

Manhattan Middle School
PTO Meeting
November 14, 2016

I. Principal's Update, John Riggs

- Open Enrollment:
 - Parent-teacher coffees: 12/5 and 12/12 at 9:00
 - Open house event: 12/8, 5:30-7; will follow same format as last year- there will be a student activity during the event.
 - Manhattan Experience (students visit during a school day): 11/30 (10:15 – 11:30) and 12/1 (9:00 – 10:15)
- New Bi-literacy Certificate:
 - A new program is in the works. The District is designating Manhattan as part of the Pathways Program. Looking to expand Spanish language arts a pathway for bilingual elementary students to continue.
 - The program will start with a cohort of 6th graders next year. It will enable students to take more than one content class Spanish. The school will create an optional “strand” to run through the school.
 - The District is committed to funding Manhattan to support whatever level of interest arises.
 - This year the school added a Spanish language heritage class. Angevine offers Spanish language as well but only as Zero Period. That would not be the plan at Manhattan. Manhattan has been charged by the District to do what Casey is already doing, which includes reading in Spanish for 6th graders, and social studies in Spanish for 7th graders. Casey Middle School has 300 students in its bilingual program.
 - The program creates a pathway for kids to go to high schools and graduate with a bi-literate certificate along with their diploma.
- Morning School Duty Parent Assistance Request:
 - Mr. Riggs asks teachers to do 15 minutes of duty before and after school for student safety, and to help make connections with students and families.
 - Each teacher picks 8 weeks during the year. Morning duty has become stressful for teachers and Mr. Riggs requests support from parents.
 - Parents would need to arrive at 8:15 – 8:30. Duty entails being out in front of the school to make sure kids don't ride bikes across lawn, etc.
 - A parent noted that Niwot Elementary School has formed a fathers' group for that purpose.
- Construction Planning Status:
 - Mr. Riggs explained the school did not receive any additional funding as a result Citizen's Bond oversight Committee. [???
 - The District is proposing a full sized high school gym, which is equivalent to what most middle schools in the District have. The footprint of the new gym will

cover the current outdoor basketball courts. The school already engaged neighbors in this discussion through meeting(s) in late July.

- The Innovation Committee is focusing on plans for the library. It will be operable when school opens in August. They may raise the ceiling in the library, and provide more windows and natural light. They are going for a more open feel.
- The 3 interior courtyards will be redone, with the cafeteria courtyard receiving the most attention.
- The library computer lab will no longer exist as the school is shifting to a chrome book system. The school doesn't need as many computer labs anymore due to the heavy use of chrome books instead of computers.
- Advanced LA: [There was a question about whether advanced LA will remain in place at Manhattan, recognizing it is going away for at least one other middle school.]
 - Mr. Riggs explained there has been no mandate from the District to discontinue advanced LA, but some schools believe it is unnecessary. Conversations are going on among LA teachers now. Some schools label every one of their classes as "advanced" to satisfy parents. Teachers believe they are capable of serving the varying needs of their students in LA just as teachers are in every other content area (science, social studies, etc.).
 - Centennial Middle School got rid of their advanced LA program altogether. There were just a few very vocal parents who disagreed with the decision. At Casey and Southern Hills almost all classes are "advanced."
 - Mr. Riggs believes that "advanced" classes should be more enriching and should go deeper than standard classes. The mission is not to give a ton of homework. The school is about supporting the "whole student" and meeting kids where they are.

II. Teacher's Update, Mary Ellen Steele

- The teachers are very appreciative of the Magic Phoenix funding and have already spent \$7,500.

III. Treasurer's Report

- Magic Phoenix: It is showing a negative balance but funds are still coming in, and Benevity is still processing donations. Last year at this time PTO had brought in \$28,000, but the ultimate tally was \$37,000 by end of year. Therefore, we can expect that funds will continue to be received for Magic Phoenix. At last count we were \$600 short of the \$30,000 target.
- General Treasurer's Report: Some expenses carried over from last year. For example, \$350 from Paypal carried over from 2014, and we may need to write that off as a loss. Paypal was holding funds in "Paypal Savings Account." Those funds should all release to us and go into Magic Phoenix.
- The school store is still trending positive.
- King Soopers grocery cards: The school is now receiving monthly checks. Any time grocery expenditures by Manhattan card holders exceeds \$5,000 revenues will start flowing to the school.

- Lucky's provides a 7% return, which is higher than the 5% return from King.
- Darcy explained that the Lucky's bag credit may not go to the music garden. Lucky's wanted it to go to something else so the science garden was identified as the recipient of those funds. Some Magic Phoenix funds will be shifted to account for this change.

IV. Discussion Topics

- Winter Social:
 - Ice cream donation by Ice Cream Alchemy. Persia offered to coordinate the rest.
 - Last year the event took place on Feb 9 – a Tuesday. The night before late-start-Wednesday is a good time. Will look into Feb 7 for this year's event.
 - There was a suggestion to also combine the event with sandwich making for Destination Imagination (DI). Darcy explained that DI is organizing an event to make sandwiches for the homeless.
 - A salsa event will also take place. Sandra (last name?) will coordinate the salsa part of the event.
 - Persia, Darcy and Sandra will coordinate to confirm a date.
 - The Winter Social is not a dance. There is a dance coming up on the first Friday in December.
- Clubs:
 - Magic Phoenix includes some funding for clubs this year.
 - Last year PTO provided \$1,400 in club funding.
 - PTO doesn't have a budget so the amount of funding for clubs is not set.
 - Karen shared outcomes from her conversation with Brent Graham. They gathered information to estimate how much club funding is spent per kid. Not every club needs money. The art club needs more money, and some other clubs may need more money if they have special events / components planned.
 - John and others expressed that they like the idea of fulfilling requests.
 - It was discussed that PTO will invite the groups asking for money to put in a proposal to request funds. PTO may provide guidelines for the proposals.
 - Karen explained that at Creekside Elementary School they have a budget and stick to it strictly. At Manhattan the spending feels too loose and she would like to establish a budget to provide more structure for PTO spending. Others agreed.
 - PTO should adhere to the mission of supporting kids, both arts focused and education focused spending.
 - Karen noted that community dinners can fund "excess" things like Paypal fees, school store, etc.
 - There was a suggestion to encourage additional fundraising for clubs, independently.
 - Mr. Riggs noted that the idea of Magic Phoenix is that there a limit on the number of times when kids are asking for money. He'd like to avoid having kids do door to door sales.
- Turkey Trot:

- A Sign up Genius has been started and the school is asking for as many parents to participate as last year.
- A lot of staff like to run with the kids so it's good to have parent support there.

V. Committee Reports

- Magic Phoenix: As noted earlier, Magic Phoenix is just \$600 away from its goal and is expected to exceed the goal once all funding comes in.
- Projects Committee: They have been busy helping out with Magic Phoenix and parent teacher conferences. Darcy explained that Phyllis Ash has a project doing some bulletin board work.
- Science & Music Garden: Jennifer Dingman has been busy and making great progress on both fronts.
- Trip Tracker: We are up to 50 people, which is more than last year. Trip Tracker dollars will be distributed in the cafeteria again.
- Community Dinners: Julie found someone to coordinate community dinners; Kathy, a 6th grade mom.
 - We made \$900 at the Next Door community dinner. That will go into the general fund.
- District and Community Reps: Reports were sent by email. [See Appendix at end of minutes.]
- Boulder Valley Gifted and Talented (BVGT): Tomorrow there will be a parent coffee. Phyllis Ash is the new TAG coordinator and will be introducing self.
- Grocery Cards: The program still needs help.
- Several volunteer opportunities are available.
- Parent Engagement Network (PEN): Representative position is still vacant.
- PTO Website: Nobody has come forward to help.
- Other: Darcy saw an Open Enrollment insert in the Daily Camera that there was a dated profile of Manhattan. It mentioned Sierra Club, which parents weren't aware existed. Mr. Riggs explained that club activity happens mostly through science classes through DT, and the school will soon sever the relationship with Sierra Club. They have been storing things at the school without compensation, which is not allowed. Loli and Mr. Riggs thought a current profile had been provided to the Daily Camera. Loli will explore why dated material was printed.

VI. Next Steps

- Establish PTO budget.
- Clubs:
 - Establish a plan for funding clubs. A meeting to develop a plan will take place during a morning in December. That will set in advance of the club "pitch night."
 - Schedule a "pitch night" – a time when clubs can make a pitch for funding. The goal will be to schedule that for the January PTO meeting since that will be an evening meeting;
- Add to list of parent volunteer opportunities: morning duty (15 minutes before school) to keep an eye on student safety before school begins.

- Loli will explore why a dated version of the school profile was used for the Open Enrollment Daily Camera insert.
- Persia, Darcy and Sandra will meet to confirm plans for the Winter Social.
- December 6: Next PTO meeting.