

## OAPTO Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Oct. 23, 2014

**Time:** 6pm-7:30pm

**Called by:** Nanette Dyer Blake, OAPTO President

**Number in Attendance:** 25 OAES community members

**Location:** OAES Library

---

### I. Welcome/Overview (Nanette Dyer Blake, President)

- Nanette introduced the current board of directors and asked everyone to introduce themselves to their neighbors
- She also introduced a document called Principles of PTO Meetings which is a code of conduct for community members to use at PTO meetings
- Nanette pointed out that invited speakers are our guests and that these principles apply to them as well

### II. Staff of the Month Recognition (Julie Lannon, Nominating Director)

- The PTO honored Nurse Laurie Hesselink for the tremendous impact she has on our school community
- She is a compassionate, caring role model who takes care of all of our students every single day – thank you Nurse Laurie!

### III. Guest Speaker (Lisa Crowley, Kindergarten Teacher)

- This summer Ms. Crowley participated in the University of Southern Maine's Maine Elementary Sciences Partnership
- This is a 3-year project and the first year is called Talk Science and is based on the work of Dr. Sarah Michaels, lead author of the book Ready, Set, SCIENCE!: Putting Research to Work in K-8 Science Classrooms
- Ms. Crowley explained that science is about inquiry, big ideas and big concepts like patterns, structure, etc. and that Talk Science uses science as the vehicle to get kids talking
- She demonstrated a typical method used by teachers called IRE (Initiate, Respond, Evaluate) where teachers ask a yes or no question, students respond, and then teachers evaluate the response as correct or incorrect
- With Talk Science, the teacher throws out a big or small question to the students (not a yes or no question) that is designed to generate discussion
- With this method, students share, expand on and clarify their thinking; they also deepen their reasoning skills and develop the ability to listen to others and build on others' ideas
- Talk Science is designed to create rich classroom discussions versus having teachers evaluate student responses; it encourages students to take risks
- Some of the strategies of Talk Science include:
  - Giving students more "think" time
  - Asking questions such as "Can you say more about that?" to get kids talking and "Can you repeat what so and so said in your own words?"

- Asking "Did you say xyz? Am I hearing that correctly?" when students give an incorrect answer
- Asking students "Why?" even at the Kindergarten level
- Teaching kids to agree and disagree with each other respectfully - kids learn to say "I agree because..."
- This method of teaching creates a classroom culture of trust and respect; it fits in perfectly with the IB curriculum and will help prepare students to be global citizens
- As part of her training, Ms. Crowley had the opportunity to talk to teachers all around the state; she then brought what she learned back to OAES where she trained all of the teachers (the training was voluntary and the entire staff opted to be a part of it)
- OAES is one of only two schools in the state training the whole staff on Talk Science
- The second part of the project will also be voluntary for all OAES teachers
- It will feature cross-cutting concepts and higher order thinking skills ("HOT")
- The curriculum being used by the Maine Elementary Sciences Partnership is vetted but OAES staff prefer to try it out themselves to ensure it is the right fit for students
- Brand-new science standards called the Next Generation Science Standards will be introduced soon
- OAES staff decided to learn about these new standards now to be ahead of the curve and to integrate the standards into our IB curriculum
- Next Generation Science Standards are the Common Core for science and will tie in with math and literacy
- Ideas introduced in Kindergarten will be further explored in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, etc.

#### **IV. OAES Mission, Vision, and Beliefs Activity** (Dr. Coursey, Principal)

- Dr. Coursey presented a draft of our school's mission, vision and teaching beliefs and asked people to break out into small groups to discuss them and help refine the language to ensure it reflects our school community
- Dr. Coursey has already solicited feedback from staff, the leadership team at OAES and from parents through the Parent Advisory Council but she hopes to gather as much input from the community as possible
- She said that we have grown as a school, adopted the IB curriculum which has shaped how we think and that this is a good time to pause and look at our vision

#### **V. Approval of the Minutes** (Erica Sabatino, Recording Secretary)

- OAES community members voted to approve the September 2014 PTO meeting minutes

#### **VI. Fundraising Update** (Cricket King, Auction Co-Chair)

- Bids 4 Kids Auction will be on Thurs. Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> from 5:30pm-8:30pm at the Mariner's Banquet Center in downtown Portland
- Admission is free and there will be items for every budget plus live music and food; parking is available in nearby garages
- Please RSVP – RSVP information is listed on the invitation
- Each grade has a gift basket theme – we are still in need of donations for the baskets
- Volunteers are needed on the day of the Auction

- Auction team has received \$4,400 in sponsorship contributions to date; goal is to raise \$6,000 in sponsorships; contact John at [john@oapto.org](mailto:john@oapto.org) if you have any connections for sponsorships or auction donations
- Parent volunteer Alison Gorman announced that parents are needed to help during art class to help students create unique art pieces for the Auction
- The Original Artworks fundraiser will also be happening this fall – children create original pieces of art in class with Mrs. Mitchell that can be transferred onto mugs, bags, etc.; information will be sent home in backpacks

#### **VII. Budget Update** (Chip Gavin, Treasurer)

- As of the end of Sept. we have an operating budget of \$7,200
- We've expended \$1900 so far, most of which was for the annual subscription to Ruth's Recyclables for OAES teachers
- Finance Committee is open to all OAES community members; next meeting dates are Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> and Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> at 12pm at Borealis; email Chip at [chip@oapto.org](mailto:chip@oapto.org) if interested in attending

#### **VIII. Shout Out for Stand Outs** (Tobin Scipione, Volunteer Director)

- Tobin announced that the PTO is moving away from the Volunteer of the Month Award
- At each PTO meeting, we will publicly recognize and thank all of the individuals who have supported the PTO in the past month
- This month the PTO recognized the following volunteers:
- **Cricket King and Kerri Nicholas** for serving as the 2014 Auction Co-Chairs and volunteering countless hours to make this event a success
- **Gilda Bryand, Alison Gorman and Jennifer Rent** for the amazing job they did spearheading last year's Auction and the help they are giving to this year's Auction Chairs
- **Jeannette Wycoff, Alison Gorman and Art Teacher Sally Mitchell** for their creativity and the hours they've spent helping students create unique art pieces for the Auction
- **Rob Carignan** for stepping into the role of Walk and Roll Chair and making a home-made "walking school bus" which, along with two police officers, led 30 kids in our October Walk and Roll to School event
- **Amber Hanlon Saenz** for supporting our Communication Director and ensuring that PTO flyers are copied, distributed and sent home in students' backpacks
- **David Kutcha** for supervising the planting of our school garden last spring and getting every teacher and student involved. David is the Grounds Committee Chair this year and is helping to create an afterschool Green Club for students
- **Gibson Fay-Leblanc** for his work in supporting and editing the Side x Side \$1.9 million federal grant that was awarded to Side x Side, a Portland-based non-profit organization, that will bring arts programming to Reiche, Ocean Avenue, Riverton and East End Elementary Schools
- **Emily Bruce** for being an active member of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) for the past two years. The PAC meets monthly with Dr. Coursey.
- **Brenda Zollitsch** for her work in preparing and submitting a School Garden Grant to the Whole Kids Foundation
- **Caitlin Kirby** for contributing the Nutrition and Our Kids article in the October newsletter

**IX. Enrichment Update** (Lisa Hicks, Enrichment Director)

- The first afterschool enrichment art classes just wrapped up
- Art, dance and yoga classes will be offered soon – a one page registration form will go home in the backpacks
- The PTO is looking to expand performing arts during the school day with at least 2 or 3 more offerings for every single grade

**X. Community Building Update** (Jeannette Wycoff, Community Building Director)

- Walk and Roll is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month – look for dates in the newsletter, warm beverages will be served as it gets colder
- David Kuchta is developing curriculum for a brand-new Green Club for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders; the club will meet on Mondays twice a month after school; the goal is to launch before January

**XI. Adjourn**