



## Roy Cloud School - 2017-2018 School Year

### PTO Meeting Notes April 17, 2018

#### Call Meeting to Order/Welcome/Introductions – Yvonne Sarles

- The PTO meeting started at 6:37 pm in the school library.
- PTO President Yvonne Sarles led the group in introductions. For attendee list please see Appendix 1.

#### Treasurer's Report - Jim Balestieri

- We don't have a preliminary budget done yet but we do want to talk about what programs will continue next year so we can start to negotiate contracts.
- Legarza Physical Education (PE) – The successful fundraising for this years Fund a Need, which focused on wellness programs, is allowing us to add, as promised, hours to the Legarza contract. The price of the contract will increase with the added amount supported by the Fund a Need account.
- Arts for All – Arts for All provides art instruction to K-5 students. There have been concerns expressed all year about the current instructor and her organization skills/teaching style. The organization is committed to finding a better instructor for our school next year. Also, right now we are at 10 sessions (down from 12 in previous years). It would be nice to go back up to 12 sessions - if there is a stronger teacher and Roy Cloud teachers are amenable – since the budget can handle it.
- James Henry Music Instruction – Despite his challenges with time management, we would like James to come back to instruct the Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grades. His time management should be better next year with both grades only having 3 classes per day (the 4<sup>th</sup> first grade classroom this year created timeline stress). He would be kept to 30 min sessions.
- Star Vista – The Star Vista counseling program, an expensive program heavily subsidized by the Sequoia Healthcare District, has two competent and well-liked counselors serving our school. The two counselors work a total of 24 hours per week and it has been assessed that this is not enough - the needs of Roy Cloud students are too great. There has been a huge demand for 1:1 counseling which is significantly limiting the counselor's ability to support group-counseling sessions. They are being creative with their time but it can't be managed with just 24 hours. In addition, Assistant Principal Kristen Fielding shared that they and others were going to implement a social-emotional learning program (called Toolbox) but they haven't had time to engage as much as she would like. That said they

are piloting classroom lessons now, focusing on primary classrooms. It may be that they are out of contract compliance and there is a discrepancy between the hours they are working and what is in the PTO budget (25 hours for 1:1 and an additional 9 hours for group counseling). Jim will review the budget and report back and it may be that Fund a Need could support an increased funding need, given its wellness theme this year. We will know more for a deeper discussion at the May meeting.

- Spanish Instruction– There is an ongoing middle school Spanish pilot program for grades 7 and 8. The aim was for students to have general language exposure before enrolling in any number of foreign language courses in high school. The preferred outcome is to equip middle school students to test into Spanish level 2 in area high schools. This is the second year of the program and students have not yet been tested to determine its effectiveness. Also, very few students have signed up for the test. Feedback on how this program is going is hit or miss. The issue tends to be that because it is a pass/fail class with no homework so the students don't have the buy in. It isn't a graded class and if it were it could help. Many parents/guardians asked that this new class be pass/fail given concerns about the volume of additional homework. If the class were to transition to graded the instructor would need to agree and may benefit from help from an available class aide. The Spanish teacher also continues to search for an available instruction book that students can take home with them. She has been to the Instructional Materials Center for RWC and she isn't getting a lot of assistance. There was some discussion about adding homework and making this Spanish course a true elective. Sadly that is unlikely – there would need to be a new or current full time teacher who is credentialed in Spanish. This class is expensive - \$33,000. Principal Dana Hardester is speaking with the instructor about her interest in returning, grading, and need for an instructional manual.
- Science Enrichment – We significantly cut science last year, having to cut it down from \$25k to \$10k due to budget constraints. Heidi von Briel has tried to work with a limited budget and has been creative and resourceful.
  - Science for Scientists started this year for 3-5 graders. They did/will do 9 sessions this school year (started in January so only a half year). The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders liked it a lot. The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders didn't have a preference for it over the Lawrence Hall of Science which isn't surprising - it is geared for the older grades. The program is subsidized by local tech companies -they pay their scientists to come to the schools. Want them to be role models for students. The market cost for the program is \$20,000 but the cost to Roy Cloud is only \$3,800. A full year of courses is 18 sessions per school year – which could mean 1 workshop per month for both 4th and 5th grades. The sessions are built to be an hour but to keep to Roy Cloud timelines they had to be shortened this year to 45 mins and teachers did report that the classes felt rushed.
  - CuriOdyssey - Heidi found the CuriOdyssey program K - 2nd grades. It is slightly cheaper than Lawrence Hall of Science and Heidi believes a better program. If we want it for the lower grades next year it needs to be scheduled in August.

- Marine Science Institute - MSI came to each K-2 classroom this year too. It is relatively cheap but hit or miss with the teacher. They have 4 different sessions. Last year her kids did field trips to MSI which were great – visit the tide pool etc.
- Education Outside - EO would be a new program for Roy Cloud next year. It's strength is incorporating the Roy Cloud Garden and Science. It was too expensive last year. The latest price they quoted is someone full day for 4 days each week for the whole school year for \$25,000 (they may have lowered their threshold for who can qualify for discounted costs).. They can do programs for grades K-8 but they don't have many programs for older grades. John Gill Elementary reached out to try to share the program this year, not wanting to take too much time out of core instruction time. That said, Education Outside has offered to work alongside teachers with current curriculum to not pull kids out of the classroom. There was a concern raised about adding more garden work on top of what is happening with the garden already.
- Reflecting on all of these programs, teachers in attendance shared concerns that some of the people these programs send to Roy Cloud aren't teachers and the quality of the instruction could be variable.
- Looking ahead, Heidi likes Education Outside for grades K-3 and then Science for Scientists for grades 4-5. The 4 days with Education Outside may be unrealistic but this sharing / split with John Gill Elementary could be good for us. Everyone agrees to give Heidi a \$30k budget (a big increase) and work out what is best for schedule.
- Lucy asked if we could use some of that budget to invest in the garden for infrastructure and really make it easier to take curriculum outside. Teachers expressed concern that they don't have enough time. Lucy pressed that there are model garden schools, with similar time constraints, that we can look to as an example.
- Technology – There are a number of replenishment needs. Two more chromebook carts are needed for next year. There is also a need to replace iPads for Kindergarten and 1st grade classes - the ones they have are too old and can't take the latest update. The older library computers need some work too but it may be that that the older computer lab is no longer necessary. This was discussed among the teaching staff last year and will be revisited. New technology was discussed - perhaps a VR system for students. MIT is piloting a program now and some kids have had seizures. A Roy Cloud parent works with VR at Stanford and he brought it to science night. Maybe Google has a program that goes to schools (they piloted something similar a few years ago).

#### Principal Report – Principal Dana Hardester

- Open House: Roy Cloud Open House is Thursday night. We would like to welcome potential incoming Kindergarteners but the school doesn't have the contact information for these students yet. A general invitation to all, on a public forum like Next Door, is a fine and appropriate idea - Yvonne may make a post. Note that incoming Kindergarteners on the Roy Cloud School of Choice list don't know yet if they are attending Roy Cloud or not.

- Classroom Counts: All grades in the 2018-2019 will have three classrooms EXCEPT there will be four 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms. There will not be any grade splits next year, thanks to a subset of teachers taking on a few extra students this school year.
- Superintendent Visit: The Redwood City School District Superintendent is coming to visit with parents on Friday morning. It will be a coffee chat in the library from 8:30-9:30 am.
- Parent Movie Night: A Roy Cloud parent mentioned the new documentary movie Angst, about student anxiety, and it would be great to have a showing here at the school (it has been shown at other local schools too. It may be expensive but we could charge a modest amount for tickets to recoup costs. Lucy Wicks offered to call the Fox Theatre to see if they would show it for our large school community plus open it up to others.

#### Vice Principal's Report – Vice Principal Kristen Fielding

- Testing
  - Testing for 3-8<sup>th</sup> graders will start May 1, with pilot science testing for 5th and 8th graders.
  - There will be multiple make up times. So if sick can miss it and try again when they are well.
- Walk to School Day: Our second walk to school day is next week, Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Counseling: We will be assessing how everyone responded to the Toolbox curriculum. Want to talk to the counselors about how to keep group sessions going.
- Student Assistance Program: facilitated by teachers, wrapping up first round. Found a lot of success and want to keep the momentum going. It was social emotional learning funded by the district.
- Yard Duty: At the last meeting there were concerns about yard duty - Kristen met 1:1 with each yard duty staff member before break and shared expectations in writing about what the job expectations are. And gave an informal evaluation. They were all pretty receptive to it and can be cautiously optimistic. Will continue to monitor. Kristen is going to be observing and have follow up meetings as necessary. So far no new parent volunteers but they would be welcome. Please text Kristen the morning of, if you know you can come to help. She will keep a close eye for improvements or continued problems.

#### Teachers Report / Associated Student Body - Anna Rivoli

- California Association of Student Leaders (CASL) Conference: Twelve of our leadership and yearbook students attended the California Association of Student Leaders (CASL) Middle School Conference on March 5th - 7th. The students attended sessions to learn new techniques and gain perspectives to bring back to our school to help students feel like they belong to our school. Now the students are brainstorming all of the good things they heard and that they want to do.
- ASB Award: Roy Cloud School received the Outstanding Leadership Program Award at the conference. This distinguished honor was presented to schools whose student leadership programs are proven spaces where student leaders grow as ethical, responsible,

servant-minded change-makers. It was awarded to the top 5% of all middle schools in California. The award is a testament to the hard work of the students and the leadership provided by Ms. Rivoli and Mrs. Ortez. Congratulations!

- Upcoming Activities: Elections are coming up with applications due Monday. The students are planning a cultural day and looking into a 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest Food Bank collection to aid students in need during the summer break. They are still implementing a leadership program – this was the first year – lots of opportunity to continue leveraging that to its fullest next year.

### Jog-a-thon and Color Run Update – Heidi von Briel and Casey Wright

- The 2018 Jog-a-thon and middle school Color Run are Friday May 18.
- This event started with a t-shirt design contest. The winning design was by 5th grader Emma Funge. T-shirts are available for pre-order through this week and then extras will be available for sale before and after school the two weeks before the event.
- All K-5 students have their own pledge collection web-page - login information has been emailed to all parent/guardians - and a paper pledge form was sent home before Spring Break. This event aims to raise \$46,600.
- Middle schoolers must raise minimum \$25 and submit a signed permission form from their parent/guardian. These forms can be dropped off in the Color Run box in the front office.
- It would be great if the PE teachers could start talking this event up with students and training them for the big day!
- Huge thanks to the whole Jog-a-thon team: Cami Johnson, Meredith Mclean, Heidi von Briel, Carly Driscoll and Cheri Burge.

### Miscellaneous - Yvonne Sarles

- PTO Volunteer Roles: Thanks for support on the roles that we play. Most everyone is thankfully continuing on but there are some gaps to fill.
  - Amy Truesdale will take on Stacy's Communications position.
  - We need an Auction lead
  - We need a co-Secretary to share PTO meeting note responsibilities.
  - We may be interested in having a technology volunteer.
  - There is still a strong desire to have a Volunteer Coordinator. Lucy Wicks has offered to host a volunteer training day to help introduce interested parents/guardians to the wide variety of ways they can support the PTO. Through that process we may find someone to take on the Volunteer Coordinator role
  - Yvonne will send out an email to clarify the status of the necessary roles.
- Back to School Kit Update: live on the box website. Mary Beth – how do we get the kit weblink? Can donate a kit – can buy all sorts of back to school stuff – delivered at Maze days. Still need to figure out how to distribute donated items. Facebook page is Robin Bulanti.

- Stanford Educational Programs: Lucy Wicks reported on two new and exciting programs available to Redwood City-based employees, residents and also for teachers.
  - For teachers:
    - The Stanford Office of Science Outreach will pay teachers \$9,000 to spend the summer there working on science curricula. You can learn more at [www.oso.stanford.edu](http://www.oso.stanford.edu)
  - For residents and employees:
    - As part of a partnership with Redwood City, the Stanford University is providing opportunities for Redwood City business leaders and residents to participate in events and courses led by Stanford University faculty and alumni. If you live or work in RWC you are eligible for a \$11,000 stipend for courses at Stanford's business school. You can learn more at [www.stanfordredwoodcity.com](http://www.stanfordredwoodcity.com)
    - Please apply today!

#### Adjourn Meeting - Yvonne Sarles

- Meeting adjourned by 8:58pm.
- The next meeting will be May 15, 2018 at 6:30pm in the school library.
- Future PTO meeting dates are listed on the [PTO website](#).

## Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

1. Casey Wright
2. Jen Clark
3. Michelle Ortez
4. Anna Rivoli
5. Yvonne Sarles
6. Jim Balestrieri
7. Dana Hardester
8. Jolie Kalvaria
9. Mary Beth Milionis
10. Kristen Fielding
11. Gail Sheene
12. Gifle Jensen
13. Lucy Wicks
14. Alex Dendy
15. Mary-Elizabeth Redner
16. Desiree Johnson
17. Christine Sochoux
18. Alicia Truby
19. Heidi von Briel