

August 30, 2023
Cornell Elementary PTO
Meeting Minutes

Welcome & Introductions - Corinne Dyksen & Kristin Hundt

- Call to Order at 6:02pm
- Attendance: Corinne Dyksen, Joanna Purkiss, Kristin Hundt, Holly Higgins, Lin Li, Nicki Berridge, Lisa Hall, Sarah Ward, Simon Belisle, Christina Carlson, Becky Holnagel, Allison Simeyer, Michelle Arndt
- 2023/2024 PTO Officers (voted in at the May 2023 meeting)
 - Corinne Dyksen, President - corinne@cornellpto.org
 - Kristin Hundt, Vice President - kristin@cornellpto.org
 - Joanna Purkiss, Treasurer - joanna@cornellpto.org
 - Lauren McWain, Secretary - lauren@cornellpto.org
- Icebreaker: expectations
 - Our main mission is to support school and teachers, but what is everyone's motivation for being here?
 - Corinne's hope is to create a community of helpers and for more/better PTO communication.
 - Becky was working full time when her older kids went though Cornell, but is not working at the moment so she has more time to help out.
 - Lin is here because wants to know what's going on in the school and wants to find ways to help/volunteer.
 - Allison has younger kids at home that will eventually go to Cornell, so she wants to be more involved in the school.
 - Christina said "PTO helps Cornell, so I want to help PTO!" It is a great way to give back to the school since the school does so much for our families.
 - Holly likes to know what's going on in the school. She is working full time now, but wants to help out when she can.
 - Nicki is our instructional coach for the building. Her main goal is to make Cornell the best building possible! She is here to share events and happenings at Cornell, and is hoping to help answer any questions parents may have.
 - Michelle is Cornell's ELL specialist. She would like to learn about activities that can help the whole school, especially activities that her ELL students can participate in to better engage with others in the school. Michelle is hoping PTO can plan even more events, such as movie nights or other events for ELL families to connect.
 - Kristin wants to be better connected to her kids and their learning.
 - Joanna wants to better support teachers/staff and help others find ways to get connected to Cornell.
 - Simon said his son loves Cornell - it is his safe haven. He wants to show support for the PTO and find ways to engage with the administration. With new school building(s) moving forward, he wants to keep families engaged in the process.
 - Sarah is new to the district! Her old district didn't have a PTO so she is excited to connect with her new community.

Approval of last month's minutes (except in August)

Principal's Report - Nicki Berridge, on behalf of Tracy Ojerio

- We have had a great kick off to the new school year
- Cornell is fully staffed, which is not true across the district. We are lucky to have so many wonderful people working in our building.
- Thanks PTO for organizing kindergarten lunch helpers – that has been very helpful!

- PBIS lessons are being slowly implemented in classrooms. Students are learning expectations for the playground, lunchroom, bus line, etc.
- Mrs. Mann is working with teachers and all students to make sure we are using common language, especially for our expectations
- Students learned “stop, walk, and talk” (if something/someone is bothering you, firmly say “stop” to the person, then walk away. If it’s still a problem, talk to an adult)
- Our arrival and dismissal procedures have been helpful. Students have been in the building before the last bell each morning!
- 4th graders can now apply to be on safety patrol
- The Board of Education is starting to replace furniture (i.e. desks and chairs) that will come with us when we move buildings
- Our ukulele cart arrived (it’s unfortunately too big to go through doors), but it works!
- NWEA testing will be September 5-15 (make ups will be the following week). This testing is done in all classrooms on the computer. We use this test to learn strengths and weaknesses for every student and adjust our curriculum accordingly.
- NWEA testing will be completed before conferences so teachers have time to process the results and can explain them to parents.
- COVID has been going around. Please wash your hands and stay home if you’re sick! We are not mandating masking or contact tracing like before, but if there are 4+ students in a classroom who test positive, the health committee will send an email to everyone in that class.
- Mrs. Mann left fliers about CR-PBIS. These were handed out at the kick start as well.
- Mrs. Berridge also filled us in on our staff’s training in teaching reading. Right now, more than half of the teachers are trained in Orton Gillingham. We applied for a grant to train the rest of the staff. This program helps teachers learn how to better teach reading, not just look through curriculum. We are hoping to host “parents as partners” nights where parents can come learning about this process. 11 of our teachers are also attending a 2 year program called Letters that is 3+ hours/week in the evening - it’s helping them learn the science behind teaching reading. Last year was year 1, and they are now starting year 2.

President’s Report - Corinne Dyksen

- Organizational overview
 - Cornell PTO is a volunteer-run, non-profit board that supports the school, staff, and students
 - We have funded things like playground equipment, events, Read Together Grow Together, a new laminator, flexible seating, etc.
 - Everyone is welcome to be on PTO!
- PTO Sponsored Events - we received good feedback having the dates posted way ahead of time this year!
 - **Global Cornell** - November 10, 2023 - 6:30-8pm
 - **Read together Grow Together** - March 2023
 - **Science Night** - April 18, 2024 - 6:30-8pm
 - **Mileage Club** - April 1 - May 17, 2024 - M/W/F - 11:25 am-1:45 pm
 - **Family Fun Night** - May 17, 2024 (rain date May 20) - evening, time TBD
 - **Field Day** - May 31, 2024 (rain date June 3)
 - **Teacher Appreciation Luncheons (potluck)**
 - **Parent Teacher Conference Luncheon**
 - **Yearbook** (Christina Carlson is our editor this year)
- District Parent Council
 - Meeting attendees:
 - the **Superintendent**
 - a rotating **Board of Education** member
 - the **Principal** of that month’s hosting school

- at least 1 **parent representative** from all 7 schools in the district
 - Meetings are open to the public, from 12:00 PM - 2:30 PM, everyone is welcome to attend. It's a great way to meet other people in the community, and learn about our children's future schools.
 - Learn what's going on around the district, participate in respectful discussions, ask pertinent questions
- Meeting Dates/Times for PTO and DPC

Cornell PTO Meetings 2023-24		DPC Meetings 2023-24	
August 30, 2023	6:00 PM	September 18, 2023	Admin. Building
September 27, 2023	9:00 AM	October 16, 2023	Chippewa
October 25, 2023	6:00 PM	November 20, 2023	Bennett Woods
November 29, 2023	9:00 AM	December 18, 2023	Cornell
SKIP DECEMBER		January 22, 2024	OHS
January 24, 2024	9:00 AM	February 26, 2024	OPM Central
February 28, 2024	6:00 PM	March 18, 2024	Hiawatha
March 20, 2024	9:00 AM	April 15, 2024	Kinawa
April 24, 2024	9:00 AM	May 20, 2024	Admin. Building
May 22, 2024	9:00 AM		

Treasurer's Report - Joanna Purkiss

- Financial standing
 - end of 2022/2023 school year
 - raised over \$22,000 (\$22,248.18) last year
 - spent \$23,500 last year
 - beginning 2023/2024
 - started with over \$20,000 (\$20,693.67)
 - spent \$9,251.25 on insurance, teacher gift cards, yearbooks for teachers
 - have not raised anything yet...

Fundraising Efforts for the 2022/2023 School Year

- **Wolf Pack Run - September 29 - 1-3:30pm - rain date October 2**
 - Bringing prizes back this year - we feel this helps motivate kids to be involved
 - Raising our individual and whole group fundraising goals
 - they haven't been raised in at least 7 years
 - \$60 individual, \$20,000 school-wide
 - Sending packets home in backpacks Friday, 9/15
 - Cash, checks, PayPal, Venmo, credit and debit card donations accepted and requested by September 29, latest to earn a prize - October 6
 - Prizes passed out the following week - any donation earns a sticky hand. \$40 gets a sticker, \$50 gets a sticker and a shoutout, \$60 will get sticker, shoutout, and keychain
 - every kid will get a bag with their prize(s) inside so no one knows what is inside
 - Super secret, whole-school surprise if we reach our goal!!
- Restaurant Night (last year we did Culvers!)
- Family Fun Night
- Gift Card Sale (RaiseRight, formerly SCRIP) - before Christmas, and in spring

Volunteer Opportunities

- **Grade Level Parent Representative**
 - Keeps the PTO up to date on each grade level
 - Contact person for the teachers in that grade level

- **Yearbook Chair** – Christina Carlson
 - Responsible for compiling and distributing the annual yearbook.
 - Send Google Drive for people to upload photos
- **Restaurant Night Chair**
 - Organizes 2 restaurant nights/year

Agenda Additions/Questions/Comments

- Allison asked about bond information. For more information, visit www.okemosbond.net
- Christina said she was trying to contact Mrs. Lewis (Mrs. Fesko's long term sub), but her email bounced back. Mrs. Berridge will follow up on this.
- Student directory will be put together soon.
- Communication from PTO to parents has improved. Simon is concerned Facebook is the main platform, but not many people use it anymore. We do have www.Cornellpto.org that has all the same information as Facebook. You can also sign up to get updates automatically emailed to you.
- We are bringing back a PTO newsletter in the Cornell Chronicles (bi-monthly).
- Parents are welcome to come watch the Wolf Pack Run! Run times will be announced ahead of time on the fliers.
- Teacher emails seem to be more powerful than principal emails. We may try using that as a way to get information out as well.

Thank you all for attending! We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting:

Wednesday, September 27, 9am, Cornell Library