



Bishop School PTO Meeting Minutes

Date: October 7, 2020

Location: <https://zoom.us/j/91393205901?pwd=emtzVWlrV0pjV20zNkRaU2tEZFG2UT09>,
7-9 PM

Attending: Principal Mark McAneny; PTO Teacher Representative Caroline Thom (3rd grade teacher); Bishop Nurse Katie Martin; Judy Geyer (Arlington Education Foundation (AEF), Bishop Rep); PTO Board Members: Co-President Christina Marko (2nd year); PTO Co-President Laura Tikonoff (1st year); Co-Treasurer David Brecht (2nd year); Co-Treasurer Lindsay Pacheco (1st year); Class Parent Coordinator Lindsay Sweeney (1st year); Communications Coordinator Amanda Maltais (1st year); Fundraising Coordinator Tai Sokoloff (1st year); and Recording Secretary Neshe Gafuri (2nd year). **Regrets:** Assistant Principal Eva Liner.

Approximately 60+ members of the Bishop Community attended, including many class parents, and Emily Kung, a representative from the Arlington Outdoor Initiative Committee.

Introductions: Christina (PTO Co-President) welcomed all in attendance. AY 2020-2021 PTO Board members introduced themselves to the audience.

June 2020 Meeting Minutes: Christina Marko proposed a motion to approve the June 2020 Meeting Minutes. These minutes are posted on the PTO website. Principal Mark McAneny seconded the motion and minutes were approved by a majority vote.

Principal's Update (Mark McAneny):

- Welcomed everyone to the third week of school for both the Remote Academy and Hybrid models.
- Both models have been built from the ground up. Adjustments are being made as needed, and as proactively as possible. Reported mostly positive reviews from the community. He thanked Bishop families for all of their support.
- There are 888 students in the Remote Academy town-wide. Eva Liner is one of the leaders of the Remote Academy.
- District is continuing to work with individual families who were affected by special needs placement.
- Working on the final version of the arrival and dismissal process, as well as lunch and recess schedules.
- The cafeteria will not be used for lunch. Grab & Go lunch and eating outside has been working well to date.
- USDA has allocated funds to all schools in the US to allow free breakfast and lunch for all students at least through the end of 2020.
- Playground “zones” allow for a controlled environment and social distancing.
- Special thank you to Bishop staff for their tireless work to accommodate both the hybrid and remote academy schedules.
- Teaching assistants have been integral in supporting hybrid students on their remote days.
- The district is continuing to hire support staff in order to provide additional assistance.
- Nurse Martin continues to develop health and safety plans for Bishop.
- Material distribution for the Remote Academy will occur every other Wednesday.
- Closing remarks were “[We are] truly stronger together and we are going to make this work.”
- Christina Marko extended further gratitude to Mark and Eva for their hard work and dedication this year.

PTO Teacher Representative's Update (Caroline Thom):

- Reported that the Bishop teachers are very happy to be back and working with our children.
- Emphasized that this year's teaching continues to be a learning curve.
- Teachers have been amazed by the students' patience and helpfulness.
- Teachers are looking forward to hearing what enrichment activities may be possible this year.

- Introduced the newest Bishop Bear - Elena. Elena is the Bishop assistance dog. Ms. Thom is Elena's caregiver and reports that the dog has been wonderful with the students.
- Elena has already visited several classrooms and will have the opportunity to visit with all children over the course of the year.
- Christina Marko welcomed input from the teachers for possible enrichment activity ideas for this school year.

Invited Speaker - Nurse Katie Martin, Bishop School Nurse:

- Remarkd that it has been a collective and huge effort to get the students back in school.
- She thanked the community for working hard to keep students safe and healthy and encouraged the community to continue doing what it has been doing to keep the numbers low.
- Stated children have been resilient and do a great job keeping their masks on during the school day.
- Noted that information frequently changes week to week as we continue to learn from experience. She will continue to communicate any significant changes to the Bishop community..
- Reinforced to the community to keep children at home when sick, and inform the nurse and his/her teacher if your child(ren) has seasonal allergies.
- In the event of symptoms, students will be sent home and required to get COVID tested. Students will require a negative COVID test before returning to school, or an alternative diagnosis from PCP if you decide to not have your child tested for COVID. If a family does not pursue testing or an alternate diagnosis, he/she will need to stay home and quarantine for two weeks before returning to school.
- If a student travels to a red zone state, he/she will need to quarantine for 14 days from the day he/she returns to Arlington.
- If a student tests positive for COVID, immediately inform the nurse's office as all persons in close contact with the student will need to be notified.
- For students that are in the hybrid program but may have symptoms on remote days, please contact the nurse regardless. This is very important for tracking contacts.
- Make sure that your children are wearing kid-size masks - oftentimes they come to school with too big a size.
- Closed update by again thanking the community for sending children back to school. "The joy is huge!"

Invited Speaker - Judy Geyer, AEF:

- Opened by stating that she would talk about two things: (1) Recruiting a new Bishop representative for AEF and (2) Changes in funding opportunities for this year.
- Judy has been AEF representative to Bishop for the past 4 years.
- In typical years, AEF's goal is to support innovative programming throughout Arlington's public schools system by offering 4 different types of grants:
 - For teachers to pursue a specific interest(s)
 - For individual schools to support a speaker series or something specific for that school/grade/class
 - For programming across multiple schools
 - For multi-year programming.
- Judy attends one Bishop staff meeting per year to educate Bishop staff about grant opportunities. If staff is interested in pursuing a grant, Judy can assist with writing it. Twice per year she also attends an AEF Board meeting in order to vote on the grant applications that the AEF Board receives throughout all Arlington schools.
- Judy intends to serve in this role for the rest of this academic year but would love it if someone from the community would partner with her this year with the intention of continuing on in the role in subsequent years.
- She is available via email for anyone who may be interested and has questions.
- There is more flexibility this year with grant applications. Additional changes include:
 - No deadlines for grant applications this year.
 - Funding will come from one pool of money. There will be no designated categories.
- Judy would be happy to talk with any parent who has an idea for innovative programming at Bishop. She would also be able to weigh in whether an idea should be funded in its entirety by an AEF grant, or split in some way with the PTO.
- Some grant examples include teleconference at the library, virtual field trips, etc.
- Mentions that typical AEF grant caps at around \$3,000.00, but there are no caps this year.
- Closed update by urging the community to move quickly if there is a grant idea for Bishop.

Co-Treasurers Update:

- Presented PTO's AY 2020-2021 proposed budget.
- David Brecht presented projected fundraising revenue while Lindsey Pacheco covered spending initiatives.
- Co-Treasurers remarked that COVID significantly impacted the budget this year and difficult cuts were made.
- Typical significant fundraising events such as the Bear Fair and Used Goods Sale cannot occur and other events need to be reimagined.
- It is unknown how hard the Bishop community has been impacted economically by COVID and thus the Co-Treasurers produced a budget to the best of their ability based on information from prior years and the realities of this year.
- Main focus for this year's budget is to support the teachers and classrooms - both remote and hybrid.
- Teachers have been spending their own money to help prepare with remote and in person learning.
- During the next 6-8 weeks once the success of some of our early fundraising efforts is known, we will have better clarity of our finances and ability to support additional programming this year. .
- Historically, the PTO has raised more funds in the first half of the year and spent more in the second half of the year. Most enrichment activities occur in the Spring. Further decisions on enrichment programming will be determined based on timing, funds available and programming feasibility.
- David Brecht and Lindsay Pacheco reviewed the budget line by line. Please visit PTO website to view the budget in full.
- Christina Marko added that the fundraising coordinator, Tai Sokoloff, is working hard with event coordinators to re-imagine much-loved yearly PTO fundraising events.
- David Brecht highlighted the importance of AmazonSmile and Corporate-Match for this year.
- Tai Sokoloff stated that communication has been and will continue to be challenging this year with our various learning models. We will continue to use the weekly newsletter, social media, and classroom parents to assist with all communication.
- Laura Tikonoff echoed that we are open to any feedback from the community re events and communication.
- Christina Marko asked the community if they would feel comfortable approving the budget as is. Another option would be to approve some aspects of the budget with a plan to present an updated budget in January once we know the success of fundraising efforts this fall. In order to be able to issue teachers checks and classroom fund checks, however, some form of the budget needs to be approved this evening.

* *Junko Nagano, a member of the Bishop community and former PTO board member, raised the motion to approve the budget, Laura Tikonoff (PTO Co-President) seconded the motion. All members of the community unanimously voted in favor to approve the motion, no negative votes recorded. Thus the motion was passed and the AY 2020-2021 budget was approved.*

Co-presidents update:

- Annual Fund campaign launched and successful with funds approaching \$5,000.00 at the time of this meeting. The PTO Board is working hard to improve electronic and print communication for the Annual Fund.
- PTO website has been updated. The broken link for the annual fund has been corrected.
- Thanks given to those who have already donated to the annual fund. Encouraged further donations through website or personal check dropped off at the school. Annual fund request is only a suggested amount and families should give what they feel comfortable given. Any amount is greatly appreciated.
- David Brecht added that all the money that PTO raises comes right back to the students this school year. Both Remote Academy and hybrid students will benefit from Annual Fund donations.
- PTO has also funded plastic dots and cones for social distancing, 3 outdoor hand washing stations, and wipe boards for students grades 3-5 (hybrid and remote).
- Upcoming picture day and Pumpkin Sale mentioned with appropriate health and safety precautions in place.
- Next PTO will feature an invited speaker discussing Mental Health and Wellness , as well as general PTO business.
- Thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and for all the hard work they have been doing to support their children

Emily Kung, Member of Arlington's Outdoor Class Initiative Group Update:

- Outdoor initiative is an international movement to promote outdoor time for safety and health during COVID, as well as to promote outdoor curriculum in the long term.
- Bishop PTO funded 3 handwashing stations for the playground.
- Hardy and Pierce purchased folding cushions for outdoor seating during lunch.

- Trying to get feedback from the teachers at these schools to see how much these seats are being used in the next two weeks before purchasing them for Bishop.
- Mark McAneny added that Bishop already has garden seating, benches, scooped chairs that are currently being utilized and agreed that waiting on purchasing additional seating is best. He thanked the committee for their initiative and concern.

Classroom Parent Orientation:

- Lindsey Sweeney (Class Parent Coordinator) welcomed and thanked classroom parents for volunteering.
- Several changes to class parent role this year given COVID,
- Powerpoint presentation available on PTO website.

Meeting Adjourned.

NEXT PTO MEETING: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4th, 2020

Minutes by Neshe Gafuri, PTO Recording Secretary