

Boylston Elementary School

PTO Membership Meeting

October 7, 2021

Attendance: Please refer to sign in sheet.

Agenda:

Item #1: Principal report

Mr. Thompson said that there have been many questions from parents regarding Covid-19 close contact quarantining policies. He hopes that his recent FAQ email helped clear up any confusion. He said that one main point is that if a student is symptomatic and a doctor hasn't determined a specific cause such as strep throat, etc., a negative PCR test is required to return to school. If a student is testing as a result of being deemed a close contact, a negative rapid antigen test is satisfactory to return to school. The school is working on a shorter clearer, reader-friendly informational letter to send home with students in the event that it is deemed they must receive a negative Covid test to return to school.

A meeting attendee asked about the status of the test and stay program. Mr. Thompson said that the district is closer to getting the program up and running. The nurses are finishing training, and the school has worked out logistical details such as where students will wait for their results. Mr. Thompson said that the district is looking for substitute nurses, and that the pay has recently increased. He asked people to encourage interested candidates to contact him.

Mr. Thompson also said that the school is working on plans for the annual BES Halloween parade. He anticipates a shift to the usual parade time. He said that masks which cover students' mouths and noses will still be required. Toy weapons, and costume masks which cover students' entire faces and make it difficult to identify students will not be allowed.

Item #2: Teacher report

Mrs. Gaucher did not have anything new to report.

Item #3: Boylston Public Library Foundation guest

Christi Stille, President of the Boylston Public Library Foundation, joined the meeting. She said that the Library Foundation is a nonprofit established in 1983 to support the Library. She said that the Foundation has provided operational/seed funding for the Library to try new programs such as CWM Mars, Ancestry, Kanopy, Hoopla, and Overdrive. The foundation also provides support to the Friends of the Library organization which funds special programming. The Foundation has also funded capital projects such as new circulation desks and tables, laptops and hotspots for patrons, and video screens for the Children's room and reference room. They also provided \$576,000 toward the recent Library renovation and expansion. Funding comes through grants, memorial bequests, and from Boylston residents through the Foundation's fundraising annual appeal. The Foundation is looking for volunteers to continue its mission in supporting the Library. Volunteers can join as Corporators to help with specific

initiatives or as a Director to help guide the direction of the Foundation. Any interested individuals are encouraged to reach out to Christi Stille for more information.

Item #4: Treasurer report

Cindy Mackenzie, co-treasurer, shared a treasurer report, which is available on file. She said that one year ago, the PTO account balance was around \$18,000, and now it is around \$30,000.

Item #5: Fall fundraiser update

Cindy Mackenzie reported that the first order collection for the magazine drive recently took place. There are two other collections coming up.

Item #6: Bobcat t-shirt sale update

Cindy Mackenzie said that the t-shirt vendor reported that all but two colors for Bobcat t-shirts are backordered due to supply chain issues. It is anticipated that the t-shirt orders will be ready at the end of October.

Item #7: BES Pumpkinfest update

Christina Calvao-Medeiros said that the Pumpkinfest planning committee has been meeting to plan the first annual BES Pumpkinfest. She asked Mr. Thompson if the PTO could access the school's master list of parent emails in order to raise awareness about the event. Mr. Thompson said he could send an email on the PTO's behalf through SchoolMessenger or update parents through his weekly blog. Christina said that the PTO would like to provide free tickets to families who might not otherwise be able to attend due to financial hardships, and the group discussed the best way for families to receive the tickets in a confidential way. Mr. Thompson will assist in working out the details. Christina said that at the event, masks will be required for people to enter the building to use the restroom, and masks will be encouraged but not required outside. There will be hand sanitizer stations available. Christina said that the PTO will need to pay a custodian for the event, and that the committee is hoping to borrow some tables and chairs from the school as well as trash bins. Mr. Thompson said that should not be a problem.

Christina said that the committee is planning to send out a Sign-Up Genius to solicit volunteers for the event. Christina said that the committee had discussed whether this event should be opened up to younger and older students in town, and the group felt that other students should be welcome to attend. Flyers will be sent to preschools in Boylston and Berlin, as well as to the Library. Christina asked how the group felt the pumpkin contest should be organized. The consensus was that there should be prizes for the top carved pumpkins and the top painted pumpkins, but that categorizing them by age group would be too challenging to organize. Event guests can vote for their favorite pumpkins by writing a pumpkin's number on a ticket and submitting the ticket to a voting box. In addition to the pumpkin contest, there will be 9 pumpkins created by staff for a silent auction.

Christina said that there will be music played at the event and asked Mr. Thompson if electricity can be accessed. He said that shouldn't be a problem. Christina said that there will be carnival style games created by BES classes and room parents. Mr. Thompson said that the Tahanto Student Council might also be interested in volunteering to plan and run games. Cindy Mackenzie will reach out to coordinate those. She will also reach out to the Library and a few families in town who have giant lawn games the PTO could borrow for the event. Elevation Fitness volunteered to run a kids' activity at the event as well. A family photo station will be set up at the event. The group will either purchase a photo backdrop or utilize Halloween inflatables. Christina suggested that it might be a good idea for volunteers to have some type of button, lanyard, or nametag to families can identify volunteers and ask questions. Jackie Hoffses, co-chair, said she would look into that.

Item #8: School assemblies update

Libby Dumais, co-chair, said that the dates for this year's assemblies have been scheduled. The Science Wizard assembly will be on October 22nd, and Hero Art will be on May 27th.

Item #9: Potential book fair bake sale

Mr. Thompson confirmed that the book fair family night is scheduled for December 2nd. Jackie Hoffses said that in the past, the PTO held a bake sale that evening. Closer to the date a sign up genius will be created and sent out for baked good donations and for volunteers to watch the table.

Item #10: Other items discussed

Jackie Hoffses said that a goal this year is to increase the PTO's social media presence to promote events and raise awareness about how the PTO supports BES. Erin Murtagh has volunteered to be a social media coordinator for the PTO and recently created an Instagram account for the PTO as well as increased its Facebook presence.

Jackie Hoffses also said that last year's Race For Education proceeds are in the PTO's account and can be utilized for a cause that Mr. Thompson feels will benefit and enrich education at BES. Mr. Thompson said he would begin thinking of ideas.

The next meeting will take place on December 12th at 6:30 in the BES library.

Meeting adjourned 7:50 pm.

Respectfully signed,

Kristin Milton, Secretary