

Walker PTA meeting: Wednesday, September 11, 2019 @ 7:00pm

Location: Walker School

Attendees:

Nicki Devine	Terry Velan	James Gray	Mya Wilkins	Kelli Kaul
Junette Moseley	Allison Bull	Anita Geevarghese	Carrie Shonk	Dante Wharton
Donna Su	Raechel Alexander	Michaela Marchi	Luke Larmee	Briana Quinn
Erin Saculti	Claudine Guerrero	Inbal Fraiman	Ellen Nagella	Stacey Masliansky
Lori Coombs	Allison Bull	Dee Johnson	Monika Tankevicius	Ashanti Hendeson
Nicole O'Connell	Darlena Simmons	Natalie Gillespie	Antonnyse Derrick	Michelle Redmond-Henley

Principal's Announcements:

- Parent coffees are next Monday and Friday by grade level, but all are welcome. Very informal chance to ask questions.
- Next Thursday is our Open House. It's a little different this year. We're doing 3 sessions: at 5:30, 5:50, and 6:10. It'll be more structured, teachers can have a presentation - it's a time for the teachers to answer the common questions from parents.
- Walk to School Day will be on Oct. 10th. Drop off will be at Central Park and the kids will walk to school together.
- Parent Question: Concern about homework - the impact it has on kids. Some teachers give it and some don't.
 - Is there/can there be a no homework policy? Is this something we could do or wanted?
 - What setting should we talk about this? PTA, Principal, other?
 - Answer from Mr. Gray: We don't have a no homework policy here at Walker. Ms. Maldonado asked if she could have one and I said sure.
 - Parent Comments:
 - There's been studies that say homework doesn't help students achieve more.
 - How would I know how my child is doing?
 - It can also teach kids how to study on their own.
 - Studies have shown that it can be detrimental and lead to anxiety.
 - This is a great topic to discuss and we can dive into it in another forum to include the whole school.

Teacher Announcements: None

Executive Committee Announcements

- Role of the PTA/What we do:
 - Last year we took on a big communication role to help the situation of information from Principal to parent and visa versa. We are handing that back over to our new Principal Mr. Gray.
 - We are here to support the students, school, families, teachers and community. The PTA is a-political - we don't take an official stance either way on issues so we can be fully inclusive. Anything that falls into the political/hot button issues/parent concerns needs to go to the teachers, principal, and District.
- Back to School BBQ Recap: It was a success! Lots of people, diverse turn out, tons of food
- Spiritwear: we sold it at the BBQ, you can buy some after this meeting, and we'll be selling more throughout the year.
- Our fundraisers: Walkerfest, Parent's Night Out, and our seasonal dances. Things that are at cost: Spiritwear and Flower-grams
- Supporting the Green Team: We're trying to phase out the use of cups at events. We will have jugs of water to refill water bottles (bring your own, we are also selling metal Walker water bottles in our Spiritwear).
- Thank you to Courtney Shapiro for donating 18 Walker water bottles and 18 Walker shirts! Mr. Gray will hand them out to students.
- School Grounds Beautification Project Update - Picnic Tables
 - The tables have been purchased. We are just waiting for them to be delivered. Cement will be poured by the lunchroom to make space for the tables and fix the mud pit issues.
- Lunch Debt Donations Update

- At the June meeting we voted to pay off the lunch debt of Walker students. We raised more than enough to cover the debt. The payments will be going through this week.
- Parent Comment: We should get the word out about what the Angel Fund is and what it's used for - this will be good to put out by Walkerfest because that's the main item it is fundraising for.

Treasurer Update

- School Supplies:
 - 218 students are paid, we need about 50 more to hit our budget
 - We will use the teachers to get the word out, esp at conferences
 - K & 3rd grade are the grades behind in number paid
 - We made a one time donation of wipes and tissues to the teachers (total of \$550 from the surplus in the School Supplies account - we had a bit of a surplus from the past 2 years. The surplus is there in case we don't raise the money needed for the year's teacher budgets.)
 - Alicia noticed that the teachers spent a lot of their budgets on cleaning supplies, so we thought it would be a good use of the extra money.
 - They have been delivered to the teachers
 - Teachers shouldn't have any need to ask parents for extra supplies - Alicia has offered to help anybody work with their budgets to make sure they don't run out.
 - School Supplies money is only used for school supplies and is kept in it's own account.
- Income:
 - \$70 in donations
 - \$410 in membership dues
 - \$3550 from the PTA Equity Program
 - An Equity committee was formed for the district because PTA funds differ widely across the district. Their goal was to make the funding more equitable. Some schools are on the giving end and some are on the receiving end. We were in the middle. This year we fell into the receiving end.
- Parent Comment: A teacher has mentioned they'd love to get the school a gaga court somehow and was unsure how to go about it.
 - We will reach out
- The BBQ was on budget
- \$1824 was the final number to pay off Walker's lunch debt

Walkerfest

- Will be on Nov. 16th, 11-2pm. We moved it a little later into the Fall
- It's one of our biggest fundraisers
- It's a carnival theme, will have games in classrooms, face painting, balloon artist, magician, food, and a game truck.
- We will need volunteers! We will have an online sign up link come out closer to the date.
- The kids have a ton of fun
- We'll be switching over to candy prizes (instead of having junky little prizes and a candy/cake walk). We will be asking for candy donations and unused toy donations for prizes.
- There will be a raffle. Narrowing it down to 3 big prizes. Two \$250 gift cards to Village Market and one other cash prize. There will be a student prize and a class prize for the class that sells the most raffle tickets. Raffle tickets will be sent home in Friday folders.
- We are brainstorming for ideas on how to get the 4th & 5th graders interested in Walkerfest. If you have any ideas, please share them with us!

Equity Committee:

- Restaurant Week for the PTA Equity Program is happening Sept. 23-27. Look for the flyer for the restaurants that will give a % of your purchase back to the program.
- FAN (Family Action Network) Update: Events are free and open to the public
 - Dr. Kendi (*How to Be an Antiracist*) had a presentation last week
 - Spet. 16: Paul Tough (*The Years That Matter Most: How College Makes or Breaks Us*) 7-8:30pm

- Oct. 1st: Marc Brackett (*Permission to Feel: Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help Our Kids, Ourselves, and Our Society Thrive*) 7-8:30pm
- Oct. 4th: Ta-Nehisi Coates (*The Water Dancer: An Evening with Ta-Nehisi Coates*) 7-8:30pm
- Will be putting flyers in the Friday Folders
- Go early b/c they fill up quick!
- Some of the speakers are willing to come speak to classrooms - we will reach out to the teachers
- We are looking for liaisons, the Equity Committee meets once a month.
- Next Steps Update: How to Be An Antiracist in Evanston, Oct. 27th, 6:30-8:30pm at Nichols Middle School
 - Using Dr. Kendi's book *How to be an Antiracist* as our foundation, in our first session of the year, we will explore new ways of thinking about racism, antiracism, and what it means to be an antiracist. We will examine how "non-racist" positions or "race neutral" policies in fact work to maintain racial inequity. We will ground our discussion by applying these definitions to concrete examples of how racist and antiracist policies play out in Evanston, how policies appear race-neutral and how to change them to antiracist policies. Spanish interpretation & child care provided. Open to the community

Enrichment Committee

- Thank you for your patience! It's always crazy in the Fall because of the timing.
- Thank you to the committee!!! For all the work you've done!
- Young Rembrandts is running on Friday afternoons (they had enough sign up)
- Reach out to the venders in case the classes aren't full - most are willing to still take kids.
- Starting in Nov. will start using a new free app called Homeroom. It will be a full, one stop place to sign up for all enrichments and see schedules. We will still be sending out paper forms for families without online access
- There was some confusion about Y.O.U. Will try to get them to do a presentation to clarify the program.

Community Service Committee:

- We will have two events in Oct.: The Sports Shed - sporting equipment drive & Bernie's Book Drive (K-8th grade books)
 - Bernie's Book drive is having an incentive that month - whichever class brings in the most books gets North Western tickets.
- We will be giving the Walker community first chance to take anything from both donation drives.

BookFair:

- The coin drive is coming up, Oct. 7-11th. We'll be collecting pennies, nickels, dimes & quarters. The money will go towards buying teachers and students books.
- Scholastic will be having a new feature this year, an e-wallet. Adults can put money into this e-wallet for a student and the student can go buy what they want using that money. Any leftover money goes back to the adult's account.

New Business: None

Volunteer Needs:

- Volunteer Tutors at Walker for D65 programs: Everybody Reads (2-3rd grades), Math is FUNdamental (play math games with 1st grade) & Kindergarten Literacy Partners (Training dates start Sept. 17th. Please contact Stacey Masliansky at staceymasliansky@gmail.com)
 - Trying to recruit people to tutor - you don't need any background in tutoring - D65 does training. It's during the school day. Commitment varies usually 1 hr per week, work with 2-3 students.
- PTA Fall Dance (Oct. 5th) - We have zero volunteers right now. We need people to serve food and take admissions.
- Bookfair (Oct. 22-23rd, Setup Oct. 18th)

Important Dates

- Coffee with the Principal Grades K & 1st: Sept 16th, 9:05am
- Walker Open House: Sept. 19th, 5:30-6:30pm
- PTA Council Meeting: Sept. 24th, 7pm
- No School, Rosh Hashanah: Sept. 30th

- Bernie's Book Drive: Oct. 1st-31st
- Early Dismissal: Oct. 2nd, 12:05pm
- PTA Fall Dance: Oct. 5th, 6pm - 8pm with Mr. Marcus
- Bookfair Coin Drive: Oct. 7th-11th
- No School, Yom Kippur: Oct. 9th
- Walk to School Day: Oct 10th
- Picture Re-take Day: Oct. 16th
- Next PTA Meeting: Oct. 16th, 7pm

Adjournment

Mark your calendars! Our next meeting: Wednesday, October 16th at 7pm in Walker Cafeteria