

Okte PTA Meeting – May 17, 2023

Board members present: Laura Zasada, Lindsey Weinberg, Allison Faul

Number of members present: 16

A quorum was met.

Call to order at 7:10 pm

Welcome and Introductions

Board of Education (BOE) Report – Gusta Miller

- Mrs. Miller announced that the school budget passed, and the district is heading to Full Day Kindergarten. The district will now work with architects on 5 Maxwell to turn the building into a school and administrative spaces. The electric buses will be ordered; however, it will be some time before the district will take delivery of the buses.
- Mrs. Miller hopes to return to Okte as our Board of Education representative next school year.
- She also stated that if people have questions or concerns regarding the district, to reach out and contact her. Mrs. Miller's contact information can be found on the Shen district website.
- She wished everyone a happy, relaxing summer.

Principal's Report – Kathleen Strangis

- Mrs. Strangis thanked the PTA for the treats, plants and taco lunch during Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week.
- The 50th Anniversary Assembly and ribbon cutting was great. It was intentionally planned to be very child centered and modeled after previous years Flag Day celebration. She noted that the Town Supervisors from the Town of Clifton Park and Halfmoon, Dr. Robinson as well as members of the Board of Education along with previous faculty members were invited guests to the event. Also in attendance was the family of Tina Wood which care for the Reading Garden in the front of Okte. The family donated a new tree to the garden in honor Okte's 50th anniversary. She also noted that the 50th Anniversary will continue into the fall with another ribbon cutting as part of the Family Walkthrough/School Supply drop off event.
- Red Grammer performed a concert on May 11 for all the grades. Mr. Grammer speaks about Okte's Morning Program when he travels. He would like to work with Okte to create a documentary about Morning Program and the benefit it provides to students and the schools. Mrs. Strangis has tasked herself with finding a reporter over the summer to work with Mr. Grammer's team to bring this documentary to reality.
- The school is working to fill the Grade 5 teacher position. The finalists have taught a "demonstration" class to current 5th graders. The 5th graders were asked to provide feedback on what the prospective teachers did well and where they could improve. The finalists will then be interviewed by Dr. Wood, which then a possible offer will be made.

- The school is currently looking to fill an ISD aide position. There was a posting for the EDK position; this is a required posting. It is expected that Mrs. Williams will remain as Okte's EDK teacher.
- As a save the date, Okte building new family walkthrough and school supply drop off is planned for August 31.
- The school is seeing an escalation of the behaviors in place. After brainstorming the faculty and staff have implemented a Voice Level program as way to recalibrate expected behavior. This Voice Level program using the scale of 0-5 has shown immediate improvement in student behavior.
- As a reminder about the upcoming Spring Picnic on Friday, the picnic is not a drop off event and to please supervise your children.
- Children ride their bike to and from school should be wearing a helmet. Mrs. Colon has a few extra helmets.
- A facility request has been made to install a fence in the back field has been made in response to a student running off into a nearby neighborhood. Facilities will conducting survey to ensure that the existing homes and new construction do not encroach upon school property. Mrs. Russom proposed the inclusion of a gate in the new fence, considering the significant number of pedestrians and cyclists who access the school from the neighboring areas behind it. This gate would enable them to continue their access conveniently. Mrs. Wood has observed a significant number of trees being removed near the playground on the side of the new construction, adjacent to the playground fence.
- Lastly, Okte's enrollment consistently fluctuates between being the school with the highest number of students in either the 1st or 2nd position.

Faculty Report – Nancy Arthur and Tami Farron

- The faculty and staff would like to thank the PTA for their support of Okte students and the school community.
- Mrs. Arthur noted that she would like to have her fellow teachers help support PTA by adding information about the PTA into their newsletters, app communication messaging and even into next year's Open House presentations. There is more parental support of PTA programs, volunteering etc. when the message comes from a teacher.
- Mrs. Farron expressed her appreciation to the PTA for the support of the creation of the 5th Grade t-shirts, book gifts for the 5th graders as part of Moving Up day and the upcoming Moving Up Day reception.
- Mrs. Arthur was very impressed with students and their participation in the 50th Anniversary Drone picture. The students love to point out where they are in the photo. The picture is hanging in the hallway to the right the office.

Treasurer Report – Lindsey Weinberg

- Cash on hand = \$56,082.91
- Lindsey Weinberg reviewed the expenses during April. She noted that there will be numerous expenses in May due to the 50th Anniversary events.

- The report was approved by motions by Kerri Kennedy and Melissa Russom

Secretary's Report – Allison Faul

- See April 2023 Minutes.
- The report was approved by motions by Kerri Kennedy and Whitney Pagano

President Report - Laura Zasada

- Mrs. Zasada presented the 4 nominations for the Okte PTA Executive Board. The four nominations are:
 - Co-Presidents – Erin Marshall and Whitney Pagano
 - Co-Vice President – Kerri Kennedy
 - Secretary – Laura Zasada
- Mrs. Zasada presented Erin Marshall and Whitney Pagano as the co-nominees for the board positions of Co-Presidents.
 - Mrs. Marshall and Mrs. Pagano introduced themselves. Mrs. Marshall noted she has 4 children at Okte and her husband is an alumni of Okte. Mrs. Pagano stated that she has 1 child currently attending Okte and a pre-schooler. She is an alumni of Okte. Both stated the looked forward to working together and with the PTA.
 - Mrs. Zasada asked if there was any nominations from the floor. None were noted. A voice vote of all members present voted in Mrs. Marshall and Mrs. Pagano for Co-Presidents.
- Mrs. Zasada presented Kerri Kennedy as the nominee for Co-Vice President. Mrs. Kennedy stated she has two children currently at Okte and a pre-schooler. She expressed her hidden desire for 5 Maxwell Drive not to be ready in time for her preschooler to attend kindergarten, as she wishes for her child to go to Okte instead. She eagerly anticipates collaborating with the PTA.
 - Mrs. Zasada asked if there was any nominations from the floor. None were noted. A voice vote of all members present voted in Kerri Kennedy for Co-Vice President.
- Mrs. Faul presented Laura Zasada as the nominee for Secretary. Mrs. Faul asked if there was any nominations from the floor. None were noted. A voice vote of all members present voted in Laura Zasada as Secretary.
- Allison Faul and Lindsey Weinberg have one year left in their current terms as Co-Vice President and Treasurer, respectively.
- The board would like to form a bylaws review committee since our bylaws are up for renewal on October 1, 2023. There are 2 reasons to review for the review due to the possibility of the increase in National PTA dues and possible change to length of terms.
 - National PTA has informed us that they will be putting forward their proposal of a \$1.75 National PTA dues increase, which, if passed in June, would increase National's dues portion from \$2.25 to \$4.00 per year, per member. If passed, the National dues change would take effect in October. NYS dues are

\$1.75, making our full financial outlay as \$5.75, per member. Our current dues are \$5.00 and have not been changed in six years if not a decade.

- The other point for review is the possible extension of length of terms to allow a current board member to remain in their position 1 additional year if there are no candidates willing to step into the board position.
- The board is looking for 5 volunteers to meet over the next few months to review and recommend changes to our current bylaws. Changes would be presented at the September 2023 General meeting.
- Members willing to participate on the committee should contact Mrs. Zasada.
- The school has made two requests of the PTA for classroom rugs and ukuleles.
 - The rugs are to replace 9 rugs that were stored and damaged during Covid and are at a cost of approximately \$3067.66.
 - Mrs. McGovern has requested \$2613.85 for ukuleles for the 3rd-5th grade music program. The purchase is for 30 ukuleles, tuners and storage cart.
 - Mrs. Zasada requested a voice vote, there were no dissents. The requests were approved.
- Mrs. Zasada reminded all that the Spring Picnic is on May 19th and currently 516 people had RSVP'd to attend. There will be a DJ and photobooth on the playground. The Burger 21 food truck will be in the back and Mr. Ding-a-Ling ice cream trucks in the front of the school. Also as part of the Spring Picnic is the Art Show and the Book Fair in the gym.

Co-Vice Presidents Report – Allison Faul

- Mrs. Faul stated that the Scholastic Book Fair has been running in the gym since Tuesday May 16th. While it has been very successful, the students have been struggling with the Buy One, Get One Free part of the fair. The younger students have needed more guidance about getting 2 posters, 2 books etc. and then making sure they have enough money to cover their purchases.
 - Mrs. Faul made a request for volunteers to help out at cashiers and to break down on Friday during the Picnic in the gym at the Book Fair.
- There were questions about the Art Show this year and whether the art would be able to be purchased. Mrs. Wood stated that Artome, company that did the art show last year no longer services this area and the art show is a showcase of the students art. Last year Artome was fundraiser last year, this year Mrs. Braglia worked with Erin Marshall to bring back Square 1 art fundraising program.
- Mrs. Faul noted that May 15-19 is Shen's Transportation Appreciation Week and all bus drivers will be receiving a Stewarts gift card courtesy of Shen PTA Council. Mrs. Faul thanked Melissa Russom for purchasing 2 Stewarts gift cards on behalf of the Okte PTA for our crossing guards and presenting them to Sharon and Scott with appreciation. The district does not include the crossing guards in their purchase of gift cards for the bus drivers.
- Mrs. Faul thanked Brandi Solomon for her work, time and commitment as the Staff Appreciation chair and her excellent work in providing the Teachers & Staff with a very

positive Teacher & Staff Appreciation week. Jody Brown volunteered to work with Brandi over the next school year to learn the ropes about Staff Appreciation.

- The PTA will be holding a volunteer recruitment event on June 6th in the library to try to recruit volunteers to help bring back programming such as After School Enrichment, Bingo Night or other programs that have not returned due to the lack of volunteers.
- Field Day will be held on June 7th with a rain date of June 8. The volunteer sign up will be posted soon.

Mrs. Zasada thanked the members on the current board for their support and welcomed the incoming board. She wished all a relaxing summer.

Motion to adjourn at 8:10 pm. Approved by Hollie Hayden and Kerri Kennedy

Next meeting: September 2023