



Merrill PTA meeting minutes

Mon, Nov. 18, 2019

6:30pm

Merrill Middle School library

9 attending:

Rose G	Sarah W	Stephanie M
Kate P	Kate E	Holly KO
Sara R	Whitney B	Karina C

Principal's Update – Mrs. Panek

Thank you, PTA – Merrill deeply appreciates the conference food for teachers, science fair food for judges, Sr Wooly Spanish program sponsorship and the world maps for every classroom.

Merrill is addressing behavioral issues by implementing a new passing scheduling for 6th grade as well as working with students and families on a case-by-case basis to determine how to best support each student. All DMPS middle schools are dealing with impacts of fewer special needs/alternative programs across the district, due to ongoing budget constraints.

- Our PTA can help by advocating for more staffing and support... which requires more advocacy at a state level. Consider joining the [DMPS Community Legislative Action Team \(CLAT\)](#).

Lively discussion has been generated around the new stadium announcement. Please [read the FAQ about the DMPS Community Stadium at Drake University](#) for more information.

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

- **Science Fair support** including renting tables, providing food for judges, and other support as needed (Rose G)
- **Conference meals/snacks for teachers** was much appreciated (Sara R)
- **Scholastic Book Fair raised funds for new books** in the Merrill library and classrooms (Karina C)
- **World maps purchased for every classroom** – The recent flash sale on Facebook was a huge success! Thanks to our many generous donors, every Merrill classroom now has an up-to-date world map to help support the IB curriculum (Rose G)
- **“Meet the candidates” District 1 school board forum on Nov 5** was a success with great turnout and support. Huge thanks to expert moderator Tammy Gentry! (Sara A)
- **Helping Hands is providing care baskets** for the Thanksgiving break as well as granola bars for the office to provide to students as needed (Julie H)
- **The new, improved Merrill PTA website is underway** and will launch soon: <https://merrillpta.wordpress.com/> (Kristen E)

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. Helping Hands** (Julie H)
 - Ongoing anonymous needs surfaced through Merrill case worker and counselor
 - Will ask for donations toward winter break care baskets
- 3. Teacher Appreciation events** (Sarah R)
 - Dec 13 holiday cookie exchange, appreciation notes & [Amazon wish list](#)
 - Jan 16 coffee bar
 - January paper & pencil drive
 - Spring conference meals
 - May teacher appreciation week & [Amazon wish list](#)
- 4. Pop-Up Apparel Store** will be open through Monday, Dec 2. (Sarah W)
 - Items will be delivered before winter break (perfect for holiday gifting!)
- 5. Dec 10 fundraiser at McAlister's Deli** (Kate E)
 - Mention "Merrill Middle School" at checkout from 5-9pm at McAlister's on Douglas (south of Merle Hay Mall)
 - McAlister's will donate 20% of all proceeds to Merrill
- 6. Book Fairs** (Karina C) – **HELP NEEDED, TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY**
 - Apparently Merrill is the ONLY DMPS middle school still able to support this fundraiser. Which is a terrible shame because money raised goes directly to the school library... which directly impacts which books students have available to them. Please considering helping coordinate this effort next year (which means partnering with Karina for the book fair during spring conferences)

More ways to help:

- [Donations & Giving ideas](#) including [teachers' Amazon Wish List](#)
- [Short-term volunteer opportunities](#) including Spring Parents Night Out fundraising event planner
- [Ongoing volunteer opportunities](#) including 2020-21 PTA president/board positions
- **Box Tops** (Amy D) – [Download the new mobile app](#) to scan receipts
- **Merrill Matters** (Rose G) – **NEED COORDINATOR**
 - Parent education opportunities; approx 4x/yr
- **Spring fundraising events** – **NEED COORDINATORS; HELP NEEDED**
 - Inaugural "parents' night out" held last spring
 - Movie night for kids
- **8th grade promotion** – **HELP NEEDED**
 - Mid-May promotion celebration at Roosevelt, dance at Merrill
- **School Supply boxes** (Emily C) – **HELP NEEDED, TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY**
- **Science Fair needs coordinator** (Rose G) – **TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY**
- **PTA president** (Rose G) – **HELP NEEDED, TRANSITION OPPORTUNITY**

PTA Decisions/Motions

PTA will sponsor a speaker/program focused on mobile device use and social media, especially as it relates to Merrill's "no phones" policy. Audiences will include students (during the school day) and parents (evening). More details to come.

Housekeeping

Next PTA meeting will be Mon, Jan 27.

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

- No Dec meeting
- Jan 27
- Feb 17
- Mar 9
- Apr 20
- No May meeting

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