

Merrill PTA Meeting  
Monday September 26, 2022  
7pm, Merrill Library

Participants: Sarah Witt, Kate Panek, Megan Hollinger, Kristen Erickson, Brandy Goldenberg, Laura Aguero, Ben Spadt, Amber Adams, Eric Weisenhorn, Claudia G. Brown, Christy Stroope, Kate Mead, Kari Taylor, Jen Chedester  
Notes taken by Kristen Erickson, no secretary in attendance at this meeting.

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Principal's report/Kate Panek

Literacy focus in middle school: students' "choice and voice." Less focused on the mechanics of reading compared to elementary school, more attempt to meet students where they are at and get/keep them engaged.

New language around building-wide expectations in school. No longer focusing on CPR (Caring, Principled, Reflective) and now using the Mustang Five:

- phones are off & put away
- arrive on time
- be where you are supposed to be
- use words that are safe & welcoming
- food at designated times only

Staffing changes: 4 positions were lost at Merrill due to lower enrollment. This means that some teachers that used to teach only one grade level are now teaching more than one. Class sizes have increased from low 20's to 28-30 and 7th grade especially has larger class sizes.

Bathroom issues are down from last year. Phones in class also seem to be less of an issue than last year.

We now have two campus monitors who walk the halls with radios and help to manage behaviors.

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Title Wish library fundraiser last spring was a big success and we propose to do it again this spring.

We have needs for members of the PTA board and committees, specifically seeking a co-president and secretary, and committee head for Advocacy.

Sarah Witt is staying on as the other co-president, Kristen Erickson and Jessi Goodsell are staying on as Communications/Community Relations. No need for a membership chair as we are not focused on membership or dues. Apparel is headed by Megan Hollinger.

Post-meeting, Brandy Goldenberg, Laura Aguero, and Kari Taylor volunteered for the Teacher Appreciation committee and Ben Spadt, Amber Adams, and Brandy Goldenberg volunteered for the Helping Hands committee.

Spirit store is now open! Megan Hollinger shared a preview of the apparel options. Store will be open through Oct 15 and shirts should be in by Thanksgiving Break.

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Conferences: 8 hours were to be set aside for conferences at the end of September. Per Kate Panek, 4 hours have been dedicated to community events like the open house and family fun night. The remaining 4 hours worth is to be used on an as-needed basis where families should reach out to teachers or teachers reach out to families to discuss student progress. No scheduled times.

There is a memo and video coming out to parents soon to give information on accessing grades in Infinite Campus and also to describe the Standard Reference Grading system of NM, PT, AT, ET and what they mean. Grades are updated when topics get completed which may not be right away after an assignment or assessment. Some classes will have a progression throughout the whole year and others will have clearly delineated topics that are not revisited after their initial study.

October's PTA meeting will be a presentation by Central Academy and will be held in the cafeteria.

DMPS has approved a three-year \$250,000 project to improve the school grounds and the plan is to have it in three phases: 1) a walking path, 2) basketball court(s), 3) play structure on campus. The goal is to have Merrill's campus be an evening destination for the community. We will discuss more about this in November's PTA meeting and hopefully the Merrill PTA will have great input into the design and planning process.