



Columbus Elementary School PTO Meeting
School Year 2020-2021
Thursday, November 5th, 6:30 pm
Meeting Minutes

<u>Time</u>	<u>Item</u>
6:30	Welcome & Board Introductions
6:35	Fundraising Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Square 1 Art - November 16 deadline for submitting art and ordering gifts. Visit Square 1 Art (instructions here)• Meadow Farms Fundraising - online sales open until December 15. Visit https://meadowfarms.com/ (click register, enter school ID - MF1032558)• Looking into Scripps Gift Cards
6:45	Enrichment Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kits instead of clubs - 10 different kits, distributed ~100 kits. Opted for this plan instead of virtual clubs since the kids are spending so much time on the computers. Planning to offer kits again--maybe in December.• Scholastic Book Fair - orders were taken online, didn't sell that much. Used the Scholastic Dollars to buy a book for every kid in the Columbus School!• Daytime enrichment - nothing has happened yet, wanted to give the teachers a chance to get settled with all of the changes and new teaching modality. Will likely reach out to the teachers in the next couple of weeks to get a sense of what they think is worth doing. Range of cost for daytime enrichment activities/offerings. If anyone has ideas of enrichment activities, please email medfordcolumbuspto@gmail.com!

6:55 Volunteer Opportunities - Class Parents

- Last year was the first year in a while that we had class/room parents. This year is so different, but would still like to try to have room/class parents to help with communication. Most classes still need room parents. If anyone is interested in helping out as a room/class parent, reach out to medfordcolumbuspto@gmail.com.

7:00 Resources for the Columbus community - resources related to COVID, in Medford, etc.

- City of Medford website - <https://www.medfordma.org/>
 - Medford Public Schools (including information on grab & go free lunches available for pickup at the school--available to everyone:<https://www.mps02155.org/departments-programs/school-lunch/>)
 - Coronavirus updates (case rates, testing, etc.)
 - Food access / food insecurity - list of free meals, applying for SNAP benefits
 - Residents Needing Assistance
 - Other City departments
- Wayside Youth & Family Services: <https://www.waysideyouth.org/>
 - Parent/Caregiver Support Group - the Medford group is looking for more participants (Thursday evenings)

7:10 Budget Update

- Budget information available on the PTO website: <https://columbuspto.wordpress.com/budget/>. Some funds were moved around this year from enrichment, field trips, etc., into a discretionary budget line so it can be used for other things if needed.
- So far, 10 teachers have used our PTO reimbursement program (\$100 per teacher per year). Share the word with the teachers if they would like to be

reimbursed for some costs.

- Purchased Scholastic subscriptions for all of the teachers; some small spending for back-to-school supplies/costs.
- Mrs. Lepore is working on giving for holidays for families - looking for donations of gift cards (\$25 denominations).

7:15 Principal Kay's Corner

- Things are going well with kids back at Columbus, kids are getting used to the rules of masks, moving around the hallways, assigned seats in the cafeteria, etc. Important for families to remember that they have to wear masks in the playground, at drop-off, etc.
- No school - Veteran's Day - November 11
- Early dismissal - Wednesday, November 25
- No school - November 26-27
- Check the Medford website about quarantine restrictions post-travel if leaving the state/area for the Thanksgiving holiday.
- Library - interviews taking place; main responsibility will be helping with Chromebook needs and distribution to families (chargers don't work, screens break, etc.)
- Teachers are getting MacBooks - will hopefully see an improvement in the technology for the teachers.
- Hybrid - acknowledges concerns that kids' backpacks are heavy (because kids are transporting Chromebooks back and forth to school). They need the Chromebooks because some assessments are online, music is remote (per DESE guidelines), etc.
- Specials - Dr Edouard Vincent - had stated that families who opt for remote model might not have Columbus teachers, but very much wanted kids to have their homeroom teachers be a Columbus teacher. Once the hybrid model was introduced, in many cases, it wasn't possible for the same teachers to cover remote AND hybrid. District is hiring a remote

computer teacher. The specials teachers the kids had this week should be who they have going forward.

- COVID - if there is a positive case within the school can't identify the child or classroom because of privacy and HIPAA laws. Letter will be sent home to inform the community. If there was close contact, you will be informed. Recommendation is that you have your child tested, would then need to quarantine for a specific amount of time. Teachers (all employees, including paras, etc.) have access to regular testing (required before they come back and strongly encouraged to do it regularly); contact tracing; involvement by the Board of Health.
- Whiteboards - purchased/distributed to the kids, will need to be returned at the end of the year.
- Water bottle filling stations - purchased 2, waiting for them to be installed (on the 1st and 3rd floors).
- School name change - process not likely to start until after the break. Committee of the Whole (School Committee); would like to involve the wider community and listen widely; involve the classrooms/social studies lessons. Tying to cultural competence/cultural diversity; having important conversations.

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 3rd, 6:30-8 pm (via Zoom)

email: medfordcolumbuspto@gmail.com

website: <http://columbuspto.wordpress.com/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ColumbusPTO>