

Frank P. Tillman Elementary PTO
Meeting Agenda
9/22/2020
7:00 PM via Zoom

There were roughly about 32 participants in the Zoom call.

Welcome from Presidents & Introductions

Laura Eads started off the meeting by introducing herself and Kelly Struckhoff, co-Presidents and then let the other PTO Board Members say “Hi” and introduce themselves.

Sarah Carroll & Emina Seevers, PTO Vice-Presidents
Tracy Klebe, Secretary
Steven Curtis, Sara Fischer, & Rani Grady, Treasury Team

Committee Updates

Katie Kirk (KSD N.O.W.)

KSD NOW – Nutrition on the Weekends – is a program that provides bags of food on the weekends during the school year for students in the Kirkwood School District experiencing food insecurity. KSD NOW provided food to an average of 110 students every week, with a total of over 28,400 meals served in 2019-2020 school year.

There will be opportunities for volunteers to help packing food in the future, stay tuned!

Sadie Smith (Yearbook)

They are hoping to have a yearbook! This school year will be like no other, and the yearbook committee would like parents' help capturing those unique, e-learning moments. If you have photos of your children (or pods) working from home, please e-mail them to Sadie Smith at sadie-smith@hotmail.com. If you have a large number of photos to share, we can also send you a link to our DropBox file so you can upload all year long.

Laura Hamper (Sustainability)

The sustainability committee is working on cleaning out the garden space for the fall. It's a great chance for families to take a break from the iPads and get outside! There's a sign up genius in the eblast for families to pick a time to come weed. Each spot is intended for one family at a time to ensure social distancing. We marked a lot of the plants we want to keep with ribbon, so no one has to worry about pulling out the wrong thing. More plans to come, but for now, we hope a lot of families will take advantage of the nice weather and come help us clean up our garden!

Jane Nichols (Fundraising)

Each Box Top we clip or scan is money for Tillman. There are two ways to support this initiative:

*You can cut out clip-able Box Tops and save them for a future "turn in" date which will be sometime in October- more details to come.

*If you see a reminder to "scan" on your item, you can scan this Box Top on your actual grocery receipt. All you have to do is download the Box Tops app on your mobile device and scan away!

Lauren Mussig (Room Parent Coord.)

We are still looking to fill 16 room parent positions.

You can find the sign-up link in the weekly eblast or on the PTO website.

Approval of 2020-21 Tillman PTO Budget

Kelly put the budget on the screen, did a brief overview and asked for everyone to vote.

Emina Seevers moved to approve the 2020-2021 Tillman PTO budget. Sarah Carroll and Sadie Smith seconded the motion. 34 in favor, 0 not in favor. Budget passed.

Principals' updates/announcements

Dr. Stobbe welcomed everyone, especially all new families! (Not how she wanted to welcome everyone, but glad we are here and hope to welcome everyone in person soon.). She gave thanks for the feedback they have received, it is how they know what is going on and how people are feeling. They know we all want an update on when we are going to get kids back in school. They want the same thing- it is a decision made by the Board of Education. They will make the decision. Based on other districts and the desire to have kids back in school, she feels that it is coming. The BOE is meeting on Monday 9/28 and they are hoping a decision will be made in the positive direction. They are really pushing to have the kids back in school.

Dr. Crnko- He knows that everyone has a lot of questions about when the kids will be back in school and he wishes he had an answer- the BOE meeting hopefully will have answers. This meeting's focus is on social-emotional health for our students. After looking at questions that have come up, they have made a few "topics" to discuss tonight. If you have other questions- please send them to the Zoom "chat". Once they have information from the BOE meeting, they will be working on a forum to answer everyone's questions regarding what the future will bring for our students.

Informative Topics:

Tips for online safety:

- KSD has K-12 curriculum that addresses online behavior, safety and security (Program name: Common Sense Media). Elementary teachers teach at least one lesson from this program per month. Learning

Standards embedded within this program include the following- Media Balance & Well Being, Privacy & Security, News Media and Literacy, Digital Footprint & Identity, Relationships & Communication, Cyberbullying, and Digital Drama, & Hate Speech

- Continue to monitor/ask about/discuss online behavior with your child
- Reach out to teacher/counselor/administrator if you are experiencing any issues

Digital drama and hate speech- We are living in a world where this is really important. The Tillman administrators take it very seriously. They are very concerned as educators about this and how we react to it. They also want to know if things pop up, if it is brought to their attention, we can deal with it on our level.

Student Workload- Everyone has a different opinion. What is too much, or too little? One thing that has gone well is that people feel good about the schedule/structure. In the spring, they didn't have a chance to have as much structure. Lots of talk about how much time should be spent with the teacher talking vs time with the student working independently. Our feedback is very important to everyone- please reach out to the Tillman admin/teachers and let them know.

Amber Sidwell, Tillman Counselor: Supporting our Students' Social-Emotional Well-being

Mrs. Sidwell misses the kids! She is trying to navigate how to be with the kids in a virtual world and provide support for the students. You can reach out to her anytime for anything your kids need support with anything.

Overview of the Social Emotional Staff at Tillman;



There are lots of resources at Tillman- In Kirkwood, we are very lucky because the school district recognizes that SE resources are very important. A few of the things they are doing to support our students;

*Class Meetings- This is when community is being built. Kids can practice social skills and build a sense of community.

*Second steps- a research based program which is used to build social, empathy, and community building skills- twice a week. Great addition to our curriculum.

Amber gets to see every student because she does class lessons- Grades K-2 work on “zones of regulation.” Every student received a chart with the zones and coping strategies. Grades 3-5 do a review of the zones, look at mindfulness and self care. They are learning strategies to use now and later in life.

Amber is always available to speak with kids- virtually or over the phone. She can work with kids about friendship issues, family changes, grief, stress management, school stress. Amber is available for both parents and kids.

Lunch bunches- Right now, they are focusing on new Tillman kids. If you have a student new to Tillman, she will be inviting them to a lunch bunch.

Small groups- self regulation, anxiety, mindset. These are formed after talks with concerned parents/teachers

Helpful tips in a socially distant and virtual world;

This is so challenging- we are social beings. Even introverts require social interaction. This is something that needs to be practiced.

How to keep kids connected:

If you know your child is really feeling disconnected, reach out to Amber to get a group together for a lunch bunch. They can also help set up Zoom times with friends outside of school time. Even though we are trying to avoid extra screen time, it might be worth it to have kids feel connected.

Texting apps? Facetime? Videogames? Lots of monitoring needed, but some of these can be a valuable tool to keep kids connected. Lot of fun games online.

Some families are having socially distant playdates. There might be more opportunities in the future.

PTO is working on making interest groups to get kids together.

Amber is here for your kids to help make connections and it is a priority to her.

Self-care for kids social and emotional well-being:

No right or wrong answer- no day is the same. Your child might seem great one day and then the next day experience zoom fatigue, irritability and low focus. This is normal and OK. The need for fresh air and time away from a screen is VERY important. It will help with stress and focus. Kids are used to moving a lot and their bodies are used to that – encourage your kids to move and get fresh air. Technology free time is important.

Organization is really important. Kids are used to their teachers letting them know what is going on and what to expect. Make sure they are getting ready for a normal school day- getting dressed, eating breakfast, making their bed- keep things as normal as possible. For some kids, knowing what time they will have a snack is really important. Predictability helps anxiety. Have their supplies ready and accessible. Setting a timer is helpful for classes.

One of the things classroom teachers use that is helpful is a “calm down” corner/space for when they need a break. This might be a good thing to have in your home. Might have coping strategies highlighted somewhere for them to refer to. (The worksheet Amber included in their school supplies has coping strategies.) This could be a way to get back into the “green zone”. Encourage your child to do them at home. Have your kids teach you how to do it!

Amber is hearing from a lot of families that children that did not have anxiety, have shown signs of anxiety now. Kids are creature of habit and routine. They are also aware of energy around them.

If your child is struggling, always let your teacher know. Being reassured by an adult outside of your home is helpful. No one should be embarrassed. Mental health should be talked about and normalized.

Amber uses the following guidelines; If your student's behavior has changed for 2-3 weeks, you should call Amber and she can help. She can offer strategies and figure out if outside support may be needed.

It is helpful to focus on the positive. Research says the more we focus our brain on optimism, the more it becomes a part of who we are.

For example, as questions like "What went well today?" "What did you enjoy today?" Focus on what went well. It will allow us to look forward to the positive things.

Limit exposure to media. The news can feel scary. When kids make up their own narrative, it can be much worse than reality. Point out the positives- mask wearing, social distancing, etc. Talk to them about how we are working on making sure everyone stays safe.

Adult problems = COVID safety

Kid problems = Is your homework done? Are you being a good friend?

Please do not hesitate to reach out! Lots of support with the staff at Tillman.

The Interest group survey – putting kids together with similar interests.
Laura Eads added that yes, we are doing an interest survey to try and get kids together with similar interests!

Thank you, Mrs. Sidwell! Thank you Dr. Stobbe and Dr. Crnko!

Reminder of PTO Communication Tools - weekly eBlast, PTO website

We appreciate feedback and want to communicate with everyone. The eBlast is the Weds. Email that everyone gets.

Dr Stobbe is going to put a link in the weekly eblast on how to watch the BOE meeting on Monday.