

# Friends of EES

## Friends of Essex Elementary School Meeting Minutes October 4, 2021 -- Zoom meeting

**Attendance:** Zoom meeting (Betsy McKeen, Maggie Gleason, Suzanne Bediz, Heather Harrell, Samantha Silag, Mindy MacNeill, Susan Bell, Jennifer Roberts, Jessie Palm, Jennifer Riopel, Whitney Buckley, Diana Remare)

### **Welcome/Introductions:**

Maggie Gleason called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm.

### **Welcome/remarks from Dr. Roberts:**

The school is settling into routines especially drop-off and pick-ups. The new inclement weather procedures have the students sit in the cafeteria from drop-off and students coming from the bus go into the gym. The new routines are being picked up quickly by the students. Dr. Roberts provided a reminder that breakfast is free and available from 8:05 - 8:20 am every day.

EES will have an Open House on Thursday 10/7 and teachers will meet with ½ of the class from 6:00 - 6:25 pm and the other half from 6:30 - 6:55 pm. Teachers are managing the sign-ups for their specific classes and have been in touch with families.

Assessments have started for the benchmarking (the first of three that occur each year) in math and reading. The school is using AIMSWebPlus, which is updated this year and has required additional staff training. Results of the benchmarking will determine needs for support through Response to Intervention (RTI). The students spend about 30 minutes each day of intervention (What I Need/WIN Time). Families will receive paperwork before any intervention is started. This includes Social Emotional groups as well (the assessment is based on a rating scale completed by teachers).

Current playground usage has focused on smaller groups during the school year. There has been concern around having all of the students on the playground early in the morning before school. EES is piloting having grades 1-3 use the playground Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays and grades 4-5 on Tuesday and Thursday out on the playground to minimize concerns.

### **Hello from Ms. Silag:**

Samantha wanted to connect with Friends of EES to determine what activities and/or events have been held in the past. Friends of EES support The Book Fair and Community Read Day as well as other enrichment opportunities for grades. Friends of EES supports the purchase of multiple copies of the MCBA; Samantha had some suggestions about sourcing for the best prices. She shared that she hosts a Facebook page and would love to have parents follow and we will have a link to the page on FoEES

website and Facebook page. Any additional questions will be addressed via email and direct contact with Samantha. Thanks for joining the meeting!

### **School Beautification Project (Ms. MacNeill):**

The Student Council (Mindy and Susan) is looking to organize the school beautification project in order to start work on the front of the school. They envision this as a partner project with FoEES and there are specific items/activities that Student Council will be looking for support. There are questions around the feasibility of donations (in kind, materials, volunteer work, etc.) and Jennifer Roberts will connect with the Superintendent to determine the possibility of donations.

- Planning the layout (can this be volunteered?) \*this would include the students
- Funding sources (fundraising would be significant)
- Donation of plants
- Installation (volunteer work)

### **Playground Naming:**

There is an opportunity to engage students in the electoral process using the naming of the playground as a mock election. The old ballot box and counter could be used as part of a mock election. Student Council is interested in this idea along with support from the Town Clerk to determine the name of the playground. The chosen name needs to be approved by School Committee for final naming rights. There is a survey that was previously completed and the project should start with those 5 names that were collected last year. Jessie Palm and Student Council (MacNeill and Bell) will further collaborate on this opportunity. Playgrounds at MMES are not named.

### **Book Fair Update:**

The Book Shop would like to have a Book Fair in-person in the spring (April 2022). They could provide a seller (who will be masked and shopping will be by appointment. They plan to set up for a week and each class would visit for 30 minutes (browsing days M, T; create wish list; list will go home - buying days W, Th, F). They will be able to limit staff and class interactions through scheduling. There is the possibility that it could be open-air, but this will need further discussion. The Book Shop will forward 20% of each book purchase toward FoEES. Additional planning and collaboration will include Samantha, Maggie, and Alina, if possible to work out the logistical details.

As a follow-up to this discussion, a Warm-Up your Classroom Library event will be created for holiday shopping for teachers' classrooms. This will allow for purchases from the Book Shop (online or in the shop) for families to gift books to their teachers' classrooms once teachers have provided wish lists to The Book Shop.

### **Music Funding request discussion:**

A general discussion was held regarding the current status of musically oriented enrichment/event activities which included:

- Daisy Nell - 2nd grade - will review current 2nd-grade enrichment
- Hoedown - whole school - canceled this year

- 5th-grade Composer in Residence - Maggie will reach out to the Hooper Fund to see if there is a possibility of the additional \$400 needed for this remainder of this year.

**Funding MCBA Book titles:**

This collection of books is used by the 5th grade for the Book Champion activity. The grade requires four (4) copies of each title. The library has already ordered 1 copy of each of the titles. Samantha would like to collaborate with FoEES and will connect with and contact the 4th/5th-grade teachers to verify how many copies are needed. FoEES has intentionally moved away from using Follett to order these books and will look for other sources to provide these books. A current quote from The Book Shop is approximately \$800. Additionally, the library has a subscription to SORA (an online platform for digital materials).

**Happy As A Clam Recap:**

The Happy As A Clam Race raised \$8,607 (profit), even with the reduced sponsorship this year.

**Family and Business Appeal planning:**

The letter will be updated by the end of the month and reviewed by the board. FoEES will email the letter to Maggie S. to send out in an email blast. Ideas to showcase the fundraising goal include a visual thermometer, which might track participation rather than a monetary amount; this will need to be cleared by Dr. Roberts.

**EES Gear Sale:**

The Gear Sale will begin soon. The selected items have been submitted to the Jungle, which is swamped at the moment. FoEES is waiting for the link to open the store and it will be posted on Facebook, the website, and emailed to families.

**Family Carnival Fundraiser:**

Meeting on Wednesday 10/6 to discuss this fundraiser via Zoom. All are welcome to join to support planning. Partner with the grand opening, unveiling, community involvement of the playground  
Jessie would be interested in planning ... thinking spring event

**Family Directory Update:**

Flyers were handed out at the HAAC and the fun dash table as a reminder to sign up and use the Family Directory. For families that have used it previously, their information was rolled over and is in the directory.

**Shalin Liu Enrichment Update:**

No update.

**New Funding Requests:**

Samantha Silag used her stipend of \$100 - dated 9/2/21; she will be emailed that Betsy will reimburse her and Heather will complete reimbursement to Betsy once the checks are available.

**Treasurer's Update:**

Welcome to Heather! We are so happy to have you on board. Heather needs some additional information and access to forms, amazon, etc. These will be provided ASAP.

**Approval of prior meeting's minutes**

The minutes from the September 13, 2021 EES PTO meeting were approved.

**Next meeting: November 1, 2021 at 7:30 pm (Zoom meeting)**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Betsy McKeen and Maggie Gleason. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm.