PTO General Membership Meeting

Tuesday April 16, 2019, 6:30 pm, Minutes taken by Secretary, Melissa Chernovsky

Principal's report (Shira Dowling)

- Happiness Advantage Initiative Update
    - Tenets implemented that have a structure incorporated into the school day are working
        - community circles ➔ are building community relationships
        - 15 minutes of fun ➔ non-academic time to de-stress, have received some feedback on differences in implementation where some strategies are more or less effective, those activities encouraging more movement have been embraced by students, RKE administration plans to provide more guidance to teachers on what the time looks like, e.g., life skills, games.
        - Journaling ➔ implementation was not so successful most likely due to lack of daily structure within the school, will not hand out journaling books next year
        - Gratitude's ➔ plan to keep for next year
        - Meditation ➔ TBD in June teacher meeting
    - Plan to have an orange rally early next school year to revive the tenets
    - Plan to develop a student committee – monthly meeting to ask what kids like to do, what makes them excited to come to school
- EEE / Global Studies
    - This has been quite successful and embraced by the students
    - Primary students have developed totem poles / Intermediate students have developed inventions and nature guides
    - Teachers gain an extra hour of planning time
    - Global Studies will start for the 2019-20 school year in October 2019.
        - Instructor will attend a 4 week refresher boot camp at the start of the year
        - Similar but opposite to the library which shuts down ~ a month early every year
    - Broadneck Elementary will be the next school to implement the EEE program next year
    - Then AACPS may consider taking the program to all elementary schools
    - Little chance of RKE losing the EEE staffing position
- Departmentalization
    - Rolling Knolls is considering "Departmentalization" for 3rd, 4th and 5th grades based on feedback from Principal Meetings.
    - Premise is to reduce the amount of curriculum and associated planning load for the teachers as means to increase teacher retention (Mrs. Dowling recollects that teacher demands are increasing from her experience 8 years ago)
    - Each teacher would retain guided reading in homeroom, and have either 3 mathematics, 3 social studies, or 3 science classes
    - The curriculum and rigor would remain the same for the students

    - Teachers had an opportunity to vote and most teachers don't want to shift to the departmental structure. Most teachers upon declaring intentions also wanted to remain teaching the same grade.
    - There will be opportunity for teachers to change their mind if there are adjustments to other grades. Teachers can transfer up until July 15th and there is a holding pattern until final decisions are made by July 31st.
    - There will be a teacher shortage across Maryland within the next 4 years, where Maryland does not graduate enough teachers/educators to fill the Maryland school positions.
- The AACPS Budget Impacts
    - RKE didn't reduce or increase staffing
    - Possibility that RKE could increase ESOL staffing as RKE has +100 English Language Learners
- Outdoor Classroom Update
    - The final contract is heading to Elizabeth (PTO President)
    - The paperwork is with AACPS, and upon approval will be ready to order
    - The area is structured as a classroom so that teachers will be able to prepare for this space similar to how they prepare for indoor class exercises.

VP report (Audrey McGuire)

- Teacher Appreciation Week May 6-10 (national event)
    - Homeroom parents have been charged, where each grade is organizing a day to decorate the teacher's lounge
- Field day discussion
    - The event being planned for the day before the last full day, on Tuesday June 11th
    - Primary ½ day & intermediate ½ day
    - Possibly could organize Kona Ice to attend the event, usually ~$2 per ice, it was discussed to plan for ~550 ices to cover students, teachers and volunteers

Treasurer's Report (Kim Augusterfer unable to attend)

Volunteer Coordinator (discussion on behalf of Lauren Miller)

- Need to fill this position
- Crystal Covington put together a nice breakfast to thank the volunteers and posted pictures from the event on Twitter

Special Events Coordinator (discussion on behalf of Catherine Bishop)

- Mother / Daughter event is on May 5th
- Father / Daughter dance is on May 17th.
    - Unfortunately, this conflicts with the Bowie Baysox night.

- With 100+ English Language Learners thinking about different kinds of events to encourage community
    - Suggestions include hosting Multi-Cultural Nights where a culture would be selected to highlight, starting early in the school year

Race for Education Committee (Lisa Lyman)

- Have raised over $16K to date, with two weeks left until the event
- Amy Smith has been doing a wonderful job with the dance bulletin board to keep everyone updated on the progress of the fundraising drive.
- T-shirt distribution – discussed optimization, need for printed labels, extra volunteer, tentatively planned for Wednesday the 24th
- Race Event on April 26th, with the rain date April 29th.

Secretary (Melissa Chernovsky)

- Box Top Collection winner with the largest tally was the 4th grade. The teachers took a poll and due to the split decision, the grades combined and about half chose extra recess and half chose slime.
    - Box Tops revenue is very useful to RKE administration because it has less restrictive earmarks on utilization, could be used for teacher appreciation
    - Whereas picture revenue must benefit all children so implementation in the form of assemblies, journals.

President's Report (Elizabeth King)

- Discussion on sending a paper flyer out to school children to encourage volunteers
    - Open PTO Board positions for Secretary & Volunteer Coordinator
    - Many events need coordinators, e.g., K & 1st grade meet and greet for next school year
- Discussion on Fundraising
    - Amazon Smiles – RKE used to be listed in the directory for this program, need to figure out how to be added back in.
    - If RKE PTO takes a break from Race for Education, what would we replace it with?
        - Majority of the money from the Race goes to the Outdoor Classroom and the PTO Operating Budget
    - Some type of marathon? Similar idea to jump – rope – a – thon where kids get a sponsor. Could be how many math problems they can solve
    - Could put together a Survey Monkey to ask parents for feedback and open suggestions

RKE Staff Report (Mrs. Dowling)

- Topics to be presented at PTO meetings – open to suggestions
    - Possibly have performances and/or art exhibits by children, and then PTO meeting
    - Wes Adams / Internet Safety

    - Parental workshops / Dr. D / Strong Father's
- Parent Involvement Advisory Council ➔ for those parents interested in a bigger level
- Annapolis Education Commission ➔ RKE hosting the meeting on May 6th at 5:30 pm
    - RKE is part of the district that is in Annapolis proper
    - Meets once a month for education advocacy
    - Covers Hot Topics that vary, for example in the past redistricting was discussed (which is currently settled), Tyler Heights rebuilding, school safety
- Mid's for Kids
    - 2019 is the biggest year, more consistent than previous years
    - Program can continue if there is interest at the school, and mid-shipmen to make the connection
    - Enjoying the Naval Academy connection to RKE, for example the Jazz Ensemble came to play

Adjourn ~8:00pm.