

In Attendance

Andrea Christopher, Jeff Hassman, Nate Gruber, Lowell Stutzman, Sarah Hess, Ashley Welter, Andrew and Nicole Bolthouse, Justine Rinehart, Suzanne Watters, Sarah Staker, Blake Robinson, Darin Adams, Monica Boyer, Jessica Booth, Randy Husted, Heather Dice, and Jenna Flugum.

School District Board Members & Principal's Corner (Andrea Christopher)

- Cedar Falls Community School District Board members Jeff Hassman, Nate Gruber, and Lowell Stutzman were in attendance for the meeting and gave a brief overview of the role of the Board. The Board's focus is on governance and policy, the budget, and ensuring overarching District goals are achieved. There are five seats opening on the Board next year so encourage active and involved parents to consider running. Conversation was opened up to parents for Q&A:
 - A parent asked about the status of the new high school. It is set to open in fall 2024. Plan for the old high school building is still to be determined. Looking at options such as selling to a developer or how to utilize the space for other community needs. Much of the existing structure will be torn down. Potential for those in the admin building to relocate.
 - A parent asked about Superintendent Andy Pattee and his being a top candidate for the Central Rivers AEA chief administrator position. If he were to get the position, the District would begin a superintendent search for next school year.
 - A parent asked about how snow days are determined. Superintendent Pattee drives the roads and makes the determination for the District. He usually coordinates with Waterloo Schools as well.
 - A parent asked about long-term plans for the preschool program. If the legislature doesn't make changes to budgets and continues to fund the program, then it will continue as it currently exists. Parent expressed concern about a capacity issue for preschool and wraparound child care. Funding formulas are primarily focused on K-12, and pre-K is less funding per student.
 - A parent asked about District transportation issues and questions/concerns should be directed to the transportation department.
 - A parent asked when the learning trailers will be removed from the junior highs. When the old swimming pools have been converted to academic space, there won't be a need for the trailers anymore. Next on the District expansion list will be the junior highs although we are 7-10 years out on that. Another parent asked about how expansion would work since the middle schools are landlocked. One idea shared was to perhaps add a 9th grade wing onto the new high school. More discussion still needs to be had. The District will commission enrollment projections within the next few years which may also inform expansion plans.
 - Board meeting minutes can be found at www.cfschools.org/school-board/meetings. Anyone can also watch the Board meetings live or watching the recordings on the District's YouTube channel. Parents can also reach out to Board members directly (contact info also on website) with questions or concerns.
- Ms. Chris provided a number of updates:
 - Coding is happening with instructional technology coach, Mr. Wagner. Students are learning to code to apply to problem solving (e.g., trial and error). For example, Bee-bot activities in 2nd grade, other students using the sphero indi, and 6th graders using sammy microchips to learn input/output behaviors.
 - Ms. Barnard, Ms. Moeller, and Ms. Chris attended a workshop about concepts from the book "Building Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics" by Peter Liljedahl. They are taking new concepts learned and

are beginning to build thinking classrooms at Orchard Hill. The book provides 14 “optimal practices for thinking that create an ideal setting for deep mathematics learning to occur.” For example, “defront” the classroom as kids should be standing to increase engagement (e.g., get them all using white boards so they can’t hide in the back of the classroom) and randomize groups to keep them engaged. Ms. Chris shared a quote she thought was applicable to kids being able to figure things out, “Thinking is what we do when we don’t know what to do.”

- Literacy Night was a success. Lots of families attended. Kids liked the scavenger hunt and the school received good feedback on what to do better for next time.
- Working on Habit 3 – put first things first. Prioritize, plan, and organize.
- Winter break is fast approaching (Dec 23-Jan 3)! School resumes Wed, Jan 4. FAST testing occurs after break as well as 4th grade wax museum and preschool registration for next year.

Updates & Treasurer’s Report

- Treasurer’s report was given by Andrew Bolthouse.
- Made \$362 from gift wrap fundraiser and we had several people show up. Next year, we might do a similar timeframe (2-4 pm) and have a few more people on hand to help wrap.
- Hospitality report – Winter parties on December 22 at the teachers’ convenience. Planning a hot cocoa event for teachers/staff in January.
- Indoor recess games and supplies for classrooms are good gift ideas for teachers.
- Hy-Vee receipts – Turned in \$50,000 in Hy-Vee receipts this fall so will likely bring in a good amount from that. Please continue to collect those for the spring turn in.
- Next popcorn day is going to be December 22. Planning to send a note home to families after winter break to ask for a \$2-3 collection from each child for the year to help cover costs. \$75 for one month of popcorn supplies. Please let Haley know if anyone has thoughts on how to pay for upcoming popcorn days.
- Penny Wars will be held Jan 23-27. Justine is working on getting a big signed printed. Ms. Nolte is helping with getting some posters put together. Pennies will be negative this year and silver will be positive.
- Read-a-thon will be held Feb 20-March 3. Have reached out to the company so they are aware we are having this again. Will need to discuss prize ideas in January.
- Fun Fair – Mindy Kramme is this year’s chair. Darin is going to take on the food. Still need a volunteer coordinator, raffle/donations coordinator, and someone to help with the theme/décor. Theme is under the sea. Date is Friday, April 28. Raffle tickets will be sold April 14-27. Looking to do wrist bands for entrance and opportunities to get prizes throughout the building when kids play games instead of one central prize location. Looking at ways to work on the flow of the event within the building. Will work with the fun fair committee to determine regular meeting days and time. If anyone is interested in helping, please let POWWER know.
- Interested in doing a parent/student donut/pancake event. Thoughts for this event or Fun Fair, please pass along to POWWER.

Next Meeting

Adjourned at 8:15 p.m. Next meeting will be held January 10 at 7:00 pm.

Minutes taken and submitted by Jenna Flugum.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

"...to promote the welfare and educational values of children and youth at Orchard Hill Elementary School..."