

Merrill PTA Meeting

Monday, February 27, 2023

7-8pm, Merrill Library

Attendees: Sarah Witt, Mrs. Panek, Channon Timm, Eric Weisenhorn, Shawna Boeding, Kristen Erickson, Claudia Garcia Brown, Kenneshaw Woods, Simone Freeman, Michelle Gartner

Meeting called to order at 7:01

Welcome and Introductions: Sarah Witt, PTA President

School Update: Mrs. Panek, Merrill Principal

- Admin level has begun planning for 23-24 school year. Focusing on 5th to 6th transition. Spending a lot of time getting 6th graders ready. Letter in February. Beginning next week, a group goes out to each elementary to answer questions. In April, student leaders will welcome kids to Merrill. May is family night. FN getting a remodel this year. Scavenger hunt. Finding clubs, lockers. PTA: please provide food/snacks for evening.
- Overall, no cuts will happen at Merrill next year, but staff shifting will happen, schedule will look different. 60 minutes in core classes, reading math social studies. This will happen across all ten middle schools. Average class size is 29-30. Merrill has 100% enrollment for next year. Open enrollment is closed for next school year.
- Book Bans: Contact rural legislation, decision should remain within the district, not as a complete Ban. Contact any republican legislator outside the Des Moines metro area. Call, email, write!
- Survey goes out tomorrow to all students, measuring how comfortable they are at school. 5-point scale, middle of the road response counts as a negative.
- ISAP tests is schedule for April 10th is practice, 11th, and 12th for sixth and seventh, April 13th for eighth.
- Merrill Moolah – 96-98% of students are meeting behavior expectations. Students are rewarded on Fridays and can “shop” the store. Lots of fun stuff for them to choose from. This also includes raffle time for things like the gym.
- Received feedback that parents miss open conferences. Working on a plan for 23-23 school year. Each teacher has 7.75 contract hours for the semester to address parent conferences. Parent idea: Survey to parents on what do they expect from conferences, what questions do they have, etc. Mrs. Panek will create a 1-minute survey before the end of the year.
- 8th grade promotion, wanting feedback on what parents would like for promotion/dance. Needs to be at Merrill. Idea of just doing a dance. However, many families enjoy seeing kids each the milestone. Possibly giving kids a certificate or t-shirt, etc. Idea of a clap-out with a certificate for each eighth grader. June 5th is the last day of school. Friday, June 2nd will be their last day.

Committee Updates:

- Communications – Thank you for putting everything on FB and keeping everyone up to date!
- Apparel – No updates.
- Teacher Appreciation – Planning is underway for doing stuff in the Spring and at the end of the year.
- Helping Hands – No needs currently. Resources are shared with other schools.

Announcements/Upcoming Events:

- No School, Spring Break – March 13th thru 17th
- No School, Professional Development – March 21st & 22nd

New Business:

- 6th Grade Orientation, May 4th 5:00 to 7:00. Looking for volunteers to do a PTA table. Possible flyer, snacks.
- Merrill outdoor space fundraising/committee – Walking track all the way around. Move basketball court down and in addition soccer mini pitches, Gagaball pits. Project start after spring break. Goal date for first part when school begins in August 2023. Fundraising for playground and gagaball pit.
- Finding grants, can be sent to Grant writer for Des Moines Public schools to look at. Green State Bank. Also speak to neighborhood associations. **Track is closed at Roosevelt**
- Need to put a group together to support “Destination Merrill” Committee. Mrs. Panek will get the full plans. Committee will come up with phases for project.
- District is not paying for the gagapit(s) or playground.

**PTA Requests: In need of snacks for students.

Adjourn at 8:02.