



Potomac Elementary School

School Board Minutes

For

December 14th, 2020

Phone (406) 244-5581

Fax (406) 244-5840

www.potomacschoolmontana.us

*“Potomac School equips each student for his/her future
within a culture of excellence that values the small community experience.”*

Call to Order

Chair Vann called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm by leading all in the Pledge of Allegiance. Trustees Kelsy Ployhar, Wes Mitchell, and Courtney Hathaway were present. Chairman Cliff Vann and trustee Gary Long attended via Webex. Principal John Rouse and Clerk, Heather Marcella, were also in attendance.

Public Input (for issues not on the agenda) None.

Consent Agenda

Minutes of November 9th were on the Consent Agenda

Warrant Lists – Total Claims = \$96,410.53. Total Payroll = \$81,922.28

Business Cards – Included in Total Claims noted.

Petty Cash – Supplemental to monthly warrants used between Board Meetings – Reimbursed thru Claims.

Extracurricular (Student Accounts) – On November 1, 2020- \$38,797.02 thru November 30, 2020 - \$50,868.19.

Kelsy moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Courtney, seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

8th Grade Class Trip Report –

Jaylee Zander and Lily Van Grinsven presented to the Board via Webex. Jaylee reported the class has \$5,165 left to fundraise in order to meet their budget goal. They have raised \$17,390 to date.

Current fundraising projects include the school spirit wear, candle sales, Papa Murphy's pizza orders, a quilt raffle and a winner's choice raffle.

Principal Rouse reminded the students that high school registrations are due by this Thursday.

Teacher Reports:

Ashley Olsen

Ashley discussed working on spelling patterns with students. In the spring she attended a workshop on phonics and spelling patterns. Ashley has implemented the Clock Face Spelling Rules in her class this year. Students are using episodic memory to learn spelling patterns. Each hour on the clock is used to reference a specific spelling rule. These rules help students identify letter patterns within a word and lets them know when it is appropriate to use different letters that share the same sound. An example would be the letters “c” and “k” - helping students understand why cat starts with “c” and kite should start with a “k”.

Bryanna Peterson

Bryanna discussed the preschool backpack program. Bryanna is putting together backpacks for local preschool aged children every two weeks. These backpacks include three books and activity outlines. Each new set of Backpack lessons focuses on a different topic. The books and activity materials are free and for the families to keep. The supplies help the children with early literacy, recognizing sounds, color identification, sorting and counting. There are currently 15 children

in the program. Bryanna also has three on-site preschool children, which she teaches in the library. She has stations set up around the room that focus on literacy, counting, sorting, and color/sound/letter identification. Bryanna discussed the need for preschool appropriate playground equipment. The PTC and the school are working together to secure this equipment.

Principal’s Report – John Rouse

All of the following activities and accomplishments would not have been possible without the full cooperation and engagement of all of the Potomac School staff members.

Teaching and Learning- Instructional Framework

- As part of our original literacy grant, the staff developed an instructional framework to help guide our instructional planning and lesson delivery.
- The components include:
 - Consistent Beginning/Opening
 - Authentic Literacy
 - Effective Instruction
 - Ending
- Beginning/Opening
 - Bell ringer
 - Essential Question
 - Anticipatory Set
 - Lesson Objective
 - Activating Background Knowledge
 - Overview of Prior Learning
- Authentic Literacy
 - Purposeful Reading, Writing, and Discussion in all content areas
 - Vocabulary instruction
 - Reading to infer/interpret/draw conclusions
 - Support arguments w/evidence
 - Resolve conflicting views encountered in source documents
 - Solve complex problems with no obvious answer
- Effective Instruction
 - Direct Instruction
 - Gradual Release of Responsibility
 - Academically Engaged Students
 - Check for Understanding
 - Reflective Lesson Plan
 - Maximize Use of Time
- Ending
 - Lesson wrap-up
 - Exit strategies/ Check for Understanding

- This month’s Instructional Framework focus for the board meeting is “Effective Instruction.” To get an understanding of what we mean by the term, effective instruction, we look to the work of some of the best educational researchers and practitioners. Included in the group are Madeline Hunter and Robert Marzano. Drs. Hunter and Marzano researched some of the strategies that were being used by teachers who were consistently getting strong positive results in terms of student achievement.

A few of those strategies include:

- Stating the lesson’s purpose or anticipatory set
 - Using advanced organizers (To help set what, why, and how)
 - Review of prior learnings
 - Provide relevant examples
 - Using metacognition and modeling
 - Checking for understanding
 - Guided practice with corrective feedback
 - Independent practice
 - Using closure
 - Provide opportunities for each student to respond.
- A more comprehensive listing of these effective instructional practices can be found on the CMSI Schoolview Observation form that was included in the board packet. This form is used by Mr. Rouse during informal classroom observations to gather data on which practices were observed in use.

Budget and Finance

- Given that we have quite a bit of money to spend through the literacy grants, Heather and I have set up a spreadsheet process whereby we are able to track the expenditures in each of our grants in one Google document that is constantly updated as new purchase orders are approved.
- We have a December 31st deadline on some of our Covid-related funding. Through the efforts of our staff and of Heather in particular we will have our full allocation spent by that deadline.

Student Activities

- The health department approved the written plan that I submitted for our Christmas programs on December 16th and 17th. Their approval allows us to seat a maximum of 70 guests in the audience. That means each student can invite up to four guests for our performances that are staggered by cohort group.
- This size restriction would also potentially impact how or if we are able to hold our annual Missoula Children’s Theater (MCT) production this year.

Safety

- As we approach the potential for an ever-increasing number of Covid cases in and around our community, we are having to prepare for the potential that face-to-face instruction in schools may not continue to be possible. In anticipation of this possibility and to address some concern issues we are having with students who are not present for face-to-face instruction, we have made some revisions to our Opt-Out Option. Currently we have a few families who are asking for their students to be served through online instruction even though their students have not been required to be quarantined by the health department nor they have family members at home who are at risk. The Opt-Out Option was put in place in response to our recent 1900 policies that were adopted by the board to address the emergency resulting from Covid. If a student is absent from school due to normal childhood illness, that student should follow our regular procedures for completing his or her assignments while absent rather than attempting to participate through our online protocols involving extra planning and effort on the part of our teachers.

- Additionally, we have some students who have selected the Opt-Out option who are not consistently engaging during the online instruction or who are not submitting their completed assignments or assessments. Policy 1905 that gave us the authority to grant credit to students for online learning requires that we are able to assess the students’ learning and document their progress. Students who do not complete and submit their online assignments by the deadlines established by their teacher will receive an “Incomplete” for those assignments and assessments. Students who fail to consistently complete assignments and/or assessments may lose the option to Opt Out of face-to-face learning. The principal will consider extenuating circumstances before removing Opt Out option.
- As the number of Covid cases increases, we need to establish a decision point for when we will shift to full online instruction even if the health department does not mandate school closures. For example if we have a third or 33% percent of our enrolled students (or 26 students) who are being quarantined, that would average three students per grade level, so in our combined grade level classes that would be six students who would be streaming instruction. At that point, it would not be practical for our teachers to try to instruct both students in his or her classroom at online. Likewise if we have more than two of our teachers out for quarantine, we would not be able to secure enough substitute teachers to cover their in-class instruction. Under the Covid situation, we are lucky to find one substitute for any given day. Therefore, the administration is recommending that our trigger points for going to all online instruction would be 33% of students (twenty-six) out for Covid or no more than two of our teachers out.
- Once we go into the online instructional mode, we will remain in that mode for two weeks and then reassess where we stand relative to the two trigger points- having 26 students out or more than 2 certified teachers out to determine whether or not to return to face-to-face instruction.

Facilities

- No new report on facilities.

Respectfully submitted by:

John P. Rouse, Principal

Clerk’s Report

The Clerk reported on the FY19-20 Audit progress and gave details on the purchases made using the Governor’s Coronavirus Relief funds.

Board Professional Development Reports –

Trustee Wes Mitchell is conducting the Board Packet Review this month.

Old Business - None

New Business

Personnel

Approve Aline Joandeau as Substitute Teacher, Custodian, and Cook

Kelsy moved to approve Aline Joandeau as substitute teacher, custodian and cook, pending a background check. Courtney seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

Consider and approve items as surplus so they may be sold, recycled or donated – 9 smartboards, 9 projectors, and a Konica Minolta copy machine.

Kelsy moved to sell, recycle, or donate the listed items. Courtney seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

Consider approving the revised Return to School Plan.

Kelsy moved to approve the revised Back to School Plan. Wes seconded the motion. The board discussed the Return to School Plan and the accompanying Family Onsite Instruction Opt-Out Form. The board decided to strike out the last sentence in the “Overview” paragraph of the Opt-Out Form.

Kelsy amended her motion to approve the Back to School Plan with the revised Opt-Out Form. Wes seconded. **Passed 5-0**

Consider recommendation to cancel basketball season.

Courtney moved to cancel the basketball season for this school year. Kelsy seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

Policy Update – 8210-R Noninstructional Operations.

Kelsy moved to approve the 1st reading of policy update to 8210-R Noninstructional Operations. Courtney seconded the motion. The board reviewed the policy. They chose a \$10,000 starting purchase value for purchasing guidelines and the optional “Geographic Preference” and “Buy American” policy language. Board Chair, Cliff Vann, asked the clerk to include any purchases over \$10,000 in the Clerk’s Report going forward. **Passed 5-0**

Approve MTSBA FY 2022 Dues Revenue Estimate

Kelsy moved to approve the MTSBA FY 2022 dues revenue estimate. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0**

Principal’s Evaluation

At 8:58 pm Board Chair Cliff Vann closed the session for the principal’s review.

Adjourn

Chair Vann adjourned the meeting at 10:14 pm.

Cliff Vann, Chair

date

Heather Marcella, Clerk

date