

Armatage PTA Meeting Minutes

7:30 pm, October 8, 2020

President Scott Staab called the meeting to order at 7:30. Noted we have a more brief agenda tonight as we just met 2 weeks ago. We are also keeping the survey up online in case a 6:30 start time is better for families, and we can change.

Scott suggested the approval of our [last meeting minutes](#); he moved to approve and Jasper Jonson seconded. Minutes approved.

Reminder to everyone to join the PTA via MemberHub!

<https://armatagepta.new.memberhub.store/store?category=Memberships>

Treasurer's report - main Treasurer was absent and Scott noted that nothing has changed since our last recent meeting. But that really just leads into questions about fundraising which is the point of tonight's meeting.

Principal's update:

- Staff have been asking about document cameras. They all have red document cameras which don't work with their computers - so can't work from home for them. There are grey ones but only 2 teachers have them at this time - all on backorder through the district. Teachers have been getting creative and figured out other options with cell phones, lights, etc at home. But others are really asking for them. Wondered if PTA could purchase?
 - These are \$50 each and there are 27 teachers (classroom plus specialists), but not all would need one. Principal Frankscould check on numbers
 - However, they were ordered by the district so could arrive anytime - so do we want to purchase if they may be coming soon? What if it's a supply issue and we (PTA) also could not get the cameras quickly? Joan will look into availability and how many teachers and get back to the board.
 - Note that these are specific document cameras; not regular webcams.
- More supplies came in from the district right after the last supply pickup! Again, the distribution and timing (see cameras above) has been unpredictable. This shipment contains more science materials. Joan wondered if parents want to pick up materials as they arrive at Armatage, or wait to do a bigger pickup once per month? Generally they are finding they don't exactly know when and how much the supplies will come to each school.
 - Parents at this meeting generally said we'd be happy to pick up as soon as they are available. But we also wanted to be sure parents who weren't able to do this had

the same access. Parents were happy to volunteer to help distribute to other families. But Joan said yes, David and Julie (ELL and Social Work) were delivering.

- Joan said they could schedule for the week after MEA.
- In general, about 90% of families came to pick up materials - thanks!
- Principal Franks gave an update on RAZ Kids and IXL math (see last meeting minutes) - these subscriptions have been ordered. Thanks to the PTA for their help with this!
- Joan also talked about staff adjustments that will be happening across the district now. Armatage has roughly lost 97 kids. 1 to 25 is the allocation for teachers, so we are possibly now down 4 teachers with losing almost 100 kids. But she is hoping it won't be that many. Tomorrow morning Joan will share plans with staff and then will put out an email for the web and parents with the staffing news.
 - This process happens each fall in the district, but for 20 years we haven't lost a teacher. However, this year the SW corner of Mpls especially has lost more students (to charters, private, suburbs where they are hybrid, some doing homeschooling, or their future schools after the CDD). Though all MPS schools are being impacted in some way, schools are down everywhere, so perhaps we will be able to retain more teachers than the allocation suggests. This staffing change would happen right after MEA.
- There aren't really updates on the speciality school application; they have been trying hard to get information but no luck yet. Supposedly, Joan will get a letter about the plans from Eric Moore tomorrow or next week.
- General distance learning update: staff are working SO hard! Joan and Jasper have been popping into classrooms and love seeing kids and cannot thank parents enough for all they are doing too. Thank you for your support - and for not leaving the school!
 - Grades 4/ 5 teacher Christian spoke on behalf of teachers for a bit: basically, it's very difficult! But thanks so much to parents, they know it's hard and parents are doing so much (many teachers also have their own kids home doing distance learning so they know!)
- Yesterday Joan posted the school secretary position; Mary has been on a leave and it's been 6 months, so the position has to be posted. Pam Durant (previous school secretary, now retired) says she'll stay until the position is filled.

Volunteering at Armatage - conversation about the fall fundraiser:

- Volunteer Coordinator Monisha has been talking with the PTA board and other volunteer parents. We need to make decisions soon to have a late October event, as our event is usually the first weekend in October.

- First, we are going to leverage the auction site that families secured this spring from the Fundraising for Foster event. Fewer items will be featured, but classroom goals especially will be used. We wondered from staff/teachers if teachers would be willing to have something fun as incentive? Joan is looking into it.
- Parent Bonnie shared a postcard writing idea: we would get blank postcards to kids to send to teachers or to care facilities in general. Pre-postage and addressed postcards would be easiest. We could give a recommended number of pledges (or dollar amount) for coloring and sending off postcards. We could give out the cards at the next material pickup.
- Another idea is keep the fun walk but everyone walks on their own. This could be in addition or connected to the postcard idea (walk to a mailbox?).
- Discussion about classroom goals with the auction site - would that limit parents to only give up to a certain limit, or create more competition between classes which could be fun for kids? Think about how we set limits or suggestions.
- Let's be really transparent about what the districts pays vs. what our fundraising needs to pay for. Parents may be less inclined to give this year, if they think the district is providing everything for teachers and they are educating kids at home. But most parents don't know about or understand our teacher grants and what they are used for so we can explain this in the event communication.
 - Then we could increase the teacher grants in general, and/or fundraise for specific items/goals (like the document cameras).
 - Could be very specific, like \$__ is needed for each ___ (e.g. document cam) so parents have some guidance on how much to give
 - Could include meals for teachers which the PTA usually provides during conferences! Send them restaurant or coffee gift cards?
 - Also really need to think about AEs who aren't otherwise getting grants or gifts but doing a lot of work. For example, they are the ones who sat outside giving out supplies all day, stuffing the bags, etc.
- A virtual walk could be the weekend after MEA week. Families could submit fun photos of themselves to perhaps win some type of prizes or recognition? For costumes, school spirit, cute pets, etc.
- Keep the auction site open at least a week? 1 week - 10 days could be a sweet spot (longer = lose urgency and people wait or forget).
- In summary, we discussed three hopefully connected ideas: an online auction/donation site, a fun walk, and postcard writing. Monisha will meet with a handful of parents who have volunteered so far to be on a committee. We thought that a more focused call for volunteers for this initiative in particular could yield more parents.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.