

Portal Elementary PTO Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2023 ★ 6:30 p.m. ★ Media Center

Introductions

Attendees went around the room and introduced themselves. There were twenty-three people in attendance which included: Mikaela Vobejda, Kate Kingery Davidson, Robyn Krenke, Cynthia Harms, Nina Giger, Jim Van Haute, Kim Smith, Larissa Hibbeler, Karen Obrecht, Jenny McGargill, Brianna Wright, Sarah Keogh, Laura Real, Tracy McAleer, Alyssa Anderson, Jenny Ingwersen, Jamie Vance, Victoria Clayton, Sheri Wells-Chesley, Jen Van Haute, Karla Sharp, Jennie Davis, and Jessica Palimenio.

Approval Meeting Minutes

Secretary, Karla Sharp, provided copies of the September 12, 2023, meeting minutes. The minutes were approved (motion to approve by Kate Kingery Davidson and seconded by Jen Van Haute).

Principal's Report

Ms. Vobejda thanked those in attendance for coming to the meeting. Kindergarten, first and fourth grade teachers were present.

- The Star Run was a huge success. Thank you to Portal families for taking the time to fundraise and help PTO out.
- Trunk or Treat was so fun. The kids were talking about it for days.
- There is no school on November 22nd-24th for Thanksgiving break.
- Winter break will be from December 20th-January 3rd.
- Staff only on January 3rd.
- The December IXL challenge will run from December 1st-31st. The goals have been reordered; the top goal is now the amount of time spent on it. Be looking for more information from Ms. Vobejda.
- "December to Remember will be filled with building-wide theme days. Details to come in school newsletter.
- Star Council has started meeting with Ms. Vobejda once a month, 2-4 members from 5th and 6th grade. They talk about things they want for Portal. Items include new bike racks and water fountains. They also want to support all of Ms. Vobejda's hopes and dreams. Students requested to move more bike racks near the 5th/6th grade wing. The group loves the ideas shared for the garden area.
- Two new working items for the building include the yearbook and getting the TVs up and running again.

Teacher Highlights:

The PTO set aside \$350 for teachers to use in their classrooms. PTO is requesting the funds be used by April 30th, so the Treasurer has time to close out the books. Below are the items teachers have purchased for their classrooms.

- Ms. Vance-purchased sets of books for reading groups/book clubs, scoop chairs, magnet erasers, and mini white boards.
- Ms. Ingwersen-added new books, new prizes, sticky note anchor chart paper, and small buckets.
- Ms. Anderson-books, classroom supplies, marker boards, educational games, escape rooms, and prizes.
- 1st grade-white crayons, confetti, flexible seating, prizes, and IXL challenge prizes.

- Ms. McGargill-flexible seating, small phonics games, and used PBIS money for treasure chest prizes.
- Ms. Obrecht-treasure box prizes, laminator, games, phonics/math, and new supplies for the new school year.

Treasury Report

Jennie Davis reported that the Star Run donations came in close to last year; within about \$1,000. Not ordering shirts were a huge savings. Teachers and parents thought the stickers were a great idea. Noted to add numbers next year. Food nights and skating parties are doing good. PTO is also receiving funds from Portal spirit gear throughout the year. The current expenditures include back to school, fall parties, recycling, Outdoor Ed, popcorn materials, and fall conference meals. Mr. Van Haute pointed out that there was \$3,000-\$4,000 in savings from not purchasing shirts. Ms. McGargill mentioned doing a color run next year, where each grade level wears a certain color.

Committee Reports

- Ms. Van Haute reported the Star Run was a blast. A big goal for the school is a new garden area. The current amount budgeted is \$16,000. There were no objections to the garden. Planning will move forward with the district and company that supports the district. The district will cover the sidewalk per the Fire Marshal's request. The company will pour a square slab and the district will plant grass and maintain. The budget also includes 6 tables to be bolted down. They are rubberized for no rust/heat, includes a 20-year warranty and accessibility spots. Kate Kingery Davidson stated that is money well spent. Portal's Garden Club can place stones and have a garden box. Grading will start now until spring. Seeding and concrete will occur in the summer. Tables will be purchased but installed closer to school for a fresh start to the school year. Trees will be staying in place. The bond will provide a sprinkler system and new rubber padding to be poured in the next 2-5 years. Ms. McGargill stated the front playground has holes in the rubber padding. The district is responsible for all ground of playgrounds. Equipment can be purchased by PTO. Ms. Vobejda will meet with the student advisory groups to get input for the back playground used by older students. If equipment needs fixed or replaced, Ms. Vobejda mentioned it may still be under warranty, discontinued, or fixable through a contract or district employee, based on her previous experiences.
- Ms. Smith reported the Trunk or Treat has 24 trunks. This event was completely free, and volunteer based. The community looks forward to this event. The weather was nice and there were leftover donations of candy that went to the school. Ms. Palimenio extended her gratitude to Ms. Smith. A thank you treat was provided for the volunteers.
- Ms. Harms reported Box Tops and TAGG are the only 2 organizations PTO is currently collecting. Both require a scan of receipt. Numbers are the lowest they've ever been. It is the same 5-6 families that are supporting. PTO received \$5 from Box Tops and \$42.25 from Godfather's. TAGG gives back about \$20 a month; on occasion winning some \$10 contests. There was discussion on way to promote; maybe to include in newsletters.
- Ms. Wells-Chesley reported Papio Fun Park Family Night went well with earning \$300 cash. Food nights have been going well. There will be 2 in November. Monday, November 27th will be Freddy's from 4-8 PM. Texas Roadhouse Gift Card Fundraiser has ended. Packets will be turned in by Friday, November 17th for a final count.

- Ms. Palimenio reported the last Skate Night was a glow party. The first night we received \$513 back. If over 100 students attend, the PTO gets 50% back. Fall classroom parties went great. A big thank you to everyone who volunteered. Ms. Keogh asked for a parent list of volunteers moving forward. Ms. Harms loved the printed name tags. Winter party email will be out soon to ensure time for planning.
- Ms. Wells-Chesley reported the Hospitality Committee will provide quarterly (3 this year) mailbox trinkets for teachers. They will incorporate Stock the Lounge; each class will stock for the month. PTO Helping Hands has also been introduced for staff in need. Any staff member can call to make arrangements anonymously. The Outreach Committee is running short on ideas to reach out to parents. Ms. McAleer and Ms. Obrecht will be the new Ice Cream Social Charis for 2024-2025 school year. Ideas were discussed to reach out to high school students who need volunteer hours.
- Ms. Krenke reported Santa Wrappers will be held on December 12th at 6:30 PM in the library. She would like to encourage more teachers to get involved.
- Ms. Kingery Davidson said there was nothing new to report for the Scholarship Committee. Should occur earlier this year in January/February. She encourages students to spend quality time on the essays. Ms. Davis mentioned we have 2 \$1000 scholarships. The qualifications were discussed. Students must have attended a year at Portal, or 6th grade at Portal. This will be checked on.
- Ms. Giger reported the marquee is going great and will be updated this week.
- Popcorn Fridays are going well, and the students love it. Ms. Smith state Ms. Obrecht's students sang a popcorn song, and it was the highlight of the day.

Other:

- An email will be sent out soon for staff holiday giving. Donations can be made via check/Venmo. In the past, PTO was able to provide nice gifts to teachers and staff members.
- Gift cards were given to Ms. McAleer and Ms. Obrecht for attending the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Sharp

Karla Sharp
Portal PTO Secretary

If you have any questions, you can contact the 2023-2024 Portal PTO Board Members:

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