

PTO Meeting: April 27

Chair: Tara Davis

In attendance: Katie Wilson, John Atkinson, Summer Burch, Seth Putnam, Evon Valentine, Jessica Bashford, Martha Hunt, Tara Gordon, Jessa Harger, Catrina Lawley

Principal update:

- SBAC testing starts tomorrow (remote students to complete it on Wednesdays); info to in-person students to go out next week (first week of May)
- Diversity Week: Zoom workshops for classes first week of May; teachers to select grade-level appropriate Zooms for their classes
- 5th grade class (with Karen) OGS student randomly selected in Earth Day essay contest for remote visit from VT's Attorney General; will be covered by Reformer; dovetailed with another year-long project studying climate change (w/ Antioch grad); Karen is retiring at the end of this year.

*John A asked if there is any information about 6th grade graduation?

Leadership Council: Tara shared about upcoming Leadership Council meeting (happening tomorrow night at 5); all welcome (open meeting); encouraged us to come.

Summer mentioned that she feels like there's a lot of spinning happening on the OG; not much action. In theory, these councils could do more if there were more action-oriented parents present. Feels that they could be more productive. Feels like there's been a lot of "no, we can't do that". Summer mentioned that other schools seem to be moving forward through COVID. Some schools are combining PTO and Leadership Council meetings. This possibility is being explored...

John expressed potential interest in council initiatives, but like many parents, is stretched too thin with engagements.

Katie is interested in moving forward and looking at opportunities for next year. For example, a need for more after-school programs.

Farm-To-School. Tara has been working closely with Tara Gordon. Idea of a mushroom garden on shady north side of school, in part inspired by OG former teacher Deb Pierotti. Project is underway, in partnership with Wild Carrot and Food Connects. Tara G introduced herself and spoke briefly--in her second year in this role; works with Green Street and Vernon schools as well. Gardens are a way we can connect and work together. John A relayed dramatic changes observed by his mother. Tara G is passionate about native plants including edibles. Katie mentioned that her spouse does mushroom growing as a hobby and may be able to collaborate and help. She also mentioned that it's been nice, as a parent, to see the improvements and growth happening in the schoolyard (especially since parents can't go inside the building).

Exchange between Summer and Tara G about donation of strawberry plants. Potential planting with pre-K?

The other project Tara G spoke to is Karen's tree planting project. Also signage -- kids have been drawing and painting.

Gardens and Farm-to-School committees have seen a lot of growth; Food Connects is a huge support for our programs. Sheila Humpreys is point person for OG.

Tara D mentioned rain gear for K/1 finally came in this spring.

Tara G mentioned summer programs for kids in the garden this summer. Last summer was the Garden Arts program. Not sure what partnerships she'll have this summer. Hope to get kids and families into the gardens this summer. Mentioned a possible camp (?) for younger age kids.

Seth brought up idea of programming around Earth Day -- day-long effort devoted to the earth.

Tara G likes this idea; wondered if we could bring in opportunities provided by Fort Dummer. She did a field trip to Fort Dummer with Karen's 5th grade class. She used to work with VT Wilderness School summer camp so knows the plants. Summer mentioned that she got a tree every year growing up from her school on Earth Day.

Tara mentioned "spring surprises" (bulbs) popping up from fall planting. Tara did an informal poll of parents present about doing another planting. Most parents voted for a weekend day.

Girls on the Run and introduction of coach Jessa Harger. She mentioned how she's involved with Edible Brattleboro and has been involved with school community in other ways (2nd grade tapped her sugar maple trees)

Teacher Appreciation Week (Martha). Martha wondered what supplies we have already in PTO bins. Jess B will check on Friday and circle back. John has supplies as well.

Sunday: chalking

Monday: yogurt bar

Tuesday: treat table

Wed: raffle gifts

Thursday: lunch from VT Country Deli

Friday: ice cream novelties

Volunteer sign-up going out to school community to support this week following this meeting.

Book Fair (Summer). After many ideas were thrown out, it looks like there will be a series of pre-recorded Read Alouds to be shown to kids (likely in the last week of May); all kids are going to get a \$8 voucher for a specific weekend; OG will get 20% of the proceeds. There are going to be different themes (immigrant, farmer, bookstore owner who will introduce themselves and then

do a Read Aloud). Bake sale will coincide with weekend of book store visits. Also, all kids will get a book (if they can't get to store, then teacher will work out a way to get them a book).

How should we advertise this to the community? Should we?

We will regroup again after Teacher Appreciation Week via email.

Other:

Tara mentioned that she can stay in chair role IF someone will join her as a co-chair next year. It's too much for her to stay in role solo.

Tara suggested the possibility of exploring a Tito's Taco Take-out night, much like 99 Dining for a Cause.

Katie said that Chelsea once upon a time had mentioned the idea of end-of-year bonfires at Fort Dummer, and even the possibility of older families camping overnight.

Tara reported that Pennies for the Playground Project has raised \$336.16 thus far. The Mystery Donor (PTO) Money Match in March contributed \$78.78 towards that. She will be pursuing another mystery donor for May. Summer suggested looking into Agway or Runnings.

Katie cannot make the next meeting on May 25th. Tara will check Mary's availability and confirm new School Board meeting schedule. If it remains in conflict, the meeting will be changed to Tuesday, May 18th @ 6-7:30pm.