



April General Meeting
Tuesday, April 25, 2017

Attendees:

Danielle Gibson	Amy Dimes	Courtney McCormick
Stephanie Collura	Marci Klein	MaryJane Garibay
Nancy Morin	Kristie Tierney	Kathy Gizzo
Melissa Cannizzaro	Steven Gimbelman	Richard Beck Tricia Barr

The meeting was called to order at 9:38 am.
Pledge of Allegiance/Welcome

Dr. Beck

Dr. Beck announced an upcoming presentation on May 2nd at 7:00. Dr. Block, a licensed psychologist, will be discussing childhood anxiety. A scuba trainer, who has worked with children whom have special needs, will follow her presentation.

MaryJane Garibay

MaryJane Garibay began by expressing her happiness with parents calling her regarding their questions/concerns. She prefers parents calling her directly as opposed to sharing them on Facebook. She thanked the PTO for helping to spread that message.

Next, she discussed the lead testing results. She was pleasantly surprised with the results based on the age of the buildings. Prior to the lead testing, the school district identified all areas for drinking water in the district so that each area could be tested. The lead test did not test the pipes or the water source, but did test the all the drinking devices. In certain places where water has not been used for a long time, the lead testing results were not sufficient. For example, the pot filling station, in the elementary school, had very high levels of lead because it hasn't been utilized in years. All issues are being remediated, by either being fixed or deactivated.

Next Wednesday, May 3rd at 7pm at CRPS, the Board of Education will be doing a budget presentation. There will be preliminary updates and a summary of initiatives for the upcoming school year. A sneak peek into some of the exciting initiatives: new textbooks and waiving the participation fee for after school activities.

At the last Board of Education meeting, MaryJane Garibay shared students' opinions of innovation labs. She interviewed students of all ages (making the interviews age appropriate). Based on the interviews, the students view innovation labs as an exciting piece to their curriculum. The district is building upon the students' feedback and next year they are developing an eighth grade innovation lab curriculum as well. There will be some revisions to the existing curriculum, too. Units will be added, so that the children aren't repeating the same curriculum. Also, the elementary school students want less coding, whereas the middle school students want more coding.

This past school year, the district submitted 4 sustainability grants. We have very exciting news! We received 2 of the grants (for CRPS and Cedar). We did not receive the CRES grant or the district-wide grant.

The district used Earth Day to focus on their green initiative. They hosted a salad in a jar evening, using produce from the tower gardens. Another way the district will focus on the green initiative will be a harvest night in the fall.

The focus in May is mental health awareness. The last week in May, the district is going to paint the town pink by putting pink bows around the trees. This will be a district-wide activity and will help build the community. They'd like for the PTO to help by providing the pink bows.

The district is still looking at making revisions to homework. The process began by interviewing teachers. Some questions being discussed: What's the purpose of homework? What's the equity of it? What's the grading for homework? What does a zero mean for homework? Is it grading an effort or a lack of understanding?

Melissa Cannizzaro, shared her experiences with homework. She found it has never been consistent throughout the years. One year there may be no homework and the next year an hour and a half.

Mrs. Garibay said the teachers also found inconsistencies in the homework being given amongst grade levels.

Kathy Gizzo talked about the importance of using school work as a basis for homework. The focus during the school day is individualized learning and differentiation and this should be reflected upon the homework.

MaryJane Garibay said there will be revisions with grading as well. It is taking more time than anticipated, but the process has started with getting feedback from the teachers, then will move towards parents and students.

One revision will be an open portal for the elementary school. This will enable parents to view their child's grades throughout the year, so there are no surprises at conferences or on report cards. The open portal will start with grade 5, then move to grade 4, and then to grade 3.

Another revision will be fall conferences. The hope is that, during fall conferences, teachers will share specific student goals for the school year.

Melissa Cannizzaro asked if Cedar will continue with numerical grades (which are more specific than letter grades). MaryJane stated, at this point, the district plans to continue with numerical grades.

Mrs. Garibay touched upon technology and how the students are doing a phenomenal job navigating through technology. She discussed how beneficial the chrome books are in helping students with technology. It was asked if students are still doing keyboard practice. The children are using Alphabet Zoo to practice keyboarding at the primary school. In the future, they are looking to make keyboarding part of handwriting.

There's a call for speakers! Mrs. Jones is sending out an invite for anyone in the community that wants to present on health and wellness.

Mrs. Barr

It's a wonderful time at the primary school. It is super busy and I'd like to thank the PTO for providing funding for such special programs. Yesterday the Franklin Institute came to the CRPS to present life in space. Tomorrow, there will be another assembly, with a magician, and the children will be participating in the "Don't play the bully game." And preparation for the child's touring theater is underway. The child's touring theater puts children's personal writing to life on stage. Children have begun submitting their writing for the theater. We are expecting some great performances.

And wonderful things are happening in the classrooms. Students are sharing their mathematical thinking and are relating math to their personal lives. It's great to hear the dialogue and conversation among the children. This morning I was in a classroom where they were working on the difficult task of drawing scale models of their bedrooms.

The preschool program continues to grow. We expanded a section of preschool for the upcoming year. Next year there will be 4 full day and 2 half day classrooms. There is only one spot available in the full day and the half day. We are busting at the seams in the most wonderful way. And the older children are benefitting as well, second graders are becoming the mentors of the building.

Kindergarten registration was successful. Some children who registered presently attend pre-k in the district and some are new to the district. Numbers will be a little larger this year. Children are acclimating quicker into routines by starting in preschool.

Executive Board Reports

a) Patricia Pecoraro / Danielle Gibson– Co-Presidents

Color Run – THIS SATURDAY

You can walk or run. We are still accepting late registrations. The Color Run is at Bucks Mill. Registration begins at 8:15 and the run is 9:00.

b) Courtney McCormick - Vice President

Minigrant Recap:

*Author Kate Klice has visited CRES. 5th grades had an opportunity to compose their own writing pieces with her.

*CRPS had an anti-bullying assembly. The magician made it fun for the students to learn about anti-bullying.

*The chess club purchased new chess boards and puzzles.

CRES Field Day – June 6th – Volunteers needed, both morning and afternoon sessions. Going to have water, oranges, and a DJ. Rain date is June 8th.

c) Amy Dimes - Fundraising / Sponsorship

Spring Gala Recap: Thanks everyone for coming out and supporting the PTO and the Colts Neck Schools at our biggest fundraiser. A huge thank you goes out to our generous sponsors, Sessa Andrieu Wealth Management, Esposito Construction, Ray Raya, Esq., Colts Neck Dance & Performing Arts Academy, and Caro Electric. We also appreciate the many gift basket donations by businesses and individuals in our community. Please remember to support our local and family businesses as they have supported us through the years.

- d) Jennifer Winkelmann- Student Activities Director**
Student Activities Recap
4th Grade Bowling Night, which was April 21st, was a fun event for all the kids and parents that attended.
3rd Grade Game Show Night – May 19th
5th Grade I-Play Trip - May 19th
2nd Grade Carnival - June 9th
Will take place at CRPS. Inflatables are already booked.
8th Grade Dance – June 16th
This year there will be a change in location. It is going to take place at the Colts Neck Inn. A buffet dinner will be served.

e) Stephanie Collura- Communications Director

- f) Kristie Teirney – Assistant Treasurer**
Flower Sale – May 12th
We are using the same vendor for prior years. Price of plants will be the same. This year it will be at CRES and we are going to give it a go at Cedar as well.

- g) Nancy Morin – Treasurer**
February Treasurer’s Report

Ending balances 2/28/17

- Checking \$19,632
- Savings \$16,660
- Gaming \$12,139

No notable income

Notable expenses:

- \$1000 for the Colts Band trip
- \$1,097 for mini grants
- \$1,025 for the 7th grade trip to Get Air

- h) Marci Klein – Secretary**

Approve February Treasurer’s Reports (Melissa Cannizzaro, Steven Gimbelman) all were in favor.

Approve Februar and March Meeting Minutes (Melissa Cannizzaro, Steven Gimbelman) all were in favor.

The school district will be offering a STEM camp this summer, Camp Innovation. A flyer is going to go home with the students.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 am.