

## Swanson Middle School, PTA Meeting, November 15, 2016

The Swanson PTA met on November 15 at 7 p.m.

Madelon Brennan, PTA President, provided a welcome and the following updates:

- She shared the minutes from the previous meeting.
- Noted the Swanson Directory will be out in a couple of weeks.
- Shared the most recent copy of the Swanson Anchor and encouraged parents in attendance to sign up to the PTA list serve to receive it electronically.
- The Grants Committee met and the PTA will be awarding a significant number of grants.
- The minutes were approved unanimously.

Pam Nagurka, Secondary STEM Specialist APS, gave a STEM presentation covering the following:

- She spoke about STEM in Arlington County and opportunities for students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. She works with Swanson as a dedicated STEM specialist; specifically, she works with teachers to incorporate STEM into the curriculum and works with students to understand how to provide opportunities in STEM after school.
- She shared the Swanson web site and directed parents to click on “All sites” and “STEM” to find her page. The page features include Challenge of the Week for students to do from home, as well as a STEM monthly calendar (a PDF) that highlights interesting facts (M,W,F) and historic figures (T, TH). She manages the middle school and high school section, which includes student STEM opportunities locally and around the country. She encourages parents and students to check for summer internships, courses, contests and other scholarship opportunities.
- Her goal is to help students discover and make decisions around their passions. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates 1 million computing jobs will be available to today’s 9<sup>th</sup> graders when they graduate from college, but only 400k students will have graduated with the computer science degree/coding skills needed to qualify. Her goal is to expose students now to coding through APS Codes; the kickoff will be December 5 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. (a flyer with details is currently available in PeachJar). Students should bring their devices and learn to code or come just to be exposed and start a conversation about coding and potential career paths.
- Q: Can you identify any games that engage children in coding and skills? Pam recommended code.org (they sponsor the hour of code); Scratch from MIT is another site she suggested, as well as SwiftPlayground from Apple (45 hours of fundamentals and enrichment that teaches codes).

Anne Henrich, gave the treasurer’s report and shared the following updates:

- The Grant Committee received a record number of 54 grant requests totaling \$22,000. We didn’t have that amount (originally budgeted for \$13,000), but the PTA was able to partially or fully fund all of the requests. The ability to fund these is because of the impressive fundraising to date; we have currently exceeded our fundraising goal \$22,580 as compared to a \$20,000 goal.
- Anne requested approval to increase the grant budget from \$13,000 to \$15,100. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Q: Do any teachers post on the Donors Chose website to seek funds? Anne was not sure, but a few people in the audience noted that a few teachers have done so for larger projects.
- Anne encouraged parents to register their grocery cards and to go to Smile through Amazon to get a portion of your purchases donated to the school.

The Principal's report was provided by Meghan Henning, Assistant Principal:

- This Friday is job shadowing day for 7<sup>th</sup> graders; many students will not be at school because they will be shadowing a chosen professional. For students who are at school, EMTs will be arriving via helicopter, biologists, medics, plumbers and other professionals will come to speak to students at Swanson.
- Nov. 28 will be a second rotation of ATSS interventions.
- December 2 is early release at noon. A band conference will be held that evening.
- December 13 is the next PTA meeting.

An Instructional technology presentation was given by Meghan Henning, Assistant Principal; Larry Seals, Instructional Technology Coordinator and other APS staff, covering the following:

- Meghan provided a demonstration of Kahoot – an interactive, online game that allows teachers to review material and pinpoint what students got correct. Parents were encouraged to participate in a mock session on Swanson's school history.
- She introduced APS Staff available for a gallery walk to help answer parent's technology questions around Google classroom, math, science, English, etc.

Parents walked around to talk to the staff and the PTA meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.