

Pines Lake Elementary School PTO Meeting
March 7, 2022 7:30 PM via Zoom

1. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by President Katie McEwan at 7:30 PM.

2. Reading of the Prior Meeting Minutes or Motion to Waive Reading

- Motion to waive by Katie and Laura Winters.

3. Motion to Accept Prior Minutes

- Motion to accept by Laura Winters and Allison Tyler.

4. Officer Reports

- President
 - Katie led the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - Katie asked everyone to take a moment of silence for peace.
 - Julia Hillje Dardia reported that she and Katie met with Mr. Celis to set the calendar for the rest of this school year. Katie and Julia are working hard to make this spring exciting for the children of Pines Lake School as COVID restrictions are loosening. Kids' Night Out is going to happen. This event is meaningful because it was the first PTO activity that got canceled 2 years ago due to COVID. More information will be given during Committee Reports.
 - Julia thanked the Pines Lake PTO board members for all of their help.
 - Katie said that we need PTO parent volunteers for the musical and the talent show.
 - Katie reported that we need a search committee to find board members for next year. To be on the search committee, you cannot be a board member or have interest in joining the board.
 - Katie asked members at the meeting to please invite friends to the next few PTO meetings. We would love to see some new faces and increased parent involvement. There are many opportunities to get involved that allow for flexibility with busy schedules.
 - Katie said that we are not trying to do too much fundraising at this point in the school year. The reason is that we don't want a lot of excess funds and we want to now spend what we have raised throughout the year.
- Vice President
 - Maria Vlahos/Allison Tyler- Allison said that they are working hard on getting everything in place for all of the upcoming events. (Julia explained that Vice Presidents fill out paperwork required for us to hold events such as insurance and permits).
- Treasurer
 - Laura/Teresa Ziegler- Laura reported that we had the following deposits: Talent Show, Musical, Opt-Out, 5th grade Bowling, and Valentine-Grams. We had the

following expenses: 5th Grade Bowling, In School Snow Day supplies, School Store supplies, and Kids' Night Out (we put down money for a DJ). Laura asked everyone to please make sure you get any check requests in as soon as possible. She explained that June is "crunch time" and the treasurers need to close out the books early in June. Julia added that you can scan check requests with your phone and send a PDF to pinelakepto@gmail.com. She and Katie will accept digital check requests.

- Secretary
 - Joanne Bakas/Meredith Snider- No report

5. Principal's Report

- Mr. Celis said hello and it is nice to be here.
- He said that it is going to be a very busy last 3rd of the school year. He is excited about the rest of year and he's making sure we are investing in academic and extracurricular programs.
- He said that today was a successful day with students no longer being required to wear masks. The children who still wore masks were supported, and it was nice to see the smiles on the faces of those students who did not wear masks.
- He is looking forward to the talent show and musical.
- He said thank you all for your support.
- Mr. Celis said that the March Madness Reading Challenge is happening now and that everyone is excited about it. Jill Carbone thanked Mr. Celis for March Madness and for going above and beyond for the children. They love all of the fun things that he does at the school. Mr. Celis was appreciative of the support and noted that he has an amazing staff.

6. Teacher Report

- Mrs. Olaya said hello to everyone.
- She wants everyone to know about the extra counseling support in the school building. In the elementary schools, the district has contracted with an outside agency and has also hired 3 temporary part-time counselors. These individuals are being divided between the 9 elementary schools. Some of your children may have met them already. One person named Jake Ryan will be doing specific service reports (with family consent). Another person will be supporting Karen and two other schools with lessons, groups, and being visible at recess and lunch for conflict and relational support. Karen said that this is good news because we all need a little extra help right now. She said that it's nice to have more hands at the elementary school.

7. Committee Reports

- Cultural Enrichment- Committee members were not present. Katie reported for them. We will have a program with The Essex County Parks System called "The Four R's and You: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink" on 3/16 and 3/17. The program will be about nature and the relationship between you and the environment. Presenters will go from

classroom to classroom. There will be five sessions a day over the two days. LLD classes will be mixed in with the general education population to view the assembly. Two educators will be on staff presenting to groups of 25 children at one time. Pines Lake PTO is contributing \$1,850 for this program. This will be our second assembly of this school year.

- Kids' Night Out- Committee members were not present. Julia reported that this event is scheduled for Friday, 4/1. Julia helped them create a sign-up form today. Julia and the committee members are currently in talks with the treasurers to try to see if this event can be provided to all the children at no cost. In 2020, Kids' Night Out was the first event canceled due to COVID and Julia said it would be very special to be able to give our kids a really fun night out at no cost. This event is only for students currently enrolled in Pines Lake School. There will be two 90-minute sessions. The first session is for Kindergarten - 2nd grade and one parent is required to chaperone a child or group of children. The second session is for grades 3-5 and is a drop-off event. Pick up for these students is promptly at 9:15. There will be a DJ, a photo booth and face painting. It will be a Square-Dance theme. Please have your child come in Western-themed age-appropriate clothing.
- Spring Plant Sale- Allison reported that they will do a preorder sale. Van Wingerden will be used as the vendor again. Plant pick-up will be 5/5.
- Staff Appreciation- Committee members were not present but Julia reported that this event is scheduled for the first week in May. They usually have special treats for the staff each day. There will be a catered luncheon on the last day of the week.
- Book Fair-Isana Shpungin was not present but Julia reported that we will have a book fair April 26-28. It will be held indoors in the gym. The Pines Lake PTO will be giving every child \$5 towards a book.
- PM at Pines- Katie reported that new guidance was recently received. We can now use classrooms for after school clubs. PM at Pines will run from 3:30-4:30 on Monday through Thursday 5/9-6/13. Groups are broken up into K-2 and 3-5 with the exception of photo club which will be only grades 4 and 5. Clubs include: Robotics (run by Mr. Celis and Ms. D'Acunto), P.E. (run by Ms. Bellairs), Creative Kids (run by Ms. McClure), and LEGO (run by Ms. Foord). Cooking will not be allowed at this time. There will be one 6-week session (which is an abbreviated session). The schedule will be out as soon as possible. You will be able to sign up via online registration; there will be no paper registration. Julia added that these clubs used to be our largest fundraiser prior to COVID. It has always been our biggest and best program. Katie currently runs this committee, but we are in desperate need of someone take it over for her.
- Field Day- Committee members were not present. Julia reported that Field Day will be held on Thursday, May 26 with a rain date Wednesday, June 1. Field day traditionally includes a barbeque and ice cream catered by Sodexo. All students and teachers will be provided with a Field Day T-shirt. Alexis Kamphausen asked what goes into Field Day at Pines Lake School. Julia and Katie explained that Ms. Bellairs, the P.E. teacher is in charge of the event. There are stations set up all around the field. The students rotate

from station to station playing a fun game or activity at each one. We do solicit parent volunteers and usually have a parent at each station helping out.

- Fifth Grade- Lisa Sullivan was present and reported for this committee. She said that 5th grade had a holiday party that was rescheduled due to rain. It was called “Winter Wonderland” and all of the children seemed to have a fantastic time. There was a big inflatable decoration, crafts, a snow machine, and a DJ. The committee is now working on putting together bowling night at T-Bowl this Friday. So far, 46 out of 55 kids are coming, which is looking like it will be a great turnout. A mixer is coming up with Albert Payson Terhune Elementary School and Theunis Dey Elementary School (the two other schools that feed to Schuyler Colfax Middle School). There will be a Pool Day in June. Per Katie, Fifth Grade Graduation is Monday 6/20 with Tuesday 6/21 as the rain date. This event is for fifth grade parents only. The Clap Out is the last day of school (6/22). Julia informed the group that a traditional 5th grade year includes the following events: Halloween party, Spa 23 Night, Bowling Night, and Pool Day. Regarding Pool Day, every fifth grade class gets to go to the town pool or town lake for a day. Dates are pulled out of a hat at a meeting with all of the PTO presidents. Our date is Friday, June 10th. “Swag” (i.e., sweatshirts or T-shirts that say the name of the middle school the student will be attending) is provided.
- 5th Grade Yearbook- Committee members were not present but Julia reported that the yearbook is underway. Parents have been submitting baby pictures.
- Restaurant-Diana Fornino reported that on Wednesday, April 20th Jersey Mike’s is offering 50 percent of sales in store or online to the Pines Lake PTO. You must enter the code “Pines Lake” if ordering online and you must mention “Pines Lake” if ordering in person. We will hold a night at Hometown Creamery when the weather warms up (probably late April or early May). We are hoping to do another Parents’ Night out at Novelli. Diana said that it was a fun night out last year. A date has not been secured yet but it will be a weekday in May. Novelli will donate 10% of dinner sales to the Pines Lake PTO for anyone who mentions “Pines Lake.”
- School Store- Karen Pollak reported the store is doing well. We have been placing a lot of orders. The children seem to be enjoying it. Selling school store gift cards in addition to the boo grams and valentine grams has helped with fundraising.
- Spirit Wear- Meredith reported that we received a total of 49 orders. All minimums were met so we did not cut into our profits. The store closed on 2/20 and the vendor ordered the apparel on 2/22. The job is currently in the printing process. As soon as items are in, she and Vivian Mike-Mayer will pick them up from Game Day. They will sort, label, and distribute the items. Our total profit was \$654.00. Thank you to everyone who purchased items, posted links to shop, and helped spread the word about the spirit wear sale. Thank you to Julia who helped make copies of flyers and for helping to distribute them to the school.
- Talent Show- Per Julia, we desperately need a chair person for this event. Julia is looking to use a digital service called Ticket Leap for ticket sales. We will be seeking parent volunteers to help out with the talent show. The performance is March 30th in the Wayne Hills High School Auditorium. Dress rehearsal is the night before. We will

soon be paying the teachers who are running the show (Ms. Christein, Ms. Sosnov, and Ms. Bellairs).

- Musical- We need a chair person for this event.
- Wayne Alliance-
 - Katie reported that we got complimented by Jen Carr, who runs the BABES program for the 2nd graders (Beginning Awareness Basic Education Studies). She noted that our school is very enlightened, mindful, and caring about our students' mental health. Katie added that this is in large part a reflection of all of the work that Mr. Celis and Mrs. Olaya put in.
 - There was a "Black Balloon Substance Awareness Day," which was a day of remembrance for those who have lost someone due to substance abuse.
 - Katie wanted everyone to know that Wayne Alliance offers several resources that can help with mental health.
- SPA (Special Parents Association)/SEPAG (Special Education Parent Advisory Group)- Alexis K. attended the most recent meeting and reported that it was informative. They broke down an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) which was very helpful. They encouraged parents to bring advocates and therapists to the meeting if desired. They reviewed the difference between accommodations and modifications in the classroom. Some upcoming events include: "March Madness" on 3/26 (DJ, Face painting, crafts, and a quiet room for parents). The group is looking to spotlight any helpful resources such as websites or pages that may be beneficial to parents of children with special needs. Also, Alexis announced that Jersey Mike's will be donating 100% of their profits to Special Olympics of New Jersey on 3/30.
- Simply Scotti Candle Sale- Julia announced that we will be holding a candle fundraiser at the end of April in time for Mother's Day and Staff Appreciation Week. This company is a small business in Wayne and we are happy to support them.
- Monello Landscaping- Julia reported that this company will help with our outdoor classroom. We are also consulting with the Pines Lake Garden Club.
- Beautification- Katie and Julia suggested that we consider asking for donations at the Spring Plant Sale to help with the appearance of the front of the school.

8. Old Business-none

9. New Business

- Meredith thanked the staff for the creative way they celebrated the 100th day of school. Having the younger students dress up like scientists for being "100 days smarter" was a new, fresh, and fun way to celebrate this day.
- Alexis asked if there is anything we can do to help show support for Ukraine. Mr. Celis said they are considering appropriate ways to recognize this issue.
- Julia reviewed upcoming dates:
 - 3/11 5th Grade Bowling Night at T Bowl
 - 3/17-18 In School Nature Assembly
 - 4/1 Kids' Night Out
 - 4/26-4/28 In School Book Fair
 - 5/2-5/6 Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week

- 5/5 Spring Plant Sale pick up
- 5/6 Teacher and Staff Appreciation Luncheon
- 5/9- 6/13 PM at Pines Late Spring Abbreviated 6-week Session
- 5/26 Field Day (6/1 Rain Date)
- 6/20 5th Grade Graduation (Rain Date 6/21)
- 6/22 Clap Out (as the 5th graders leave the school on the last day all of the grades come out and cheer for them)
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10. Adjournment 8:38 by Julia.

Minutes recorded by Meredith Snider