

# Grace Abbott Elementary PTO Meeting      Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> 2017

**Board Members:** Jaime Diamond, President; Josh Kitchen, Treasurer; Christy Kleffman, Secretary; Alyssa Mason, President Elect

- **Welcome/ Introduction** of Board Members and meeting attendees. The meeting was called to order at 6:27 PM.
- Mrs. Johannsen thanked the board for the grant that purchased the book The Energy Bus which is being used during Swamp Time this year. Other teachers also wrote thank yous to the PTO for the grants that have been received.
- **Superintendent's Meeting:** Notes were shared from the last Superintendent's meeting so PTO members would be aware of recent happenings in the district.
- **Review November Meeting Minutes:** Cara Robbins motioned to approve and Cheri Shoup seconded
- **Principal Report:** The custodians have requested that the PTO storage closet be cleaned out and organized.
- **Secretary Report:** Please email Christy Kleffman (crmk77@cox.net) when you need to reserve a room at Abbott for your event. Your email should include the dates and times of your event, as well as the digital form for room reservations that you can get from your committee head. The form includes several questions you will need to answer about your event. Please note that even if your event is on the Grace Abbott calendar, that does not mean that it has been reserved with the district.
- **Treasurer Report:** We just received a \$2300 check for Box Tops. Thank you for collecting! Walk - A- Thon 2016 funds have been finalized.
- **Committee Updates:**
  - **Classroom Party Volunteer Coordinator (Carri Dyer)**
    - Room Parent Funding Form Review: A new form has been created for room parents to use to organize any money collected. If more than \$300 is going to be collected, the board needs to be contacted. Any checks written for classroom parties or activities must be made out to the PTO.
    - After a vote, it was decided that Valentines Day parties will be held at 2:00 on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Going forward for classroom parties, the Classroom Party coordinator will coordinate the dates with the school and administration by the beginning of May. It should be double checked that these dates are listed correctly on the online school calendar.
  - **Movie Nights (Maureen Kitchen)**
    - February 10<sup>th</sup> is the next movie night.
  - **Walk-A-Thon (Julie Shaner)**
    - Numbers for the 2016 Walk-A-Thon are final and all of the matching funds have come through.
  - **Social/Welcome Committee (Jessi Mann/Amy Skolaut)**
    - Volunteers are still needed for the Snowflake Breakfast. There are 19 spaces still available, such as ticket collecting and running the cake walk. Participants can pre-purchase their tickets online on the PTO website. Volunteers are also needed on Friday night to help decorate the gym.
    - **Original Art Works Fundraiser (Debbie Smith)**
      - This year's initial setup has begun. We are just waiting for supplies to arrive.
    - **School Carnival (Kristy Gotschall)**
      - First meeting for the Carnival committee will take place following tonight's PTO meeting. The date for this year's Carnival is Friday April 28<sup>th</sup>.

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- **Fifth Grade Farewell (Candace Casper/Jennifer Cukendall/Shelly Anzalone)** No update
- **Cash Rewards/Incentive Programs (Candice Casper/Robin Matthes)** Roughly \$300 from Hy-Vee receipts has been collected. The Winter Box Tops collection is estimated at \$836 so far.
- **Yearbook (Suzie Hartman)** Yearbooks are still for sale. 5<sup>th</sup> grade dedications can still be turned in if you have not done so already.
- **Bricks (Erin Barry)** No update
- **Fun Nights (Cara Robbins)** A hot chocolate buffet and bunco night for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders will be held on Friday January 13<sup>th</sup>.
- **Youth Frontiers (Julie Shaner)** No update
- **Educational Grant Programs/Scholarships (Carri Dyer)** Student applications are due February 1<sup>st</sup>, so applications for the scholarship will start arriving soon.
- **Buzz Book (Laura Hensley)** Buzz Books are done and distributed for the year.
- **Hospitality (Becky Eichmann)** No update
- **New Business**
  - **Walk-A-Thon Fund Discussion/Voting:** Items for consideration are listed here. Please see more information on each idea below.
    - Cement Track Savings
    - Popcorn Machine
    - Additional Circuit Training Equipment
    - Electric Pencil Sharpeners
    - New School Desks/Chairs
    - Little Free Library Structure
    - Rubber Mat instead of woodchips for the playground
  - **Veridian Contest:** Veridian is a new company in town. 8 schools were nominated to participate in a contest sponsored by Veridian. The school with the most online votes receives \$2500. People can vote for Grace Abbott to win once a day on the Veridian website.
  - **Discussion of how much money should be allocated for funding projects this year:** About \$55,000 total funds are available, including what is in the money market account. We need to keep about \$13,000 in the money market account to fund a year of PTO costs in case the PTO is ever disbanded. About \$6500 additional money is available as Walk-A- Thon brought in more money than expected. Spending \$37,900 would allow us to leave a safety net in place for next year. This item will be discussed further and voted on at the next meeting.
  - **A vote was held** to fund these four smaller items: the Little Free Library, the Popcorn Machine, the Electric Pencil Sharpeners, and the water bottle filling fountains. The popcorn machine, the electric pencil sharpeners, The Little Library (for a total up to a \$1000), and the Water fountains (for a total up to \$2000) all passed. Total cost of these four items will not exceed \$5000. A vote will be held at the next meeting for the four bigger items once we have more information on the budget, and a more precise cost estimate on the four items.
- **Questions:** No questions
- **Adjournment:** Christy Kleffman motioned to adjourn, and Joy Campbell seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

### Walk-A-Thon Fund Discussion/Voting:

**1. Cement Track Savings Plan:**

- a) Initial estimates from several years ago were around \$25K-\$30K.
- b) Standing Bear Elementary recently had one put in for approximately \$55K.
- c) We can request the project from Millard to get a firm estimate on the costs but would need to vote "yes" before that process can start.
- d) This would likely take 2-4 years of savings if completely funded by PTO
- e) The Pepperwood HOA may contribute to the project but will not make a decision until they have a firm estimate of the costs. Their donation would likely not be very large.
- f) Quotes from staff:
  - ⑩ "I like the idea of a cement track because it gives students more room (to walk, run, jumprope, etc.) when it's wet or snowy on the field. "
  - ⑩ "I would love a walking track!!!! As a person who loves to walk for exercise, I would personally use it after school on a regular basis. As a teacher, I would take my class around it for an exercise break and for counting and skip counting exercises. The staff would also use the track for our monthly (and hopefully more) Workout Wednesdays. The fresh outdoor walking would be so beneficial!! Thank you for considering this request.
  - ⑩ "I am pleased to know that the cement track idea is on the table! This has been a long time coming! I've been at Abbott for over 30 years, and we have always wished for this to happen. Here's why: It's a great gathering place for neighborhood walkers on the weekend, evenings, and when school isn't in session. Some more direct benefits to our school would be for Walking Clubs, Girls on the Run, PE, and for the older children who prefer walking over using the playground equipment, basketball, or soccer. It would promote movement for those children who may otherwise choose to sit or stand during recess.

**2. Popcorn Machine:**

- a) This would be used at PTO events and could be used by the school if requested. It would be the responsibility of the PTO to keep the machine clean and to ensure it was used properly according to all of the fire ordinances (which includes use only in the kitchen area).
- b) The model the PTO would need would cost between \$750-\$1000.

**3. Additional Circuit Training Equipment:**

- a) The PTO purchased equipment for a portion of "a circuit" in previous years.
- b) This purchase would be to complete the circuit.
- c) If the funding did not allow us to purchase the entire remainder of the "circuit", we would work with Mr. Spooner to determine which pieces would be most beneficial.
- d) The cost would be determined by which parts we decide to buy. \$3800 would provide approximately 3 pieces of equipment.

**4. Electric Pencil Sharpeners for all Classrooms:**

- a) This was requested by the staff members.
- b) Cost is approximately \$25-\$50/classroom.

**5. New School Desks/Chairs:**

- a) This was submitted by staff members. The current desks are approximately 36 years old. About 430 chairs/desks are needed to furnish the whole school with an approximate cost of up to \$300 for a desk and chair set.

**6 Little Free Library Structure:**

- a) This idea was submitted by a staff member.
- b) Here is what a staff member wrote: I also would like to put a bug in your ears for another project idea: A Little Free Library! I have implemented an indoor version at Abbott, and I think it would be a wonderful way to promote and share the love of reading with our community. It could be placed near the sidewalk leading to the circle outside the K door, in the grass/pine tree area near the front circular drive, or even near the walking path. I am roughly estimating the cost a few thousand dollars to get it up and

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running. There is a vendor on Etsy who custom builds the structure or a local could be hired. As far as the books, I started the indoor library with books from my personal collection and asked for donations via The Gator Tales. Staff members have also added to the library in the last year. It's been a raging success, especially for my class, due to more direct advertising on my part! Many of my students frequent the library daily and are happily finding books to borrow or keep, along with bringing in their personal donations. If you would like more information about Little Free Libraries, visit this site: [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org).

c)      An approximate cost is \$500.

### 7.      **Rubber Mat Instead of Wood Chips for the Playground:**

a). This was originally submitted to MPS by the School Improvement Team for payment with bond/levy funds

b). It was rejected by MPS, because this is not an issue that is unique to Abbott, and would not be a fair use of funds.

c).it would cost about \$40,000 for synthetic grass to be installed

d). Most likely, this is another "savings plan" idea.

### 8. **New Water Fountains for Filling Water Bottles:**

⑩      This was originally Submitted to MPS by the School Improvement Team for payment with bond/levy

⑩      This was also rejected by MPS because it is not an issue unique to Abbott.

⑩      Need to investigate the cost further but probably \$1500 per water fountain