



Merrill PTA meeting minutes

Mon, Nov 16, 2020

7:00pm

Zoom online meeting

9 attendees:

Sarah W	Shawna B	Kate E
Kate P	Patty N	Jessi G
Holly KO	Sarah V	Andrew P (Success Case Mgr)

Principal's Update – Mrs. Panek

Teachers and staff loved the Starbucks gift cards (thanks to the Teacher Appreciation committee!)

Transitioned back to a fully virtual schedule. [Lunch is still free](#) via pick up at various schools. Merrill staff are delivering lunches directly to Deer Ridge.

Biggest current challenges include:

1. **Staffing shortages** – last week 12 teachers were out with only 3 subs. This is/will continue to be an ongoing pandemic-driven challenge across the district/state/country. Merrill is faring better compared to other DMPS middle schools (some reported as many as 27 staff out).
2. **Families expressing difficulty navigating multiple information sources** – Merrill is working on consolidating information. Hoping to deliver a single linkable document shortly.
 - UPDATE: [Find the homework check-in links here](#).
3. **Personal devices causing distractions in class** – Asking parents to help enforce Merrill's no-device policy whether attending class in-person or remote/virtual.
 - **Parents, we need your support** – *when your students log on, everything else (phones, video games, etc.) should be put away.*
 - Teachers may start encouraging students to turn on cameras, at least for a quick check-in. It's good to see each other's faces!

Important upcoming dates:

- No school Nov 25-27 for Thanksgiving Break
- No school Dec 23-Jan 1 for Winter Break

Recent PTA Accomplishments

- **Provided Starbucks gift cards** to every teacher and staff member at Merrill
- [Apparel pop-up sale](#) through Nov 29

PTA Decisions/Motions

1. Approved purchase of an **exterior locked library book return** as requested by Carrie Kent, Merrill Librarian.
2. Approved funding for the student-driven "**virtual culinary club**" as requested by Kimberly Foshe, Merrill Counselor.
3. Considered purchase of **plastic crates to be used as library book return drop-off** for each classroom as requested by Carrie Kent, Merrill Librarian. Will revisit in January.
4. Informal consideration of **sharing Merrill PTA funds** to help ensure schools with less/no PTA funding get clear masks. Will explore further.

Upcoming/Ongoing PTA Events + Opportunities to help

Please continue to support teachers by:

- Staying in contact
- Provide feedback – they're especially interested in improvements and new ideas
- Writing a positive note of encouragement

Open 2020-21 committee positions include:

- Fundraising coordinator – need 1-2 parents to lead critical fundraising efforts
- Box Tops coordinator – need 1 parent to manage physical and digital Box Tops through the school year
- Book Fair coordinator – need 1-2 parents/families to coordinate and execute one Scholastic book fair event during Spring conferences (pending pandemic conditions; usually there are 2 book fairs per school year)
- Merrill Matters coordinator – need 1-2 parents to propose, plan, and execute 2-4 parent/community learning events through the school year (previous years have included topics like recognizing drug use, using safe online habits, talking with teens about awkward subjects, etc.)
- 8th Grade Promotion party coordinators – need 1-2 parents to coordinate food, refreshments, decorations, etc.

If you're interested in serving, please contact Sarah at [switt1509\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:switt1509(at)gmail(dot)com)

More ways to help:

- [Donations & Giving ideas](#) including [teachers' Amazon Wish List](#)
- Box Tops – [Download the mobile app](#) to scan receipts
- No volunteer opportunities at this time

Housekeeping

The next PTA meeting will be on **Mon, Jan. 25, at 7:00pm via Zoom.**

The Merrill PTA generally meets on the third or fourth Monday of each month at 7pm. Upcoming 2020-21 schedule:

- Jan 25, 2021
- Feb 15, 2021
- Mar 22, 2021
- May 17, 2021

Merrill PTA Board 2020-21

- **President:** Sarah Witt
- **Treasurer:** Theresa Chivers
- **Secretary:** Holly Kilborn O'Neall

Merrill PTA Committee Members 2020-21

Communications: Kristen Erickson, Jessi Goodsell
Membership & Community Relations: Jessi Goodsell
Fundraising: TBD
Apparel: Jessi Goodsell, Sarah Witt
Merrill Matters: TBD
Helping Hands: Julie Hahn, Tracy Beck, Sarah Osteroff Melton

Teacher Appreciation: Katie Carlson, Shawna Boeding
Book Fairs: TBD
School Supply Kits: Kate Evans
Box Tops: TBD
Advocacy: Holly Kilborn O'Neall

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

Contact Sarah Witt, PTA President, at [switt1509\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:switt1509(at)gmail(dot)com)

Find more information at <https://merrillpta.wordpress.com/> including [PTA meeting archives](#)

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

Visit [Mrs. Panek's "Merrill Minute" newsletter archive](#)