

Swanston PTA  
September 12, 2017

First meeting of the 2017-18 school year

Meeting started at 7:00

Madelon Brennan welcomed the attendees and introduced the PTA Executive Committee for the 2017-18 school year.

President - Madelon Brennan

VP – Tara Antonipillai

Treasurer – Phoebe Bennett

Secretary – Suzanne Plimpton

Fundraising Chair – Holly West

The Beautification Committee (thank you to Valerie Brennan and her hard workers) spent a lot of time cleaning up the front of the school before the open house – a lot of hard work went into that and volunteers are always needed during the year.

Committee Chair – Welcoming Committee - Shubha Iyengar

Directory Chairs - Sherry Bennett and Terry Muckleroy

PTA goals for the year:

- Engagement – what’s happening in the community and outside opportunities
- Monthly newsletter – the Anchor (information from teachers and staff). Distributed through the listserv – make sure you’re on it and inform others about it
- Volunteer – most of what happens couldn’t without volunteers. Three positions are open right now – Reflections (or two co-chairs, Membership
- Membership is a year-long commitment – need to increase membership
- Many other areas are available for parents
- Support and fundraising. Two big fundraisers – no-stress and Handmade Arlington

Holly West spoke on fundraising – Swanson has one check-writing campaign; all the donations go directly to the school – flyers are available, also can be done online. Box tops and grocery cards – Harris Teeter and Giant, Amazon Smile program is going to go through the school this year. Note: Box Tops and Amazon Smile go directly to Swanson; the grocery cards come through the PTA.

A parent noted that recommended amounts per child was noted at ASFS; suggested amount. Also suggested giving a breakdown is helpful for parents – teacher grants, supplies, class support, etc. Assurance that the money goes directly back into the school. Budget does have a projected amount. Employer matching forms are available.

Handmade Arlington – Ellen Fitzgibbons. Leslie Sands – co-chair. Largest juried arts and crafts show in Arlington. From 17 tables in the cafeteria to a lot more than that - 51. Swanson promotes this because it is a community event, as well as a fund-raising event. Every artist who applies and is selected pays to participate in the show. The event has grown a lot from a little show; it now fills both the gyms; the cafeteria will probably be used in the future. Hoping to turn it into a show where there is an entry fee.

Christine Wright will be helping, but both have 8<sup>th</sup>-graders. Areas needed: publicity, marketing, managing volunteers. Spread the word among the community if Swanson families know artists; returning artists, new artists.

Budget: Phoebe introduced and explained that the teachers and staff make the proposals, but it all goes to support the children – this is not to supplement salaries. The budget has stayed fairly consistent. Spirit sales will be different – online sales rather than having stuff available already for sale. One order for the fall and potentially a second order period later, maybe during the holidays. Pre-sales are a better way to manage sales.

Donations are always welcome – helps offset the cost of other expenses.

Phoebe moved to pass the budget; it was seconded and passed.

Reimbursements can be made if anyone does anything for the PTA.

Principal's Report: Renee Harber

Madelon introduced Renee and Laura Partridge (the teacher representative for the PTA)

Officer Treacle also attended (school resource officer for Swanson)

Safety assembly was done on the first day – handout given

“Realize our Greatness” – theme for the school year. Nurturing the legacy of Swanson – impressed that so many parents stay on even after their children leave. Renee is happy to be back; the staff is dedicated.

Enrollment (as of 9/12/2017):

355 – 6<sup>th</sup>

424 – 7<sup>th</sup>

443 – 8<sup>th</sup>

New staff welcomed:

Alicia Zekan, Administrative Assistant to Principal

Antonio Francis, Instructional Assistant

Bashir (LB) Kouhacji, Physical Education .6

Daniel Koh, Math 8

Eric Underhill, Assistant Principal

Eric Young, Social Studies 7

Hannah Gombos, Math 7

Ira Allen, Long-term Substitute for Stephanie Brown

Jasmine Watson, Special Education

Jennifer Phillipp, Psychologist

Jonas Brown, HILT

Joshua Brew, Physical Education

Karen Kaldahl, Algebra

Laura Porter, Assistant Principal  
Leslie Enright-Lopez, Special Education  
Mahi Savage, Long-term Substitute for Cathy McMahon  
Marcy Kupchella, Family and Consumer Sciences  
Melissa Dyer, School-based Substitute  
Melissa Lara-Ortiz, Counselor  
Mia Elliott, Administrative Assistant, Counseling  
Michelle Smith, Instructional Assistant  
Mohammad Zishhan, Counselor  
Pamela Kopiak, Administrative Assistant, Main Office  
Reneé Harber, Principal  
Sally Donnelly, Reading 6  
Steve Love, Technical Education, Admirals Wheel

Introduced to school and technology expectations. iPad rollout has started with the 6<sup>th</sup>-graders. Professional development for teachers – plans have started.

Canvas is the new platform for knowing what's going on in the school – this provides one place for teachers, parents, and students to go for homework, grades, and other information.

Swanson beautification has been ongoing – lots of weeding going on. Boy Scout troop worked on the benches that are outside

Plans – two new cafeteria tables – round ones

- Minor construction/major – interior repairs and painting, removing the carpets in the first-floor classrooms to replace it. The large gym needs to have the floor refinished. Wrestling mats have been stored in a cubby where there's a time capsule (fire hazard so they're trying to get them to a safer place)
- Superintendent – engagement day 9/23/2017 10-2 (drop-in event) – boundary changes for middle and elementary schools. Strategic plan. Instructional vision and feedback
- Ambassador from Swanson to get more information about this. Mary Anne McCallen (?) will be the ambassador
- Engage resources through the engage link. 7:00 p.m. on 9/12/2017 – boundary changes for middle school started – webcast (available via APS website)
- Building Level Planning Committee involvement – how and when to move grades to new boundaries

Questions for Renee

The dress code is being discussed a lot – it has been around since 1997 and there is acknowledgment that it needs to be updated.

The new policy for cell phones also was discussed – the students are starting to talk to each other during lunch.

Renee thanked the PTA for the meet and greet sessions last month. Principal forums for leadership – starting with 8<sup>th</sup>-graders. Spoke with the Galleons.

TJ (Fairfax) informational session was this morning for interested 8<sup>th</sup>-graders and their families.

Arlington Tech is coming in October to talk about that option (accepting 200 students next year).

Laura Partridge – back-to-school night is 9/28. Thanked the PTA for the breakfast and the other things the PTA does for the teaching staff.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Enrichment registration opens 9/13

Next meeting is on 10/10/2017 at 7:00 in the library

Jennifer Sexton, Swanson's substance abuse counselor will be speaking