



## Merrill PTA meeting minutes

Mon, Oct. 21, 2019

6:30pm

Merrill Middle School library

### 13 attending:

|           |         |             |           |
|-----------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| Rose G    | Sarah W | Stephanie M | Tammy G   |
| Kate P    | Beth B  | Shawna B    | Kristen E |
| Holly KO  | Patty N | Becky E     | Sara A    |
| Channon T |         |             |           |

### Principal's Update – Mrs. Panek

Thank you, PTA – 6<sup>th</sup> graders love their Merrill t-shirts! The shirts help incoming students feel connected to the school and community.

**MAP data** is available from fall assessments (testing occurs in fall, winter and spring) and serves as a progress benchmark. [Read more about MAP GROWTH testing](#) and [what MAP results mean to your student](#).

The new **Infinite Campus app** is tricky to navigate and understand. A new version of the IC app came out this summer and all of us – administration, teachers, parents, students – are figuring out the new interface (keep in mind the [web-based IC portal](#) is available too).

- Teachers update IC with assignments approximately weekly. Assignments then roll into topic scores.
- Merrill will hold “Infinite Campus 101” sessions at fall conferences
- PTA and Merrill staff have collaborated on a “how to use Infinite Campus” brochure that helps explain key pieces of information including grades, attendance and schedule

Be sure to [download the new SchoolCNXT family engagement app](#) to stay in touch about school activities and communications. The biggest benefit of the SchoolCNXT app is a built-in translation function so all DMPS families can more easily consume content.

Busing issues are still a challenge (a few buses have inconsistent arrival times) due to driver shortages. Parents should contact Mrs. Panek to report problems.

Fun fact: The beautiful planters in front of the school have been donated/cared for by a school neighbor who lives just down the street.

**CAFETERIA HELPERS URGENTLY NEEDED** – Please consider [signing up for an upcoming lunch shift](#). Any shift helps! Due to ongoing budget constraints and an increase in enrollment, there are 270+ students in the lunchroom at a time... so a few extra pairs of eyes and ears can make a big difference.

### Recent PTA Accomplishments

- Delivered orders purchased from the fall pop-up online store (Megan T)

## Upcoming/Ongoing PTA Events + Opportunities to help

- 1. Opportunities to directly help the school** (Mrs. Panek)
  - **DESIGNER NEEDED** – Mrs. Panek wants to freshen the space to better showcase student talents; she’s looking for an overall designer to help imagine and execute a new look
  - **CAFETERIA HELPERS URGENTLY NEEDED** – Please consider [signing up for an upcoming lunch shift](#).
- 2. Vote YES on PPEL** (Rose G) – The PTA encourages voters to say “yes” to the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy proposal that gives more spending authority to schools without increasing residents’ tax bill. [Learn more about PPEL](#).
  - Merrill spends a significant portion of its annual PPEL budget on technology, for example, simply replacing laptop batteries (which is a constant need).
- 3. “Meet the candidates” District 1 school board forum for Nov 5 school board election** (Sarah A)
  - Planning a 1-hour forum on 10/28; moderated by Tammy Gentry
  - District 1 candidates Heather Anderson-Morrow and Kimberly Martorano as well as At-Large candidate Kelli Soyer will attend
  - Other DMPS schools will be invited
  - Will also be an opportunity to encourage voters to say “yes” to the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy proposal that gives more spending authority to school without increasing residents’ tax bill. [Learn more about PPEL](#).
- 4. Science Fair prep** (Rose G) – **HELP NEEDED, TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY**
  - Thurs 11/14
  - Help needed to coordinate needs among science teachers
  - Need help soliciting judges from the community
- 5. Basketball concession stand fundraiser** (Amy D, Melissa S, Lisa V)
  - Merrill hosts approx. 6 JV & freshman Roosevelt basketball games Dec-Feb
- 6. Fall Book Fair fundraiser** (Karina C) – **HELP NEEDED, TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY**
  - Will be held during fall conferences
  - Helps raise money for library books
- 7. Teacher Appreciation events** (Sarah R)
  - Fall conference meals
  - December appreciation notes
  - January coffee bar
  - January paper & pencil drive
  - Spring conference meals
  - May teacher appreciation week & [Amazon wish list](#)
- 8. School Supply boxes** (Emily C) – **HELP NEEDED, TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY**
  - Currently approx. 10% of families use this option
  - How can we better accommodate last-minute supply list changes, especially from new incoming teachers? Could we set the expectation that the supply package is simply “core” supplies?
- 9. PTA website to house all the ways to help/get involved** (Kristen E)
  - Targeting launch in November

More ways to help:

- [Teachers’ Amazon Wish List](#)
- **Helping Hands** (Julie H)
  - Ongoing anonymous needs surfaced through Merrill case worker and counselor
  - If interested in helping, ask to be added to Julie’s donation mailing list (private list)
- **Box Tops** (Amy D)
  - [Download the new Box Tops for Education mobile app](#) to scan receipts
  - Will continue to accept physical box tops
- **Merrill Matters** (Rose) – **NEED COORDINATOR**

- Parent education opportunities; approx 4x/yr
- **Spring fundraising events – NEED COORDINATOR; HELP NEEDED**
  - Inaugural “parents’ night out” held last spring
  - Movie night for kids
- **8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion – HELP NEEDED**
  - Mid-May promotion celebration at Roosevelt, dance at Merrill
- **PTA president – HELP NEEDED, TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY**

## PTA Decisions/Motions

1. \$350 to support a special request for Spanish classrooms
2. Will provide a supply of granola bars ongoing for the office to provide to students as needed
3. Will fund new uniforms for basketball and track

## Housekeeping

**Next PTA meeting will be Mon, Nov 18.**

PTA generally meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at 6:30pm in the Merrill school library. 2019-20 schedule:

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| ● Nov 18         | ● Mar 9          |
| ● No Dec meeting | ● Apr 20         |
| ● Jan 27         | ● No May meeting |
| ● Feb 17         |                  |

### Merrill PTA board 2019-20

**President:** Rose Green

**Treasurer:** Theresa Chivers

**Secretary:** Holly Kilborn O’Neill

**Communications:** Kristen Erickson, Holly Kilborn O’Neill

**Membership & Community Relations:** Sarah Witt

**Apparel:** Megan Tempero

**Helping Hands:** Julie Hahn

**Teacher Appreciation:** Sarah Ramsey

**Book Fairs:** Karina Casini

**School Supply Kits:** Emily Cataldi

**Box Tops:** Amy Dagitz

**IB Liaison:** Marquis Ellis

All Merrill PTA meetings are open to families and community members interested in helping students.

Contact Rose at: roseDOTgreenATcbdsmDOTCOM or 773.844.1782

Find more information at <https://merrillpta.wordpress.com/>

Connect with us at <https://www.facebook.com/merrillpta/>

Read Mrs. Panek’s “Merrill Minute” monthly newsletter for more PTA information