk with – Mrs. Placito for 8th grade. Kids are sharing rumors they've heard, things keep coming back to square one. Lisa asked what she should relay to parents who are saying they aren't sending their children to school. Andy isn't telling students anything about coming or not coming on Friday. He says it is a parent's choice. Teachers are having to discuss this openly in the classroom because students ask questions and chatter. Andy feels safe for Friday. If the situation changes before Friday he will communicate immediately to the students. 5th grade parent expressed concern: discuss how parents are having conversations with their kids. Because we are being extra vigilant. We have an extra counselor too. We have people out in the hallways being visible. Micki voiced can we have officers or someone help fuel parents with how to talk with their children about this. Rachel voiced need for Crisis Team to respond to the next needs of talking to our kids about how to react to this and then also fuel kids with language around how to speak about the child that wrote this – sitting in lunchroom hearing people talk about them. That kid needs support the most. Armor One training? West Genesee did it, we do not have plans to do this at this time. No handwriting analysis done. Andy and Kerri offered to this very concerned parent to meet with her daughter. Serena asked if anything like this has happened at our school before – no, but had one incident at the High School in the district. Cameras – can we get them? Why not yet, Andy is and has advocated for cameras and will continue to but this is a district issue. What would trigger us to get Armor One training. Andy explained he is leary to do a training like that because they are so specific to a scenario but people that do these things learn the tactics that get learned and then accommodate. Navigate Prepared is an app we have used for safety in order to account for all 933 kids. Take thru scenarios a lot. We did a lockdown drill last Thursday on the spot and kids did everything they were suppose to, even without teachers telling them what to do. Andy has arranged that buses must get walkie-told when stragglers are delayed getting their backpacks from long haul from PE or opposite building before leaving school since no backpacks between 8th and 9th periods. Multiple parents thanked Andy and Kerri for the transparency they've had through this whole process. Parent asked if we will have police presence beyond this coming Friday – Andy believes they will have a presence here after Friday, not the same exactly, and may look different.

IX. Open Forum – Questions/Comments?

All of the above stemming from Principal report.