

Chenery PTO Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 10, 2019

7:05 PM

Attendance: 12

Minutes taken by Sunyoung Hong-Osborn

Minutes have been approved

PTO BUSINESS

- **Welcome:** Ms. Ganguly & Ms. Laura Vanderhart, Co-Presidents
- **Last meeting minutes (dated June 5, 2019):** Approved.
- **Budget:** Ms. Barbara Bulfoni (Fundraising co-chair)
 - \$15,000 out of last year's leftover was given to the school and used to purchase 60 Chromebooks. About \$2K leftover was put to this year's budget.
 - Three major sources for fundraising is Annual Appeal, PTO Clubs, and Directory Advertisement. Through Annual Appeal, we have collected about \$17K so far this year, almost reaching 50% of the budget goal. With Jesse (Fundraising co-chair), we are trying to be creative and expect to earn about \$10K through ads.
 - All (100%) income through fundraising is spent to support enrichment, school events, field trips, etc of that school year.
 - Retail fundraising line item means an income through Amazon.com. We will try to send out information and direct link to Chenery parents. It will be a good way for grandparents to be linked to their grandchildren's schools.
- **Upper School enrichment:** Ms. Heather Nahas
 - Upper school enrichment this year is working with Urban Improv. It is an improv group that helps social-emotional learning and opens up discussion on challenging subjects with kids. We started to work with them last year and it was very well received.
 - This year, each team came in for an hour session with 5-7 actors on the stage and discussed Depression (7th grade) and Bullying and Cyber Bullying (8th grader). We have 6 performances in the fall, which cost about \$6K. Last performance of this year will be on October 15, Tuesday. We would like to have more performance in the spring if the budget (\$13K for upper school enrichment) can afford.

- **PTO Afterschool Club:** Ms. Maura Fennelly
 - We have 16 clubs running this fall and are currently in the middle of enrollment. Overall, enrollment is going well. Model UN is the most popular club. Two clubs (Art and Drumming) have not met the minimum but close so we will run all 16 clubs after all. We may add indoor soccer in winter.
 - We expect to make a net profit of \$5K.
 - This will be Maura's last year at Chenery and we are looking for a new volunteer to take over PTO clubs.

- **Pasta Dinner:** Ms. Shabrine Daftary-Bussiere
 - 5th Grade Pasta Dinner is coming up next Thursday, October 17, 2019. So far, 220+ people signed up, but expect to have more coming in at the last minute. We are looking for volunteers to help the event.

FBE PRESENTATION: Ms. Christa Bauge

Christa briefly introduced Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE). It is FBE's 26th anniversary and FBE has been helping public schools in Belmont through almost \$4M grants so far. FBE has two major arms: *Board of Directors* has 17 parents who serve 3-year term at a time and take care of all FBE fundraising events. *Program Committee* is comprised of 17 representatives from core and curriculum areas of the Belmont public schools and works on grant proposals all year around.

She also shared highlights of some FBE main events. She first thanked everyone participated in the FBE Apple Run on October 6th. About 700 runners came to this event. She then asked everyone to spread the words about an upcoming FBE Spelling Bee on November 2, 2019. Registration is currently open. Even though it is a competitive event, it will still be fun. More information is available on *FBE website (FBE-Belmont.org)* and *Facebook*.

SEPAC: Mr. Roger

Belmont Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a state mandated, volunteer run organization under Massachusetts special education law. We are family members with children with different abilities and others interested in special education. We educate each other, collaborate with school professionals, exchange ideas and information that help students, and enhance community inclusion.

If there are inquiries about special education items and if anyone likes to connect to SEPAC, the best way is to contact Roger.

Roger said that people might not understand well that the school tries in general to have inclusive environment though some kids are seen out of school. Also, people may think that the district will provide all sorts of special education when needed, but resources are constraint. It is a process and some parents do struggle to get the help they need. SEPAC is a great network of families with information and supports when going through the system.

Ms. Cohen said that Chenery just added an executive function specialist who will join sometime later this year.

Q&A: ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL COHEN

Ms. Jody Cohen has been a science teacher at Newton North High School for 20 years. She loves science and teaching, but wanted to help students in a different way. One of her strengths is relationship with kids. She interviewed 11 schools and was a finalist at 4 schools. At the end, she made a decision to come to Chenery in July. She felt warmth and leadership from Mr. McAllister's letter and inviting environment she felt during the interview process. So far, she has been loving her job although very demanding and busy.

- *Can a group of teachers come up with a uniform way of using Google Classroom amongst teachers? It may look all different and overwhelming to students* - Ms. Cohen said that Chenery has Professional Learning Team (PLT) that is all about Google Classroom. They teach other teachers how to use it. This might be more discussed during Community Block.
- *Can teachers coordinate test schedule so students do not get a wave of test all at once?*
- *Is the executive function specialist for all grades? What is her role in school?* - It is a better question answered by Mr. McAllister. It is supposed to be for "any" student, not just for special education students.
- *What do you think these students should have before going to High School?* - Ms. Cohen answered academic integrity, study skills, mindfulness, and asking for help.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.