



MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

Call to Order

- Meeting Called to Order at 8:48AM.
- Megan Seliga asked everyone to respect time and move through things. Noted that the meeting will pause at 9am for World Language program signup. Introductions for all present.

D90 Superintendent's Report: Dr. Ed Condon

- Dr. Condon handed out the River Forest District 90 Strategic Action Objectives.
- **2023-2024:** The year is off to a great start. D90 Principals & Vice Principals did a lot of work this summer, with great new hires. The custodians have put in a lot of great work.
- **Overarching Goals:** 1. A high quality and innovative culture. 2. Insuring safety for all students. 3. Stewardship of taxes. 4. Teaching learning. This is what the community funds and it's our priority mission.
- **Student Safety:** Confidence in students' safety has become a priority in the past 3-5 years.
- **SEL** learning and the supports to be successful are also crucial.
- **D90 Alignment:** We've aligned goals across D90 schools, with improvements that reflect district priorities.
- **Literacy Program:** Looking at this with a close eye. The Literacy Committee will exceed 15 people across the Board of Education and school administrations. Literacy will be what we need moving forward.
- **PTO:** Wonderful history of PTO making school fun for kids & families. Look forward to working with you.

[Brief Pause in Meeting for World Languages Signup and Zoom Login]

Principal's Report: Diane Wood

- **Back to School Picnic:** It was fun if hot! Lots of people were there, enjoying the event.
- **Orientation:** It was a big success. Both picnic and orientation helped with belongingness and inclusion.
- **Gaga Ball** is a big success. Pit is so crowded, the ball can't move. Some kids have never played before, so Mr. Nolen & Ms. McDermott will be teaching strategy and technique for an even start. We're looking at layering in a grade at a time, so it's not everyone at once. Rules are on the wall. We love imagination, but when the rules are the same, everyone has a fair chance to play.
- **Library Art:** We measured this summer, just finalizing.
- **Safety Week** starts this week. Great time to start preaching safety at home. Do you have a meeting place for fire? If there's a tornado, do your kids know what to do? Check batteries in smoke alarms. When we all get prepared, it normalizes it for the kids.

- **Nurse Update:** Pam Clink broke both wrists. We have substitute nurses, but Pam is always at the ready on the phone. As a family, please speak up for what you need. A dad came in today with medication and we helped. We have close relationships with nurses Erin Godellas (Lincoln) and Gina Hardy (Roosevelt). Thanks for patience and support.
- **Benchmark Assessments:** Benchmarks give a sense of where students are today and their math level and literacy levels. What did they learn and where did they regress? This is how we can layer in supports. Helps with groups planning for teams: What does that mean for instruction? What do we need for SEL? 6-8 weeks planning for teacher teams.
- **Buddies Program:** A fun program where an older class and younger class are paired together. They do fun things like get-to-know-you activities and sharing writing and projects. Their Buddy can support them and cheer them on. Buddies is a school-wide program.
- **Post-Pandemic:** We're back, all in after pandemic! Band, orchestra, & chorus starting. Newspaper club and other clubs opening soon. Check Sept. Wizard Weekly for news. We have clubs during lunch so everyone can participate. Garden club will happen now and in spring. We try to create something for all kids.
- **Parent Question:** Do nurses require proof of flu shot? Diane: No, they do not.

Presidents' Report: Megan Seliga

- **Hoot & Howler:** Congrats to Nikki Kidd for the Hoot & Howler. It can be found [here](#). Organization for the whole year has turned out so well.

Treasurers' Report: Emily Nash

- I'm looking at numbers from last year. We ran with a profit last year and we'll be at a deficit this year because of major gifts given by PTO in August. Good for everyone to know.

Secretary's Report: Kathleen Luttschyn

- Agenda will be out one week prior to meetings. Please let me know if you have an Agenda item to include.

VP-Communications Report: Rachel Dardis

- **Sign-up Genius Membership:** We might need to upgrade package, but need to see if it's worth it. Hadley sent a breakdown of what we're paying for and what we're getting out of the minimum. \$11.99 a month, but jumps to \$30 a month. Room Parent signup is very popular—as soon as we make it, the signup is live. When the Wizard Weekly arrives, the sign-up is already published and most people know that. We can't do a publish time and we want to keep it fair. We also need more access so that different committee chairs can create signups. It's not in Revtrak. Michelle: We could leverage more with a better membership, especially since a lot of events are through email.
- **Thursday Backpack Mail** (via Diane Wood): We started Thursday Backpack Mail too. We try to do things electronically and Nikki is great at keeping things relevant, but paper flyers always help. Committees have asked to send things home: this is always Thursday Backpack Mail. We're trying to get families to know that is when mail comes. If you have a flyer, please give it to the office by Wednesday for distribution.

VP-Volunteers Report: Rachel Dardis

- **Room Parent Registration & Info:** It filled up very fast. There are a few random slots, so we'll reach out to those classes. Dates and time for Room Parent Orientation TBD. Orientation is not mandatory, just helpful. We'll have a quick rundown of what you do as a Room Parent. We need an updated Snack List. We can add it to the Room Parent Agenda. Yearbook will be added to orientation agenda & website is up. **Parent Question:** Can you explain Room Parent role?
Rachel: Helping for 3 parties and gift collection for teachers. Some parents plan these parties for a month, some do it in a day. The Room Parents are the lead contact for the teacher so she's not getting too many emails. Each class has their own class party. Halloween is always school wide. Other parties based on teacher recommendations. If a Room Parent can't attend an event, they can find a substitute, but teachers & staff don't want the rooms full of parents. A very basic email to follow. Diane - Party is usually an hour, snacks from the snack list, often game and craft stations. There is a budget. Meredith Maienza - Teachers will often send ideas.
- **Social Hosts:** They throw an event for the classroom parents. It's usually on Thurs., Fri, or Sat night. Invite parents and teachers. The parties are very intense lately, but they can be simple. You're not doing everything. It can be BYOB or potluck - your choice. Sometimes the whole grade is hosted at one house, which is a much larger event. I suggest going, especially if you're new to the community - great way to meet people.
- **Parent Question:** What will preschool do for early dismissal on Halloween? Diane: We'll talk to teachers about how to do it.

VP-Technology Report: Nikki Kidd

- **PTO Website:** It's updated and looks different than last year. I did updates and tried to make it easier to find information. People can see everything that's going on. I'll continue to keep it updated. Should be easier now that I'm also doing Revtrak. If there's anything you'd like to see, please let me know. If there is something to be updated, also please let me know and I can absolutely include that.
- **Bylaws:** Currently missing. Camille - I can talk to Anna Parks. Emily Nash - I can call some past presidents.
- **Forms:** Send me a list if there are forms to be updated. PTO deposit form can be taken down.
- **Reimbursement Form:** is updated and available. There are copies in the Treasury Box.
- **Website Edits:** Rachel Dardis- PTO Committees need a few changes. Some people listed are no longer at school. Camille - I have the master list and can edit, so please send any changes. Please CC Nikki Kidd on the email. Nikki - can also link to the list so everything is in one place.
- **Volunteer Requests:** If any committee needs more people, let Camille know and she can add to Sign-Up Genius.
- **Parent Question:** What is the PTO website? Answer: <https://willard.district90pto.org/>

School Board Liaison Report: Erin Dowdall

- **9/21 School Board Meeting:** I attended my first school board meeting on the 21st, Most of it has been discussed. Mostly housekeeping and new members coming in. Dawne Simmons and the District emailed out summaries. They shared numbers of the year and language and policy updates. They had a bond hearing meeting, as well as a closed session for staffing issues. If you have questions or need Erin to bring up anything, please let her know. Diane - Just FYI for all that every Board Meeting ends with a closed session.

- **Committee of the Whole Meeting:** 9/5 at 7pm at Roosevelt, There are changes to how you can attend. Upstairs in the LLC and via Zoom. You can submit comments, but they may not be shared in that meeting, due to certain practice and procedures.

Belongingness & Inclusion: Ingrid Payne

- **Pilot Program:** Working with Debbie Lubeck on D90 Special Needs. Piloting a Special Needs Program so that all kids can access an alternative program. Hoping for success and to expand in 2024.
- **Parent Support Group:** We're bringing back the support group for parents of special needs and neurodivergent students, which ended during the pandemic. Will be with the township. It will be a social gathering for ideas and topics discussed at the meetings. Guiding questions, things of that nature.
- **Monthly Meeting:** We will be having committee meetings once a month, probably Thursday around drop off. Look for an invite. Looking for an event checklist so as we're planning we can look through the lens of everyone being welcomed. We piloted a quiet room at the dance - may not have been quiet, but good that intention was there.
- **Ideas & Suggestions:** If there's something you want to see at our school, please let me know.

Community Fundraising: Meredith Maienza

- **5K:** The Willard 5K will be in the Spring. Dinner dance will have to move to avoid conflict with finding sponsors & donations. 5K is slated for the Spring because we coordinated with Lincoln & theirs is the fall. Diane - We want kids to be able to attend both and are coordinating with Girls on the Run and other running clubs.
- **Dance/Auction:** Late winter may be the best time for this. Asking for lots of donations for multiple events doesn't work, and before holidays is too much. I could throw something together for the fall. Megan, Meredith & Camille will meet to discuss.

Green 4 Good - Chair: Virginia Sara

- **Halloween Costume Giveaway:** Hopefully we'll have a good turnout for Halloween giveaway. We need a date. Maybe the first week of October? Legacy, World Languages, and YMCA are after school, so Thursday might be a good day. Could be outside, but we'd have to move inside for bad weather. Diane - we can put our heads together on a date. Should be done on a day we don't need the gym in case of bad weather. Ginny & Diane will email to set a date. No volunteers yet - Camille will add to the Signup Genius.
- **Volunteer Discussion:** Camille noted that many parents don't want to be on a PTO committee, but would volunteer for a one-off. Links in the Wizard Weekly for one-offs might be a good idea. Sign-Up for the Pancake Breakfast is a link on the PTO websites.

Kindly Wizards: Diane Wood

- **Awesome Upstanders:** Kindly Wizards has evolved over the years, and has now been folded into Awesome Upstanders, an internal school program run by Ms. Parker and Ms. Costin. The program addresses how to make a difference within the Wizard community, as well as the greater community. It has a rolling membership, with a QR code. Whoever wants to go that week can go. Awesome Upstanders did the Brain Break table because kids need a break place that's not a

bathroom. They also made rule signs for the bathroom since people weren't making good choices.

- **Volunteers:** Parent volunteers are not needed, but roles on other committees can be found for those who volunteered for Kindly Wizards.

Spirit Wear: Deja Von Ende

- **Website & New Options:** I'm updating the website and my husband (a creative director) is doing new designs. There are holes in the website. I made everything available in purple, gray, white, & black. I've removed everything but purple and basics and will continue to scrub site and make it easier to find things.
- **Merch Tables:** It would be nice to have t-shirts at events. There used to be hats, shorts etc. Need to check if there's a budget and if Deja can be reimbursed if she pre-orders for events. Emily and Deja will discuss. Diane - That was the status quo, but there's an upfront investment. Also, we don't have anywhere great to keep it, so PTO volunteers had to bring home, Great impulse buy though. Michelle- Last year, people bought at the beginning of the year and then it trickled out. Diane - this may have been because quality is not the same. Michelle - We make a lot more money if we buy in bulk. Roosevelt barely made any money.
- **Parent Question:** Can we see what items are popular and base it on that? Deja: Yes, I can look into that.

Yoga: Camille McLamb

- David Driscoll is this year's chair. He was the teacher last year, but couldn't teach this year. Taking over coordination. We have a teacher to replace him. She does Mann and Scout Troops. So much happening in Fall, so a Winter start might be better. We will coordinate on dates. Diane - Legacy and Slowfire are daily placeholders, but there might be room. Megan - I modified the calendar but need different access for those events to change.

Family Care Committee: Ashley Graves

- **Purpose & Mission:** Ashley is a therapist and still sorting out the purpose & purview of this committee.
- **Liaison with Social Worker:** Diane - Work with social worker to allocate money / plan if someone needs a meal train, snow pants, etc. It's 100% confidential. Everyone is treated a bit differently. There needs to be a need. Megan - Email Lauren the scholarship families so people can reach out to her. Megan would prefer for it to go through one person so we can track who's getting funds and make sure to open opportunities to various people.
- **PTO Role:** PTO decides what qualifies for scholarship funds, from spirit wear to school supplies. PTO already funds Fun Lunch for kids who can't afford it. Only one point person per committee should know the scholarship family. We need to make sure people know they have the opportunity - sometimes families don't know they can apply, so they don't try.
- **Revtrak/Signups:** Nikki - Let Laurie know I can get families a special signup on Revtrak without them having to pay. We've been leaving one extra place in the system. Slowfire is a bit different because it's outside RevTrak. Should consider letting people know about signups ahead of time. Also, we don't want the same person to get a scholarship every time.
- **Fee Waiver/ Scholarship Qualifications** Diane - Fee waived is a government program but maybe someone can't afford something but aren't a fee waiver. Does PTO want to stick to Fee

Waiver or help anyone who needs help? Laurie is starting to struggle with that too as some people aren't Fee Waive families. That's a PTO decision. Meredith - It should be open to everyone. Nikki - I thought this was for people who weren't Fee Waived. Erin - We probably miss an entire portion of people just above the poverty line who don't make Fee Waiver. Diane - I'll let Laurie know and we'll think of a process and system.

World Languages: Megan Seliga, on behalf of Chairs

- Totally sold out, other than two spots for French. Brenna will talk to Nikki about adding dates.

2023 Spring Fling (Debrief): Meredith Maienza

- We raised \$47,560 and netted \$32,321 after expenses. 170 attendees. Ticket sales were our biggest driver. We may revisit the ticket pricing. Lots of nice donations from the community. Wine pull brought in \$1405. Would love to have someone on the committee who can take over when I leave next year.
- We're open to different venues for this year. OPCC was easy to work with - no rental fee, close to where we live, and they let us clean up the following day. I did florals so that was a huge saving. Software was a huge pain. Small changes could have been made, but the committee was great.
- We gave Megan Keskitalo a gift certificate to Maya Del Sol for all her help with the tech & software.
- We should consider having something specific to raise money for, since people are more likely to come out for something specific.
- Maybe the end of January would be fun for this year because no one is doing anything. Lincoln's is March 8th, venue TBD. January is after the holiday but before Lincoln's fundraiser.
- Ingrid - Thanks for the hard work you put your heart and soul in. Meredith - Thanks Diane for the support, Diane- You pulled it together quickly, thanks for all the time and energy.

Pancake Breakfast (9/23): Megan Seliga, on behalf of Chairs

- The committee has supplies together, The breakfast is in the Wizard Weekly and people can sign up for shifts. Make sure they're getting the volunteers they need. Diane - this is always a favorite vent.

Family Reading Night (10/26)

- It's a lot of work for Bridget Whisnant, who works full time. Diane - Teachers have put out a call for action. They put a fun want ad explaining why new staff should help out. Many teachers volunteer that night. We've had illustrators, readers' theater, authors, etc. There are different ways to make it engaging. It will be tied to Book Fair this year once again.

STEAM Night (1/25) - Camille McLamb on behalf of Chairs

- STEAM Night is booked with an outside vendor. We're outsourcing 10-12 stations with activities. They'll provide everything but the STEAM committee needs 6 volunteers. Committee can take over that part.

Family Culture Fest (4/18) - Camille McLamb

- It's been on hiatus and needs direction. It was tied to World Languages and a concert with food, but we moved away from that. Families shared their art, crafts, country and culture. Diane - We moved away from food across schools because of allergies. We can imagine it fresh. In the Wizard Weekly and we can coordinate with World Languages. Committee can send out a plea.

Science Fair: Camille McLamb

- Jackie Jancius would like to do it. She's going to start planning this month and call for more volunteers.

Connect 4 Kids: Courtney Healy

- **Walking Wednesday:** Begins next Wednesday. More people on the committee - possibly people who signed up for Kindly Wizards? Volunteering can be a one-offs. You can pick a day. You can wear a Wizard Costume. We'll get out in the Wizard Weekly this week. It will run through the end of October. Connect 4 Kids has been different things.
- **Future Ideas:** Bringing in an author, parent presenter for all three D90 schools. Coordinate with OPRF, but sure it translates to elementary kids, not just high schoolers.

Fun Lunch: Courtney Skelton

- **Sales:** Now closed & it was a success. 282 Fun Lunch orders (3 faculty), which is around 88% of all students. Total sales were \$30,126. With the current, tentative budget (understanding the costs of supplies will likely change), I expect profits to exceed \$10,000. Thanks to Nikki, who was amazing at doing the website and being super organized. Megan- thanks for free pizza - kids loved it. Melissa Hanses - First half was tricky with Kindergarten students, but it all worked out.
- **Volunteers:** 7 volunteers will be plenty, especially given space and the fact the orders are well-organized.
- **Quesadillas:** Committee will contact Taco Bell about offering cheese quesadillas next quarter. Megan - We have 4 vendors this year. Thanks to Courtney & Melissa for all the work.

Yearbook: Nikki Kidd

- **Pricing:** Yearbook is not on RevTrak. Camille - you can make it live on Weekly Wizard. We're going with the suggested cost: \$25 by Dec, \$30 by end of year, \$40 in person.
- **Binding:** Downsizing to softcover would be too big a change for this year. We have people who have been doing it for 6 years & are used to the current format.

Final Q & A

- **Parent Question:** Can we add to the Snack List? There are similar products that kids can bring. Diane - There's an allergy committee and to submit new items would be a process. We also need to finalize which is the official snack list for this year.

Closing Comments & Adjournment

- Megan - Thanks to everyone for attending & for your hard work. **Adjournment:** 10:10AM