

Whittier International Elementary PTA Meeting
September 11, 2017

of attendees: 20

Welcome & PTA Overview

- Whittier PTA is an independent non-profit, run by volunteers. The executive council consists of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer + committee chairs: Fundraising, Events and Communication. In the past, we have had an Advocacy chair which is presently open. For 2017-18 Because the team looks a little different each year, the efforts of PTA can vary from year to year.
- Our mission is to benefit Whittier school community with an annual budget of around \$27,500.
- 85% of PTA budget funds school programs: MacPhail Music partnership, Amity language intern, and field trips.
- Other efforts include community building, advocacy, and fundraising.
- Membership is optional for participation. Part of member fee goes to state PTA and the cost is \$8 individual/\$15 family.
- The school has a PTA office located between the media center and kindergarten hallway that includes a lending library and computer workstations available to parents/caregivers during school hours.

PTA Volunteer Needs

We are currently in need of volunteers for the following positions for the 2017-18 school year:

- Spirit Wear: Work with the Exec Council to maintain inventory, square store, deliver orders periodically during the school year and assist selling at events.
- Amity Coordinator: Lead the interview process in late Winter and recruit placement of intern into host families. Coordinator is not required to host.
- Give to the Max Co-Chair: Partner with Fundraising chair for the annual statewide non-profit fundraising event in November.
- Read-a-thon: One of the bigger annual fundraisers for the school. Last year's theme was Reading Superheroes and we raised over \$10K.
- Translation—Spanish and Somali assistance on ongoing basis. Presently one Spanish project need.
- All are encouraged to sign up for Family Directory which includes an option to join PTA as well as indicate Volunteer Interest.

Administrative Updates (Principal Gibbs)

- Safety and Security. The building Safety and Security plan was refined over the summer, resulting in the following changes:
 - Make door #1 primary entrance and close door #8.
 - Student who walk to school may use door #15 from 9:20-10:00 a.m. and 4:10-4:30.
 - No cars are permitted in Circle Drive, only emergency vehicles and small buses.

- Buses were moved forward on 27th ST and onto Harriet Avenue to open more space on 27th at main entrance for drop off.
- New permanent signage is on order.
- Feedback on the above should go to Principal Gibbs.
- Parent Pick Up. This year parent pick up is located in the multi-purpose room and kindergarten hallway. Parents are instructed to wait in the lunch room, then walk to Parent Pick Up staff to sign-out children. Principal Gibbs is exploring iPad setup for signing out.
- Parking signage has been ordered for those with mobility concerns, parents with strollers and expecting mothers.
- IB Learning Attributes. We look forward to furthering education around social/emotional learning. Also, our IB Student Ambassadors will be participating in a national conference in Bloomington, MN.

Upcoming Events

- Fall Community Breakfast (Jacques) — This is a before-school event that all parents/caregivers are invited to attend. It will again be in partnership with Common Roots Cafe with free bagels and coffee. Date has not been set but we hope to host in early October. We will need a few volunteers.
- Hispanic Heritage Event. There was a discussion Hispanic Heritage Month being very early in the school year. Jeff Carlson is exploring if there is interest and resources to plan something. If we move forward it would be in late September. If not, consider start planning late summer next year.
- Scholastic Book Fair (Dave). From Oct 24-26th PTA will be sponsoring this event at school. A fantastic kids' book shop will be set up, staffed by volunteers before/after school. In the past kids have brought in coins to donate to classroom book purchases and teachers make out wish lists. A percentage of books sold is turned into credits that are used for media center books and fixtures.
- If you are interested in volunteering the above events, please contact the event chair or email PTA.

Hot Topics for 2017-18 school year

- Help PTA set agenda for future meetings! Survey was passed out requesting interest in various topics. Results:
 - Behavior Policy & Positive School-Wide Behavior (3)
 - World Language & Heritage Language Learning (2)
 - IB Reauthorization—Status and Learnings (2)
 - MacPhail—Whittier Music Partnership (2)
 - Family Involvement Plan (1)
 - Annual Budget (2)
 - Hand Hygiene (1)
 - Length of Recess/Structured Recess (1)
 - Lunch Room Behavior Policy (1)

Ideas, Feedback, Questions

- A parent expressed concern regarding hand sanitizer being stocked in the cafeteria line. Principal Gibbs stated a new vendor is supplying hand sanitizer so delivery time should be reduced in the future. Discussion around proper handwashing, and potential PTA assistance with hand hygiene awareness campaign in the school as cold/flu season approaches.
- A parent expressed concern that kids have been asked to be silent during end of lunch period. Principal Gibbs stated that last year teachers ate with the kids. This year the teachers are with the class at recess but not at lunch. Discussion of staffing level cuts this year may be a part of the issue.
- Discussion of food policy. Parents are permitted to pack any type of food in lunch bags/boxes but food must be contained in the lunch bag/box, not loose in lockers. We have several students with severe allergies and cannot risk their safety.
- In general do not hesitate to reach out to your student's teacher or Principal Gibbs with any concerns about the school.

Speed Volunteering Activity

Have a Re-"marker"-able Year gift for teachers and staff. Thank you to everyone for helping with the project!

Next Meeting

Monday, October 9, 2017 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Stay Informed!

- Sign up for the weekly e-news to get updates from school, PTA & community partners. Go to <http://whittier.mpls.k12.mn.us/whittierpta> and enter your email address.
- Follow us on Facebook; search Whittier International PTA.