

Van Hise Elementary PTO Meeting 10/1/13

PTO GENERAL MEETING

In Attendance: 8 parents, 4 school staff, Board members: Shelby Connell, Carousel Bayrd, Dana McCloskey, Jen Roth, Sarah Van Riet

Principal's Report

6:30pm, Principal Keeler

Follow-up from last month's talk, principal Keeler has scheduled three coffee talks on October 2, October 10, and October 17. Shelby suggests adding an evening time as multiple families have requested this. Principal Keeler agrees.

Note to families: if ever feeling "stuck" with regard to academic or social concerns with your child, first work with teacher, but also always ok to request Student Support Team meeting where principal, teacher, family, social worker, psychologist, etc. all help problem solve.

Bullying Presentation

6:40pm, Beth Cantwell & Caroline Osgood (see supporting handouts)

Beth Cantwell: All school assembly today, kids were introduced again to anti-bullying message. It's ok to report to an adult. Kids were taught difference between tattling and reporting. Focus on feelings. Kid President video with Obama focus on respect, stand up for others, etc. Kids were taught an anti-bullying pledge- don't be a bystander. Song "Brave" by Sarah Barielles is being played/taught to reinforce the message. Mrs. Koval taught at least one class some dance moves for the song. Kids are invited to sing a large orange banner pledging to "be a buddy, not a bully" and will get orange bracelets as well. Other activities this month will continue to support this message.

Caroline Osgood: anti-bullying message focus October but will keep going on all year.

Other programs in school to be aware of:

--> Second Step is nearly school wide now. Foundation for managing friendships, feelings, etc. Language used is "3 Rs" Recognize, Refuse, Report. In middle school this program also includes cyber-bullying curriculum.

--> S.A.V.E. (Student Anti Victimization Education) 2nd/3rd grade. Wisconsin state requires that all students get this program. Covers all areas of abuse, violence, personal safety.

District policy on bullying: Full policy available to all in handbook and on website. Defines bullying as intentional action to inflict harm (physical, mental, emotional) to another person and includes a perceived or real imbalance of power.

A bullying incident reporting form is available in office or on website (can submit anonymous but it is difficult for staff to follow-up on incidents without details/names). Parent asks what happens to these forms after processed (concern about privacy)? Principal Keeler says unsure but can find out if needed.

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(Anti-bullying continued)

The two children in an incident would never be brought together to process it; first the victim is helped and supported to feel safe. Then, also, the child who did the bullying will get help working on social skills.

Ques: "How do you determine a friend problem vs. bullying?"

Caroline's Answer: If it's going back and forth, unlikely true bullying. If power balance is an issue then more likely bullying.

Ques: Is there research to back up anti-bullying education actually reducing bullying in schools?

Caroline's Answer: Second Step program has much research behind it. Difficult to reduce incidence of bullying, but education reduces bystanders and improves how students react to bullying situations.

Ques: Are there any set protocols or processes that staff could get locked in to and take things too far (not look at case by case?)

Peg's Answer: No. Staff always listens, supports each child. Use structure of policy which specifies that incident is investigated, find out what child needs. Flexibility is in staff judgement. MMSD especially good about letting each school make decisions based on what they know of the students/situations involved.

5 MINUTE BREAK

7:30

PTO BUSINESS MEETING

In Attendance: 10 parents, 2 school staff, Board members: Shelby Connell, Carousel Bayrd, Dana McCloskey, Jen Roth, Sarah Van Riet

September Meeting minutes, review 7:35pm, Shelby Connell & Sarah Van Riet

Shelby motions to approve minutes with any edits made by those in attendance tonight. Candy seconds and vote 13 in favor, none opposed.

Financial Update

7:40pm, Shelby Connell, Dana McCloskey

-Direct appeal. Donations of ~\$8200 so far.

-After School Classes: 85 children have signed up so far for classes (Garden, Art, etc)

-Grants: Teachers have been alerted that can submit for PTO funds until 10/23/13. PTO won't know how much can give in grants until fall fund drive complete.

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Walking school bus and WOW Challenge 7:45 pm, Daniela Sponseller

Safe Routes to School in WI contacted Dani to have VHE apply to be a safe routes Model School b/c our WSB program is so successful. Will be in this program 2 years. Encourage all students to walk or bike to school. WOW Challenge 10/7-10/18 encourage everyone to walk/bike to school and will keep track. The top 2 schools with greatest participation will receive \$1000 from this county challenge. Discussion on families who bus- could bike trains be tried? Could students walk after getting off bus at school to count? Many options to consider. Peter Gray, parent, offers to work with families near bus stops to make "bike trains" to ride to school once or twice during the WOW challenge weeks.

FYI from Peg Keeler on bus routes. District rule is to ride bus must live OVER 1.5 miles from school. Some students have been using bus though not technically supposed to. Peg has been working through this to improve communication so families know.

Classroom Parent Rep Update 7:50pm, Carousel Bayrd

Some classrooms have had parents respond but others none. Question if all teachers sent out request? No parent response from any 4/5 classes yet, and also none from Nelson, Zucker, or McGuire. More than one parent states opinion that encouraging room parents to attend meetings and share concerns if they have them will be great help. Carousel will follow up with teachers who don't have room parent yet.

Madison Foundation for Public Schools 7:55pm, Carousel Bayrd

Foundation has \$781 for VHE that we lose if don't use. Peg Keeler states that she already has a committee formed who has decided to put money toward a cultural item in garden. Carousel will assist in paperwork for grant. Foundation also has adopt-a-school program and Demco company may sponsor VHE. This may provide donated supplies and other support from this company for our school!

Other upcoming events 8:00pm, Shelby Connell

- Noodles Night Coming up, 5-9pm 10/14.
- Box Tops good friendly competition among classrooms this fall.
- Stone's Throw Event in the works- Dana and Shelby to follow-up
- Scholastic Book Fair Scheduled Nov 14th evening and Nov 15th all day BUT change in conference plans means school closed Friday the 15th, so may adjust book fair hours.

Jolynne, a parent, is helping update our PTO website and improve newsletter format. She will design a survey to send to families to find preferences.

Meeting Adjourn 8:20pm

Next meeting: Tuesday, Nov 5, 2013 6:30pm