

**Sunset Ridge/Middlefork School PTO  
Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 7pm  
Virtual Zoom PTO Minutes**

**Meeting Called to Order: Sandy Norbot at 7:01pm  
Approval of November, 2023 Minutes – No corrections, stand as approved.**

Presidents Report:

*Sandy Norbot, PTO President*

This is the second evening meeting that we have held this year. Two more this year, and the January meeting will be morning slot. January 8<sup>th</sup> at 9am – this is the Monday we all get back from Winter Break but will be nice to get back into the swing.

We have a great group with us this evening including the district administrative team- including reps from the board of Education, Administration and a teacher representative. There is a lot for us to talk about and share together. I would like to start by discussing some things that have been happening since we last met.

Book fair: big thanks to Sara Cohn, Carma Pagni and Laura Curry, Ms. Kiedaisch and the staff at Middlefork for all their hard work to make this event a success. It encourages the love of reading and is a good community event. This is a PTO fundraiser, so in addition, we get some funds from the bookfair. Thank you to all for participating in that program.

There was a roundtable meeting with all the New Trier feeder schools PTO boards. Sears school was gracious enough to host this meeting and it was a great way to meet other PTO reps. We shared a lot of ideas and our best practices. I think we are going to try and continue to meet 1-2x a year and share info off line.

[PTO WEBSITE](#)- Our teacher appreciation chairs updated the section of the website called Teacher Favorite things. This is located under parent resources, Teachers favorite things is a great resource for parents while doing holiday gifting, or to use during teacher appreciation week. You can go on this link and see what some of their favorite things are.

**PTO Gifts Program Grants**

The PTO gifts grants for 2023 have been announced. Our president elect has done all the hard work on this program, but she could not be here tonight- I am going to report on her behalf. She did such a great job, we received more applications than we have in a long time! She did wonderfully with this project, speaking with Staff, applicants, and communicating with everybody and updating the website. Bravo Ranjini. This is her report, thank all the applicants for their submissions!

The PTO had \$15,000 to donate this year. We received applications from teachers, parents and one from a student, and we fulfilled lots of the requests. Green Guardians club is an initiative requested by parents and Ms. Kiedaisch to start a composting program at Middlefork along with a club. There is a new recycling program going on. Excited to see what this leads as it

grows. .Ping Pong Club- 8<sup>th</sup> grade student submitted this request. We now have a ping pong table, and can use that in many ways for all the students. Ms. Johnson from the Middlefork leaning center requested coding robots for the learning centers, those were granted. Ms. Gray at Sunset Ridge asked for an E Reader, Kindle for the library which is available for Sunset Ridge students. Some ipads were purchased for art classrooms, flexible seating for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, special display at Middlefork Library for the dual language books, flex seating for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms as well! Thank you to all who submitted application and feedback and who contributed to this program.

[HERE](#) is where you can information on the PTO gifts program:

#### Treasurer Report:

*Yena Levinson, Treasurer*

Total bank balance of \$102,131.06. \$150 in additional classroom party fees has been collected since the end of October. \$75 more in Dues. Fees for the parties will be cut in a week or so, for Holiday parties.

#### Community Update:

*Bill Lustig, Northfield Chief of Police*

I hope everybody is doing well. Will start with Crime, we have been lucky that we have not had any burglaries in the past few weeks. Very exciting, especially as we move into this time of year. Keep your guard up, but this is great news.

Last month we had an individual that called the police and report that somebody was shot behind Marianos.. It created a big response from us and around other forces in the area. This ended up not being true, and the caller was hospitalized and then arrested after his release from the hospital.

There was an ambulance call, a woman had passed out and the husband barricaded himself in a room with a weapon. Police on the scene were able to deescalate the scene. They did arrest him and take him into custody where he was charged with aggravated battery and assisting arrest. Those officers did an awesome job making sure this dangerous situation did not escalate.

I have been asked why do we have empty squads parked in spots in the area? When we park a squad car at Marianos or Walgreens it seems to deter criminal activity. , Suspects wonder if there are officers inside the store, or in the area. This has worked well so we continue to use Drone cars when available. .

Hiring has been a true nightmare for the last 2 years. Officer Auroro is now on his own. Interviewed 6 candidates, keeping my fingers crossed that one will make it in the future so we have more officers on our staff.

Despite our best efforts sometimes a staff makes mistakes. One of the supervisors was caught with inappropriate imaging. That caused problems and he did retire. Just completed a sergeants list- promoting a new sergeant. That about completes my list for tonight.

Administration Reports:

*Sra.. Lynn Nelson, Teacher Representative*

Good evening everybody. Just want to thank the PTO for all your generosity, for all the gifts. All of those are wonderful things that our district will appreciate and use. And so great that a student applied and was granted a gift for a new club!

Spanish club was funded by a grant, and now if funded through the school- but that initial bonding continues. I have already filled 2/3 for spring, and the 1<sup>st</sup> grade has some slots available. I am excited about that. Robotics and BBALL and Ambassadors are all going well. Thank you for all the support with the NUSH project, thank you for all your time and energy on that project.

*Dr. Ed Stange, District 29 Superintendent of Schools*

Echo Lynn's gratitude for the generosity and thoughtfulness of the PTO for the Gifts program, Settlement house, book program... and for the favorite things link on the PTO website.

We are seeing big spike in illness, in both staff and students. There is a bad respiratory virus going around. This is just a reminder to keep kids home if sick. Happy to partner with you so nobody is missing out on any work.

I won't steel the school board thunder but one of the big items on the agenda is about the calendar. It is on the agenda for approval. If you have any feedback please give it to us before tomorrow's meeting.

Plug for Parent connection meeting on December 20<sup>th</sup>, Stephanie Evans will be joining us for another night meeting. At 7pm on the 20<sup>th</sup>- talk about Special Education and their tiers of support.

I told the Park District that I would direct email about the dog park survey- I had that in the Friday news. Please share your input with the Park District on the dog park.

Sandy: Calendar, you can see the zoom links for the parent connections meeting. The meeting is also recorded so if you are not able to attend you can listen afterwards!

*Dr. Ivy Sukenik, SRS Principal*

Readapoloza, at Sunset Ridge is going to be held right before break. We are going to be spending the afternoon focusing on reading only. We will be setting up rooms with different themes such as a cook book room, travel guide room, teacher who has put Taylor swift and reading together. Kids will get to rotate to their choice reading rooms... so you are wondering where does the PTO come in? We are setting up the Easel nest café, we will have a lounge like vibe with chairs and tables, live music and thanks to Sandy and her elfs we have hot cocoa and snacks for the kids. We are super excited about the afternoon to come together and celebrate reading. We want to continue to brainstorm ways to keep it exciting... We will also have trivia throughout the day. Few more slots for volunteers at SRS for this program.

PTO is going to pay for the hot cocoa and goodies, just need to note that. Around about \$200. This is an extra expenditure outside of the current budget.

Our BBALL teams are off to great starts. We are Particularly proud of the girls team, 6,7,8<sup>th</sup> graders together. They are only permitted to play against varsity teams. So far they are undefeated, we are very proud of them.

Our student ambassadors are having a used sports equipment and book drive. Also putting on spirit week the week of break.

We so appreciate the partnership with the PTO for the Settlement house drive. 6,7,8<sup>th</sup> graders got to take a trip to Target to do their shopping. That was really great, compliments from people in the target about how well behaved the students were. Great time had by all.

Sandy mentioned one of the gifts grant was the ping pong table. We now have the club as well as a ping pong table to utilize during indoor recess times. Coincidentally, I just had lunch with the winners of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade elections. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders study a whole unit on government and create proposals as their platform to win the elections. One of their proposals was to have a game room, so we were brainstorming other things we could add in our PE flex room and they could follow through with their promises.

We had a lot of people out, flu hitting pretty bad. Keep trying to stay healthy and we ae doing out best to stay flexible with staffing in the coming weeks.

*Jennifer Kiedaisch, Middlefork Principal*

Lots of exciting things at Middlefork!

*Musical events*, we are proud of our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who performed at the Northfield Holiday fest, This was a live event in front of the community. It was a beautiful night and was the debut concert for Julia Clark. Our students did a great job.

1,2,3<sup>rd</sup> grade winter concert is this Thursday and there will be lots of parents in the Building on Thursday.

Kindergarten performances are in Feb, cute way of involving families during the day.

Thanks to the PTO for funding *Junior great books* once again. Registration went live today, I look forward to having those great conversations about good literature. Keelin Rooney will be the teacher leader for this.

Thank you to the amazing group of PTO leaders for running the book fair. The Who done it theme was great and even started with footprints down the hall. This built up excitement around the school. It was really nice to transform our library into a book store.

Northwestern Settlement is underway- the Dedicated dolphins have built boxes and students have made cards to involve the younger grades a little bit more.

During our last week before winter break there are a few different events- principal read aloud, reading buddy time and dolphin pods time.

Final update is that I wanted to thank the PTO for funding so many of the gift proposals that parents and staff ( including myself for the Go Green initiatives). We are looking to kick off in the new year with the composting program. We have been doing a lot of research and taking field trips to other schools to see how they have been successful. This will be a slow roll out, but starts with some recycling and we will have a gradual roll out into more detailed composting practices. We will dedicate some of our volunteers to help with this initiative. We will have somebody to stand by a sorting station to remind student, trash and food scraps go. This is mainly for the verbal reminders.

We have a plan to train the students in January and the parents as well. We will get more info out to the parent volunteers. Our target date will be Feb 1 but that depends on a few different factors. We have partnered with Go Green Northfield, a small but mighty group who focus on all of those residents interested in green initiatives.

### School Board Report

*Abigayil Joseph*

Good evening – December board meeting is tomorrow night. Part two of a very exciting convo about the assessment data. If you were able to listen in November, we received all the assessment info and we had good questions for Dr. Stange. He gave a comprehensive presentation and will be answering some more questions on the data.

After the special meeting we will roll into the regular board meeting- Worth highlighting that we will be discussing the school calendar, that is one of the main topics. We had some conversation about the week of thanksgiving. Do we take the full week off or stay in school like New Trier does? The recommendation will be to continue to take the full week off.

There was some discussion about when parent teacher conferences happen. Had them on a Thursday, some have asked about having those on a Friday- we will make that decision at the

board meeting. There is an early release day on the Friday before Spring break being discussed. There was talk about having that the day after spring break. Looking like the recommendation is to keep as is, before spring break.

We will also be talking about digital security with Ryan Zoch, anybody interested should tune in.

Those are the highlights of the board meeting.

School board meetings are live streamed on YouTube – You can access the meeting information [HERE](#)

#### Committee Reports:

*Sandy Norbot on behalf of program chairs, Holiday Gifts Project Northwestern Settlement House*

We were able to save some money by getting the boxes donated, which was a \$500 savings! This donation has allowed us to up our gift cards for dinner to each family from \$25 to \$40.

Virtual Zoom Meeting Adjourned -7:41pm Adjourned by Sandy Norbot  
Minutes compiled by : Emily LeMire, Secretary