



Rutherford Elementary PTA Meeting
Tuesday September 2, 2025 at 3:00pm
Recorded by: Lisa Tschida

Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 3:01pm

Welcome & Introductions

Kate Berg- President; Kaira Bettin- Co-chair; Stacy Rassel- Treasurer; Elena Patton- Communications; Lisa Tschida- Secretary; Nicole Heggerness- Garden Committee; Jamie Jansen- Teacher Liaison (K Teacher); Michael Hallberg; Jaret Ethridge, Aimee Bezdicek, Celine Louwers; Dr Krebs- Principal; Stephanie Tack; Paula Lewis; Ashlee Schneider; Emily Siegel- Grants Committee; Alex Zauner; Jen Plisch; Emily Garness; Ann Kindler- Gr 5 Teacher; Ashley Brown; Hannah Hoffstatter; Abby Pierre; Melissa Roback

Presidents Updates

- Kate- Welcome. We have an open board position, a Member-at-large role.
- Kaira- We have 2 of these positions and one remaining open. This is a new position this year. This role is involved in board meetings, voting rights, involved in planning the schedule/calendar of events.

Treasurer's Report

- In 2024-2025 we raised \$88,000
 - \$ 38,750 Raising for Rutherford
 - \$24,000 Fundraising sponsorships
 - \$ 18,800 Move & Groove
 - \$3,800 Dine out & local partnerships
 - \$2,400 Company matches & donations
 - \$ 730 PTA memberships
- How did we spend \$74,000 in 2024-2025?
 - \$18,700 Classroom & staff support
 - \$17,900 Fundraising expenses & prizes
 - \$12,680 School events & celebrations
 - \$7,000 PTA Grants
 - \$3,650 Staff appreciation & grounds
 - \$3,300 Kindness retreat

- \$2,800 Dulcimers
- \$2,500 PTA dues & administrative
- \$2,500 General art supplies
- \$2,500 ACT! Theater & Little Free Library
- Plan to raise in 2025-2026: \$71,085
 - 2 events, similar to last year, with the Move & Groove Color Run and Raising for Rutherford Casino Night. We have received positive feedback on these events.
 - Adding a few more dine-out nights
 - Note: about \$10,000 is pass through money raised through the yearbook and book fair.
- Plan to spend in 2025-2026: \$97,525
 - We still have a budget surplus (EOY cash balance of \$70K)
 - School events and celebrations - \$26K.
 - Change: up from \$16,500 last year. We added more events throughout the year and will be fully supporting the Fun Fest in the spring.
 - There is almost \$17K going to staff to support the needs of their rooms and students
 - And another \$12K for grants to support the school or multiple classrooms.
 - Changes: shifted grade level funds that were provided in past years (\$6,400) to other areas, including:
 - Adding \$2,000 to grants
 - Creating a new teacher fund (\$1,000)
 - Supporting the new science classroom (\$1,000)
 - Adding \$1,500 to the general art fund with anticipated needs there

State of the School

- Dr. Krebs- We are off to a really great start. Teachers have been working hard to be ready, thank you for trusting us with your kids. Thank you to the PTA for all that you do for our school, there are some big things happening, looking forward to the outdoor learning space.

Committee Updates

- **Grants Update**
 - Emily- there are funds set aside for teachers and they can apply for a grant for things they need. There are two committee reviews each year, fall and spring. Teachers can apply and the committee will review to determine where the funds go. We are looking for additional members to help review these applications. If you are interested, let us know.
- **Gardens**
 - Nicole- It's very laid back, come when you can/help when you can. Kids are welcome.
- **Yearbook**
 - Will be led by Nicole this year. We are looking for volunteers to help.

- **Staff Appreciation**
 - Led by Bethany Falch

Old Business

- We tried popsicles on the playground this summer
- Thank you to everyone that came to Chalk the Walk, this is a really fun event that we love doing
- Thank you to everyone that volunteered at Ready Set Go, it's so nice to have a bright welcome at RSG
- Outdoor learning space- a few years ago, we raised money for 2 new playgrounds. It was 2 phases; we wanted the playgrounds and the outdoor learning space. We have been able to move forward sooner than we thought with the outdoor learning space and with the help from the teachers, we have designed an outdoor flex space that can be used for all different types of learning. The day before school started, volunteers, including teachers, built the picnic tables for the space.

New Business

- Dine out nights- Culvers, Chipotle, Chuck E Cheese, Jersey Mikes, DQ, Victorianos
- Back to School Bash
 - Kindergarten playdate 5-5:30pm
 - Bash- 5:30-7pm
 - Will have food trucks, face painting, bounce houses; everything is free except the food trucks
- Move & Groove- Color Run October 3rd (Pre-K will be October 2). We raise funds by class, classes compete against each other to get the most donations. Then the day of the event, the kids do the color run and commit to moving their bodies as part of the fundraising. We do need about 40 volunteers. The kids love it. All kids get to participate regardless if they raised any money. It does take place during the school day so it's all inclusive.
- What does it mean to join the PTA?
 - To remain part of the national PTA membership we need 20 paid members
 - Paid members get to vote
- Voting in new Member-at Large: Kate- all in favor of Stephanie Tack taking on this role? All agreed.

Questions

- Paula- You mentioned a PTA FB group, is there a group for each grade level? The school we came from used a Whatsapp, there was a room parent for each grade and they were in charge of it.
 - We don't have anything set at the grade level, other than the class contact lists. We used to have class/room parents, but have stopped using them.
- Emily- How are the 4th/5th grade combo grades going? Will this happen next year?
 - Dr. Kreb- It's still early, but so far pretty well. For next year, we can't say at this time. The decision was made because of budget cuts and it was all pretty last minute and there are no budget decisions from the legislature happening right

now, we also don't know class sizes yet so hard to say at this time if it will be something that's continued.

- Ashlee- we are new to the district, but will the new Lake Elmo school impact the boundaries?
 - Dr. Krebs- I don't know what that will look like at this time, but there is a district wide discussion group, Heather [former principal] is leading that.
- Emily- How is the new science room going?
 - Dr. Krebs- Scott has had lots of experience with hands-on activities, he is able to really focus on science, the kids seem to really be liking it and having a good time.
- Kate- we know there is an art coordinator and media coordinator, how can we best support them?
 - Dr. Krebs- I think everything is still so new and we need to figure out exactly how they are working and how you can best support them, but it will probably be something that is down the road. The art coordinator is a district resource that is available to help teachers with any questions they may have. We also have an agreement with Belwin this year, so every 3rd, 4th and 5th grader in the district will get an experience at Belwin. The naturalists will lead a program in January and then the kids will go to Belwin.
- Emily- when is FAST bridge?
 - Dr. Krebs- First round will start tomorrow. It's a shorter 20-30 minute test to look at the students and see where they are at. These are done 3 times a year, some were done at RSG this year, but will continue over the next week. It will be used to see where the gaps are, which students may need more support, how we are doing as a building and as a district. It is done in January and then again in the spring. Results are shared with parents. It's just a snapshot of where we are at this point in time. It's an adaptive test, it's computerized and as they get questions right it gets harder and then if they get them wrong, they get a bit easier and then it levels out to give an overall look at where things are at. It's not designed for testing kids as gifted. As it gets harder it's less accurate. The MCAs is designed to see how the school is doing, not how the individual is doing. It's also not an adaptive test, so if your child tests advanced for 4th grade, they have a very good understanding of 4th grade, but are not being tested at a higher level.
- Whose decision was it to do school pictures before school started? Discussion around more notice, having Life Touch available all 3 days of RSG, and announcing ahead of time what the make-up day will be so parents can better plan if they need to take time away from work.
- Discussion about PowerSchool- lack of information, new parents/families unsure of how to access, not enough notice given to figure that out before RSG sign-up opened. The following information was shared via Pony E-News on 9/2:

Have you ever struggled to use PowerSchool, the system that manages all of your student's information and records? Join us on Sept. 18 from 6 to 7 p.m. in the Oak-Land Middle School Choir Room. Our staff will help review information including how to log in to PowerSchool, access Edutrack to make online payments, report absences, and fill out the annual forms. We will demonstrate this to families on both laptops and cellphones. Bring your PowerSchool log in information and the device(s) that you use to access PowerSchool to get the most out of this learning session. This event is open to all Stillwater Area Public Schools Families.

- RSG conference announcements- can sign-up open earlier than 1 week? Not likely because classes are still being finalized up until the last minute.

Adjourn at 4:05pm