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**Friends of Essex Elementary School Meeting Minutes**

**March 2, 2023 -- In-Person/Zoom meeting**

**Attendance:**

**In-person:** Betsy McKeen-President; Maggie Gleason - VP; Sheila McAdams - Principal; Heather Harrell - Treasurer; Bradley Cooke- Secretary; Hilary Mattison - Enrichment Coordinator

**Via Zoom:** Rachel McInnis-Social Media Coordinator; Jessica Torcicollo - Grant Writer; Beth Kelley - 1st grade teacher

**Welcome/Introductions:**

Maggie Gleason called the meeting to order at 7:45 pm, and the previous meeting’s minutes were approved.

**March Madness Book Bracket**

Maggie Gleason will pick up books from Beverly Bookshop on March 10th, but we are in need of more book orders. Maggie Safrine will clarify messaging in the next email blast so families know that we need more book orders for the school to participate.

**Welcome/remarks from Mrs. McAdams**

Mrs. McAdams shared that the iReady scores from January were sent out to families. The school adapted the scoring grid from iReady to correspond with their report card language. The school is still sorting out how to interpret these scores since 50% of the questions that kids get on this test are stretch questions.

There is lots of enrichment brewing–March is packed with activities. Playground timeline is still on track, and Mrs. McAdams met with Jess Palm and Jess Hurwitz to approve a less ambitious and more realistic planting plan. She is also checking in with some other parents with landscaping connections. The setup will be similar to the front of the school, where families can hopefully help purchase plants, grass seed, etc. and help offset the costs.

Mrs. McAdams is also working with Buckley Tree to create stumps for child seating outside. The second graders will be working together to answer the question, “How big should the stumps be outside?”

She also just finished the statement of interest for the new building project. To finish the playground, she has spoken with Dana Woulfe about a mural to commemorate the old building. Her initial thinking is to invite the community to “put their mark” on the mural somehow and hang it on the backside facing the playground. This will be on fabric rather than pavement so that when the new building comes the mural can be rehung.

Finally, next Tuesday night, in front of the school committee, there’s an elementary spotlight and she will be sharing the March Madness tradition with our updated spin on using more inclusive book choices.

**Remarks from Beth Kelley, 1st grade teacher**

Ms. Kelley shared that Emily Dwyer has used all of her money for books. She also complimented the organization behind Messy Art Night, but she suggested that we communicate more clearly to the Essex community that it is a whole-family event and that siblings and residents not enrolled at EES are also welcome to attend this in the future.

**Enrichment Update**

* Kindergarten and 1st had the Acton Science Museum come to school, and still have $500 left in each of their budgets. Audubon site visit planned for May for K. 1st has other plans in progress.
* 2nd grade went to Woodman’s, Acton Science trip in progress for May
* 3rd grade has a few trips completed,and an Essex River Cruise this spring
* 4th grade is planning to go to the MOS and potentially Acton Science
* Ms. Seymour has a list of books and is looking for a small bookshelf. She will submit a form.

**Grant Update**

Jessica Torcicollo confirmed with Heather Harrell that we received the Essex Cultural Council grant.

She also has two grants on her radar in April but needs a specific project. The Cape Ann Community Foundation would be best for a one time project, or something that we don’t necessarily need Enrichment funding for in the future; perhaps Daisy Nell? The New England BioLabs grant in April should be for something new. This can be up to $2000, and so long as it is STEM related they are supportive. Since we already have funding in place for Stem Night 2023, funds could be used for some additional STEM-related activities in Essex like the WhaleMobile.

Betsy McKeen suggested that since we have an extra $1250 left over from Daisy Nell we should ear mark this to help fund her to perform live again at Hoedown. Mrs. McAdams also suggested that EES look for other options for Composer in Residence and open it up to something broader like an “Artist in residence.”

The Community Read grant is due in May, so Jess will need contact info and book for the budget by the next meeting.

**Treasurer Update**

Heather Harrell confirmed that we will have Jeff do our taxes again. The 4th and 5th grade playground equipment has been ordered. There is a backorder on playground balls but these should be shipping mid March. Heather will provide the playground budget info to Mrs. McAdams shortly.

**Messy Art Night**

This was a huge success! Although it’s not a specific fundraiser, we made $100 in donations which is about what we’ve made in the past. Maggie Gleason suggested a Venmo QR code to be displayed in addition to the donation jar. We still need to reimburse artists for their materials, so Betsy will be following up with Elle Woulfe. As Ms. Kelley noted, we will make sure it is communicated out that all residents and siblings are welcome in the future.

**Book Fair**

This will take place March 15 and 16. It will remain open after school on the 16th for families leading up to the 5th grade ice cream social. The books are getting dropped off on the 14th, and 5th graders are helping to set up the books. Maggie Gleason is double checking on whether or not we include tax. Envelopes will once again go home on Friday before the fair, so parents can send their children in with money. A parent volunteer email needs to go in the next few days.

**Ice Cream Social**

This is not officially a FoEES event, but is being organized by 5th grade families. It is also open to the community, similar to Messy Art Night. The 5th grade families will be doing the advertising for the social. Betsy will get some starter change.

**Restaurant Night**

The next one will hopefully take place Tuesday 3/28 at The Farm. Caitlin Cann needs to confirm with the owner, but the manager has signed off on this. Rachel McInnis will post on social media once the date is made official.

**Staff Appreciation Lunch**

The next one will be on Wednesday, March 15th from 11 - 1:15. It will be sponsored by K and 1st grade.

**STEM Night**

Jenn Ware is on top of it. It will occur on Friday, April 7, 2023.

**Business and Family Appeal**

We can stuff envelopes at the April meeting. FoEES Board will arrive by 7 pm ahead of the meeting.

**Teacher Stipends**

Our EES occupational therapist got some great materials for her classroom including left-handed scissors, textured paper, and mazes.

Emily Dwyer used her stipend on some great books.

**New funding requests (above and beyond teacher stipend)**

Emily Dwyer requested $148.25 to support vocab & morphology in the 3rd grade. Betsy McKeen made a motion to approve this funding; Hillary Mattison seconded this motion. FoEES approved this funding request.

Maggie Gleason asked Ms. Kelley to get feedback from Emily on how the new online form worked.

Betsy will update the website to make it clear how teachers and staff can submit requests for their stipend: “I want to use my stipend → Option 1 - use the Amazon Link, Option 2 - if not on Amazon, submit a request with this form…”

Maggie Gleason motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 pm and Hillary seconded.

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**Next meeting: Thursday April 6, 2023 at 7:30 pm in person and on Zoom.**