**Thornell Road PTSA Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, November 16th, 2021 10AM**

**Attendees:** Virginia Brown, Roger DeBell, Ivana Nadler, Colleen Emmons, Andrea True, Emily Waller, Thahara, Michelle Miller, Laura Webber, Elizabeth Wenger, Deborah Trimble, Hillary Bobys, Kylie DeGrave, Dawn Schnell, Megan Bonaforte, Christine Ferarra, Laura Wixson, Sadie Szrama, Liz Selkow, Drew Morkis, Erin C, Deborah Trimble, Allison Magnuson, Megan Bonaforte, Sarah Marche

**Call to order, 10:10am**

**Opening remarks: Colleen Emmons**

Membership update: Our – TRE’s goal is to reach 125 families who purchased PTSA membership. So far, we are at 99. The good news is that we are not at the bottom of the district anymore. The district has bypassed its membership goal. To encourage the families to sign up for membership, PTSA will be starting to draw names on this Friday for $10 Spirit Wear gift cards. Please sign up!

Light the loop was a huge success; the district raised a similar amount of money as last year. Enormous thank you to the volunteers who came to set up. Each school does Light the loop a little differently and therefore they are reporting different concerns that may have come up this year. The event will be back next year and we will be incorporating any changes due to these concerns.

Bookfair - Just closed, Becca McCormic and Laura Pullem ran it. Thank you to the volunteers! We had $8698.31 of total sales. Due to Covid concerns, we did not have the rollerblading event and the parent nights. We are not yet sure which way the bookfair is going to happen in the future, but this past bookfair was very successful in spite of omitting these features. From the profit, first $1500 goes directly to PTSA’s fundraising budget and the rest goes to Scholastic dollars for the teachers to use. We’re going to make sure you know where this money goes to. In the spring, all the money will go to scholastic dollars, which will then be applied to school, since we cleared our budget goal.

Some of the profit was shared with Happy birthday chahaha – we were able to provide them with 2 huge boxes of books for children that they requested.

Congratulations to the first grade families who raised the most money from the book fair, their grade won! Laura Pullem who runs the bookfair is always looking for volunteers to help in the future, please contact her if you are interested.

We held the PTSA parent night to discuss what PTSA does with parents who can’t make it to the morning PTSA meetings. We were able to hear a report from SEPTA and from Susan Levitan, who shared with us the district’s health and wellness updates and resources. Comments from the attending parents brought up questions about anti bullying resources. This is something PTSA would like to help with and will provide more information about it in the future. Another topic of interest to the TRE PTSA leadership and the parents was a building of school community. PTSA is truly trying to find opportunities to have children involved as a part of community, which has been especially difficult with COVID around. To further this goal, we are looking into running a family game night in March.

Budget review – We have another immediate open position for treasurer. If anyone is willing to do this, we really need to have a treasurer. Colleen has been through a training, it is not too difficult and you would not have to be present at the meetings to fill this role.

Our budget comes from an older document and some of the lines do not reflect programs that we are currently running. Sadie and Emily have also requested a line item for DE&I, so that they can financially support their programs. Colleen brought up a proposal to amend the budget on two lines. 1. Propose $200 line for the budget for DE&I. 2. $200 for Student Opportunity Fund. This fund would provide tuition for enrichment or similar items for students in need. The only questions clarified that if we don’t charge against any of these items, the funds won’t disappear. Motion to vote on these, Voted yes.

**Mr. DeBell:**

Good morning! Obviously the topic is our current situation with Covid at TRE. Mr. DeBell has been in regular communication with the District Leadership team, who is in communication with Dr. Mendoza and the county health department. A lot of information is coming really fast. Yesterday Mr. DeBell wanted to have a person from a district or a health department audit the procedures at TRE to reevaluate the procedures the school is taking to minimize Covid spread. The email he sent on Monday the 15th detailed this audit.

Covid is spreading in our community, some locations are hit harder than others. School busses might be a source. The administration is looking very closely at that. Maintaining protocols on the bus is crucial. Contact tracers are looking at where were you without the mask less than 6ft apart for 15 min.

District is looking to sponsor rapid test clinic at Thornell Road. Email came out today, Tuesday Nov. 16th with the details.

Mr. DeBell had a long discussion with a parent/physician looking for any items to bring up with the district. Two suggestions were looking closer at the procedures on the school busses and reinstating the daily qualtrix survey.

Many parents are bringing up the disparities between district and county dashboard. County updates its dashboard daily, district updates on Wednesdays at 10am. Mr. DeBell will talk about that with the District Leadership team, but meanwhile it is more accurate to look at the County data.

If you did a home test and had a positive result, they recommend that you get a PCR test with a medical care provider, that way you would get on the county health department radar, and they would provide guidance.

Surface contamination does not seem to be a huge concern. It is good to think about, but not a critical aspect of covid transmission. Covid 19 is airborne respiratory virus. The currently active delta variation is very infective. The question is whether the health deparment has modified its approach in response to the Delta variant? TRE administration and the district leadership team are looking at what more can be done to prevent the spread.

Q&A:
- Would they ever consider quarantining a classroom? This comes from county health department, not the school or school district. School’s job is to make sure all the protocols are fully implemented, but the decisions beyond that are at a district or county level.
- Transparency about numbers in the classroom: This is still a topic of conversation. We are not the first building to be impacted with numbers like this. Right now, notifications sent with over 3 cases, but he has it on his list to review and lower this threshold.
- Since numbers are high on the buses, who alerts families who ride on the buses? Are kids re-taught about mask-wearing? They think what’s happening is that it’s hard to hear on the bus with so many kids on the bus, so kids might be pulling down their masks to be heard. They are working directly with Director of Transportation and Safety Coordinator to correct some of these measures. Looking into putting another adult on the bus to monitor. He’s not sure if/how families will be alerted for cases on the bus, but he will look into it.
- How will he be updating the school on the progressing situation day to day? He wants to keep everyone updated with changes. They’re trying to figure out the details of this. Overall theme is that the parents would like to see the district do more than what is being done. The details are the challenge. Updates will be sent as information is available. Director of Student services has been amazing working with Mr. DeBell, she is the liaison between the county and the district.
- For a class with multiple cases, more than the threshold of 3, how is this handled? There is no plan for remote learning, but that doesn't mean it’s off the table. He said there are some classrooms that are half full. Some of those are a combination of positive covid and also parents/families making a decision to keep their kids home. They are evaluating this. - How are the teachers doing? So far, staff is staying healthy. They are vaccinated and boosted and are in a good place. Mr. DeBell is really worried about our vulnerable little ones. There are many sleepless nights.

-Teachers are staying healthy. Vaccinations and boosters have been had and the adults seem to be in a good place.
- Mr. DeBell ran out of Q&A time but took all the questions from the Zoom chat and will be addressing these. His inbox is blowing up right now, so it’s hard to keep up with the communication. If there is a pressing need you have, please work with your classroom teacher.

-Mr. DeBell offered to consider a zoom opportunity with himself for families in the future

This is Mr. DeBell’s last year in Thornell Road. The notice has to be sent to the superintendent by Dec. 1st. This does not indicate that he’ll be less dedicated to the students. We need to stick together to get out of this.

**Committee updates:**

Reindeer lane: Gina - Asked for volunteers, still to organize the volunteers. Shop is going to be set up on Monday. Shopping for the students will start on Tuesday-half day, Wednesday-whole day, Thursday-half day, Friday-half day shop and half day pack up. Everything has been shipped. Supplies should be plentiful, resupply should be fine too, but shipping has gone up like crazy! The vendor suggested that we keep one of whatever we are running of, get a list of kids who would like this, and get them all together at the end. There are plenty of mugs but we could consider supplementing pet toys, which are popular.

Kindergarten school spirit day: We are giving pencils and certificates to students. Dessert for teachers.

Membership toolkit needs more sign ups – to get in touch with people. We still have many families to sign up. Perhaps activate everyone unless they opt out?

Enrichment – Colleen is looking to organize a week-long, one time opportunities for afterschool enrichment. We would try to make it happen about three times this semester, one week at a time. These would be short exposure classes. Cookie decorating, Science center (slime), tie dye,… TRE would be piloting it for the district. Also, looking into bringing back family game nights.

Fall enrichment is wrapping up, Winter and spring is TBD.

Science Action –

Spirit wear – Kristin was not present. We had issues with shipping (supply chain ect) but the ordered fall spirit wear should be picked up today and people should get their items soon.

DE&I – Emily Waller – looking into a rainbow club, looking into a book club, happy to have a budget

Other conversation – back to Covid theme.

There is a school board meeting tonight, there was an opportunity to add to public comments before noon. Given that a lot of decisions are on the higher up level, this is a good avenue to explore to get some answers.

Suggestion that the transparency should be coming from the parents of children who tested positive for Covid. They should possibly contact any exposed contact. It seems to be the best bet, as the department of health takes a long time, which makes it not useful. Also, the schools go out of their way to protect the kids’ privacy which often results in the exposed individuals not being notified.

Another suggestion was that a pediatrician presents at the evening meeting with Mr. DeBell what to watch out for when it comes to Covid symptoms in children.