Calvin Leete PTO Organization

Calvin Leete Elementary School

PTO Meeting Minutes

Date: February 2, 2022

Time: 6:30P.M.

Location: Zoom

In Attendance:

Audrey Barr - Co-President Paul Freeman - Superintendent

Jen Gould - Secretary Christina Holmes - Treasurer

Ornella Rullo – Co-President Melissa Gargano

Clarice Amanda Shine

Kristen Alisha Rayner

Kenneasha Sloley Julie Fitzpatrick

Lara Tagliapietra Craig Broderson

Krsitine Ford Krsten Balsamo

Lauren Testani Ana-Maria Schell

Linda Lauren Trotta

Angela Gambaccini-May Deirde Dolan

Nicole Israel Brian Jones

Kristen Eaton Arnold Skretta

Gigi and Catherine Jennife Labbadia-Colon

Dr. Freeman is guest speaker for meeting.

Audrey Thanks Dr. Freeman and he begins discussion.

1. Welcome Mrs. Sloley back
2. On Monday evening – curriculum meeting – report delivered, and you can view on Equity tab – 25 page report and a slide show and a recording of the meeting on Board of Ed website.
3. Brief overview of the budget –
   1. 2/14 budget approval day then goes to board of finance to create an overall budget for Guilford. They can change bottom line.
   2. The package goes to the voters
4. Highest budget that he has ever brought forward – 3x the increase in past 11 years. Asking for $66,760,243 over 3 million increase – 5.9% increase. The reason it is so high:
   * 1. We’ve been running lean budgets – no budget padding at all
     2. Increase to medical insurance costs – 1.4 million - single biggest increase
        1. 2.4% of total increase – we are self-insured
        2. 60% of budget is salaries – usually single biggest increase
     3. General costs have gone up because of inflation
     4. We are still in the pandemic – we need services we provide our students because of this.
5. Budget included – investments
   1. One assistant principal at Lakes – house the Special Ed program or if a principal needs to be out they will have someone to cover – may not survive budget
      1. Avg. class size is 19 for us
      2. Avg class size is 22 at Westport – they have 3 administrators at each elementary school.
      3. Math Coach for high school – may not survive in budget
      4. Additional teacher at Cox – probably will survive
      5. Special Ed teacher – Baldwin and Lakes
      6. Athletic Programs – swim and hockey programs
      7. He was hoping to add social workers to the budget instead of using the grant that was given to us due to covid but it didn’t happen so it will be in jeopardy next year as the grant will end.

Questions:

Clarice –

1. FOI (freedom of information act) – anyway that the legal fees can be reimbursed?
   1. The people can be charged 50 cents per page – it takes time for everyone to pull it all together. Doesn’t offset the expenses incurred.
2. Why add an assistant principal and not a special ed coordinator?
   1. An assistant principal is more of a utility player – supporting PD, Student/Parent relationship and discipline
   2. A special ed coordinator is more specialized.
3. What coaching positions?
   1. Math instructional coach – 100K
   2. Assistant swim coach - $3500

Jennifer Labbadia-Colon

1. What is the difference between dept chair and math coach?
   1. Dept chair teaches less classes and they are the lead teacher for that department. Become mentors to all the other teachers in dept. Similar to a general manager of a baseball team.
   2. A coach doesn’t directly service students. They are the on the ground working full time doing professional development for teachers. Helps teachers meet curriculum standards.

Kristine Ford

1. How much are books that are being purchased?
   1. George Floyd, new mascot, Book “Think Again” – “Thank you Teacher” total cost is around 7K-8K. He will continue to buy books. 1/10 of Legal fees (FOI).
   2. They employ attorneys for many specialties – 80K to 154K.
2. Is there a plan in the budget for the work to continue for the work?
   1. Yes and it will travel down to the elementary schools. Dr. Harrison family equity liaison – focus group meeting for the parents. Text money to buy books talking about race, equity, and social justice. Two themes that came from teachers – they want to do this work and want to do it well. NH an VA have hotlines for parents to dial in if their student is uncomfortable with what their teachers are teaching. Work is moving slowly because there are a lot of stressors in the classroom, but they are still working on helping the students.

Clarice:

1. A recent graduate online said the textbooks that are used at the high school are outdated. Is this true?
   1. We replace textbooks every year – some replace and some refurbished.
2. Why don’t we look for local businesses to supply food to us?
   1. We have looked into it. It sounds simple but many of the local vendors they are more expensive and can’t supply enough. It is through a state bid and we can’t match the price of this locally. If breakfast and lunch become free for all but at this point we don’t qualify in Guilford after the pandemic.

Jennifer Labbadia-Colon

1. Can we have distance learning on snow days?
   1. One year exception last year but didn’t get renewed this year. In person is better. This year is a 180-day school year. There is some vague talk that the 180 may be lifted again this year but not at this point. He thinks going forward this may happen but not now

Ana-Maria Schell

1. When you propose a coaching position are they subject matter focused or grade level?
   1. Yes they are specialists in broad subject areas. At first it was just literacy but now we have mathematics as well. The new one is slated for STEM. Two positions that are technology integration specialists.
2. When you create a curriculum do you do a benchmark with other schools?
   1. Each has a shelf life of 4-5 years
   2. State of CT identifies standards and that is the starting point
   3. We look at other schools as well
   4. There are a lot of federal guidelines too
3. Did the money from Govt help and was it enough?
   1. Not enough and 10% had to be used for learning loss. We got $900,000.
      1. Providing 2 additional social workers
      2. English learner teacher
      3. Special ed budget

Dr. Freeman ended at 7:43PM then Audrey begins meeting…

Treasurer report:

**Christina Holmes – we are on track – teachers supply checks went out a few weeks ago. Miscellaneous expense – Colors of the world crayons – ABAR committee purchase?? Going to look into how ABAR money is distributed as well.**

4th grade activities – hoping to do more this year but nothing set in stone yet.

Enrichment – Christine Manuck – didn’t have as much enrollment as the in person. 17 registered students – had to cancel yoga class. Hoping Mid-March will be in person. Question was asked about weekend enrichment? Christine is looking into it.

Assemblies – Children’s museum begins Tuesday the 15th -24th –

K and 1 – tiny houses

2 – fossils to footprints

3- balloon cars

4- wizarding workshop

Kindergarten teachers asked about weather – they are going to have a zoom program with a meteorologist.

Art Night Out – Kristen Hershman and Lauren Testani – Mrs. Donarumo is going to help. All projects have been chosen. Looking for silent auction and sponsorships as well.

Variety Show – March 1st is the deadline to submit acts. 8 acts are confirmed. At the end of the show everyone will sing with Mr. Abraham.

Yearbook update – in holding pattern because of covid. Working on a google classroom yearbook club but hoping to not have to use it. Looking in to figuring out if we can meet in person.

ABAR Update – focusing on spring. Resources for holocaust remembrance day. Black history month. Working on reading events with the library. Still planning on doing non-clothing drive – has been put off. Looking and actively seeking volunteers for April. Harmony Day – looking for volunteers – going to celebrate in May at all elementary schools. Any questions reach out to Kristine Ford.

Leete turns up the heat cookbook – will be available to purchase

Valentines Day for Bus drivers – bring in valentines for the bus drivers.

SEPTO – new board – cookie social in December – IDEA requirements coming out and happening and some professionals coming to speak. Working with Jason Sconziano for parents to ask questions. Every April – The R word campaign coming back this year.

Hospitality Chairs – Lauren Testani and Christine Manuck – put together a gift for Mr. Abraham for his new baby coming soon. Hall was decorated for Mrs. Sloley’s return.

Volunteer Needs – Art Auction, Variety Show, and 4th Grade Activities

Mrs. Dolan asked about bringing back the school store.. as of now we can’t have parent volunteers but hopefully soon or we can utilize the teachers as well.

Next Meeting: March 2, 2022 at 6:30pm

Meeting Adjourned 8:28pm

Teacher Report:

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| Kindergarten | In skills block, the kindergarteners continue to apply their growing phonemic awareness to decode and encode single-syllable CVC words. The current unit focuses on digraphs (th,sh,ch) and short vowels. We continue to introduce and reinforce kindergarten sight words through the use of decodable texts.  In writing, we are continuing the Weather Wonders unit. In this unit, students are learning and writing about the different types of weather and the environmental components that impact them. We recently began to study weather around the world through our mentor text On the Same Day in March. We are beyond excited to have WFSB meteorologist Scot Haney join us via zoom this month to discuss his role as a meteorologist.  In math, kindergartners are focusing on ordering and comparing numbers 1-10, solving addition and subtraction problems within 10, comparing objects’ lengths, and adding with pennies and nickels.  Kindergartners are continuing their social-emotional lessons with Mrs. Carney. Students are currently engaged in safety lessons during this time.  **GRADE 1 -** In literacy, first graders were working on open and closed two syllable words and are now starting to explore the Magic e rule for long vowel sounds. They are continuing their studies of the sun, moon, and stars, through reading poems, observing photographs, taking notes, and reading many different genres of text. Some science standards are integrated in the unit as well which makes it fun and exciting for the students!  In math, students continue their work in exploring addition and subtraction. They are comparing numbers, learning different strategies to solve problems, and solving real life story problems. |
|  | FIrst graders are focusing on the pillars of choose love including courage and gratitude. They have been reading stories, role playing, and discussing the importance of them.  In math, students continue their work in exploring addition and subtraction. They are comparing numbers, learning different strategies to solve problems, and solving real life story problems. |
| Grade 2 | In literacy, 2nd grade has been learning about fossils and earth changes. They have been very excited about this unit. We have looked at multiple texts already to expand their understanding of fossils. The culminating task of this unit is writing a narrative about finding fossils.  In math, they are just finishing up their 4th unit where they have been focusing on measuring. Second graders have looked at inches, feet, and yards with estimating and  finding actual answers. While doing this they have worked a lot with word problems and started looking at fractions in measurement.  In science, they have been working through the  Engineering Design Process to try and harness the wind. They started with sails and tried to design one that would work best. They thought about the different properties of the material they were making the sails with and why they thought it would work well or not. They are now in the  process of taking their learning from sails and trying to  apply it to windmills. |
| Grade 3 | In math third graders are learning about the metric system and how it pertains to mass and volume. Soon they will take a closer look at fractions, fractional parts, and fractions on a number line.  In Literacy students continue to take a close look at Peter Pan as they learn about the historical context during the time period in which it was written.  The monthly share focus for February will be on Black History Month and President’s Day. Third graders will select an individual of interest and conduct a mini research project. They will record themselves on Flipgrid once the final draft is complete. |
| Grade 4 | Literacy-Just finished our animal defense mechanisms unit. Students also wrote choose your own narratives using their researched animal as the main character. We are moving on to a historical fiction unit focused on the history of  Chinese-American, immigration in the early 1900’s  Math-Students finished learning about fractions and decimals. They are currently learning about measurement conversions and place values up to one million. We will be shifting our focus to multi digit addition and subtracting up to one million. |

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| Art | In addition to regularly scheduled classes, Mrs. Donarumo has been working along with classes and their teachers to make interdisciplinary connections between literacy and  art. In 1st grade, students created warm/cool colored night and day artworks to go along with their Sun, Moon and Stars unit. In 4th grade, students worked in the art room to create the animal cover illustrations for their “Choose Your Own Adventure” unit. |
| PE  Music | Grades K-2 have been hard at work in our balancing unit. Students have had the opportunity to practice various types of balancing through the use of unique balance stations and games/activities.  Grades 3-4 have been working in a speed, strength, and reaction time unit. Students have been challenged in a variety of concepts that will help prepare them for sport competitions as well as personal fitness.  Students in all grade levels have completed our whole school songwriting project! The song we wrote together is called We Choose Love. We are now in the process of creating a music video for the song. Students in each class are recording audio performances of the song. 2nd graders are creating artwork for the music video in collaboration with Mrs. Donarumo. Once all recordings and artwork are complete, Mr. Abraham will edit the video and share! |
| Library | In Library, all grade levels have recently completed their hour of code units. Moving forward:  **Kindergarten** classes are working on comparing and contrasting books by the same author (Jan Brett) as well as different authors.  **First graders** are listening to The Story of Diva and Flea by Mo Willems. They will each be creating their own character when we are done.  **Second graders** are beginning a unit that will help them identify the characteristics of a good story. They will be doing some activities related to sensory details and vivid descriptions.  **Third graders** are participating in lessons about digital citizenship. Topics include being responsible to yourself, your community, and your world; strong passwords; and information that should not be shared online.  **Fourth graders** are involved in a unit called Is Seeing Believing? Students are analyzing photos and websites to determine if what they are seeing and reading is real or fake. They will be learning how to find reliable information. |