



# NEIL CUMMINS ELEMENTARY

Neil Cummins PTO  
Meeting Minutes  
December 6, 2023

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## PTO Representatives:

Kyle Shaw, Principal  
Quinn Galli, NC Counselor  
Jessica Dinday, Co-President  
Alana Cohen, Co-President  
Lisa Griffin, Communications  
Lindsay Pasquini & Ashley Grabham, Events  
Laura Meyers & Jessica Pascucci, Hospitality  
Siofra Rice, Class Coordinator  
Annie Cappetta, Nicole Webb & Karmen Elwazir, Spirit Wear/Fundraising  
Natasha Chalmers, Campus Conservation & Hawk's Garden  
Anjuli Marotto, Safety Taskforce and Safe Routes  
Camilla Behnke, Parent Education  
Alison Revell, Social Media  
Jennifer Leibick & Kimberly Rom, Lost and Found  
Jen Zamzow & Mike Strasser, Yearbook  
Kristine Krause, Treasurer  
Lisa Carpenter, Auditor  
Sarah Wagner, Secretary  
Karen Emmons, Teacher Representative  
Amir Movafaghi, LCMSD Board of Trustees Representative  
Kristina Wilson and Ellie Strasser, SPARK Representative  
Erin Duggan, Corte Madera Recreation Department  
Parent Attendance:

## Ash Henry

- Call Meeting to Order - 8:23
- Introductions - Board Members & Representatives
- Gratitudes/Questions - 5 minutes
  - We appreciate everyone taking on their respective roles and doing so much work for our schools.
  - Spiritwear - Thank you for organizing for the Secret Snowflake.
    - Call to action: don't forget to sign up to provide a gift for faculty and staff members.
  - Thank you to Jess for helping to organize the Holiday Store and to the holiday store team for getting everything organized.
  - Thank you to the 3rd grade families and the hospitality committee for a great BLTA in November. The teachers enjoyed Early Bird Tacos and homemade treats.
- Co-President Update - Alana Cohen & Jessica Dinday
  - December 21 - Festive Holiday lunch for faculty and staff. We will present the Secret Snowflake gifts during the lunch. This year the district staff and shared staff members will get a joint gift from NC and the Cove. Feel free to publicize and share by word of mouth.
  - December 11 - Parent Ed event at Kent Middle School focused on internet safety. This will be helpful information for parents of all aged kids.
  - Holiday Store - donations have started. We will be doing a big push for donations over the next week. We are always looking for men's items, in particular.
    - PTO Board members - please sign up for set up and/or clean up
    - Wrapping paper, tape, bows, boxes, etc are always needed
    - Each student should bring \$2 to buy their gifts. The teachers will collect money ahead of time.
  - 12/22 - Spirit Assembly will be fun and festive
- Readathon -
  - January 24
  - PTO's biggest fundraiser
  - Goal - \$75,000
  - We have some really great authors and special visitors (including firefighters)
  - We will kick off the Readathon during the week on January 8
  - Friday, January 12 - Readathon Kick off Assembly along with Corte Madera Fire Dept will join
  - Every student will receive a link to their 99Pledges page the week of January 8

- Bookmark competition - We will make few changes this year. (Karen will gather feedback from teachers to help inform some of these changes). Bookmarks will be due February 2
- All Readathon winners will be announced during an assembly Friday, Feb 9
- A thorough communications plan is in the works to make sure all families understand the goal of the Readathon and to keep kids motivated.
- We will be offering the option to purchase the author's signed book prior to January 24. Please encourage your friends to purchase books if possible because the authors have agreed to visit for a lower fee this year. Links to purchase will be in the Sunday weekly email and teacher newsletters.
- The Readathon committee made a big push this year to keep costs down, especially in terms of author's fees.
- We will need to make sure we have coverage for yearbook photos on January 24 during the event itself.
- Teacher Monetary Gifts
  - Siofra will email instructions and specific language this week
  - PTO cannot gather gifts for teachers so class coordinators cannot collect money. A different parent will need to collect the money from the class and present it to the teacher.
- Important Events:
  - 12/4 Secret Snowflake Sign Ups began
  - 12/11 Parent Ed - Internet Safety, Katie Greer @ Kent Library
  - 12/15 Holiday Store
  - 12/21 Staff Holidays Gifts and PTO Sponsored Lunch
  - 12/22 Spirit Assembly
  - 1/8-2/2/24 Readathon (Readathon Day 1/24/24)
  - 3/13/24 Variety Show
- Principal Update - Kyle Shaw
  - No update
- Neil Cummins Teacher Rep Update - Karen Emmons
  - Kinder - Holiday Sing on 12/21 (singing 10 songs and excited to share!)
  - Joni DeGabriele- Musical Moments (paid for by PTO) works with K, 1, and 2 on SEL lessons
    - The teachers report that this has been really helpful
  - 3rd grade - Miwok Day was a huge success and the kids had a great dance performance as well. Each class will visit the Richardson Bay Audubon Center for an upcoming field trip to learn more about native birds.

- 4th grade - Students are learning about Japanese Internment camps and will complete a cross curricular project with Ms. Mckee in art that involves letter writing and painting.
- 5th grade - Cross curricular project with Ms. Mckee where they will paint a wintery scene and write a poem.
- 5th grade - Family Life will start next week
- 5th grade - Yearbook voting for cover this Friday
- PTO Board Updates and Discussion Items:
  - Campus Conservation & Hawk's Garden - Natasha Chalmers
    - Girl scouts will come in to help in the garden today and will pass on their tasks to the 4th grade girl scouts moving forward
    - The students have planted many different vegetables, including kale and potatoes.
  - Safety Taskforce - Natasha Chalmers
    - One of the Hanover recommendations was to get a safety perception survey from the community and so a survey was sent to all parents, teachers, and some students. We expect those results soon.
    - Dr. Geithman sent an email last friday with important safety information he wrote in conjunction with local first responders and also an email about signing up for the Safety Task Force.
    - We want to make sure that people understand that this committee addresses psychological safety issues as well.
  - Safe Routes - Anjuli Marotto
    - Today (12/6) was another successful Walk and Roll Day!
    - Next Walk and Roll day is February 7th. Theme is Valentine's and we will be passing out squeeze hearts as prizes for those that walk and roll to school.
    - Congratulations go to Henry, Eloise, and Natalie (3rd graders) for being one of six groups in the county to receive this year's BUDDY UP Contest Award! These students walk together to school daily. Safe Routes will be giving the group of students a \$50.00 gift card!
    - I am going to be creating a Google form in upcoming NC newsletters to see if people in hilly or distant areas are interested in setting up meet up locations to walk and roll to school. If anyone on the PTO lives in one of these areas and is interested in being the team lead and has a meet up location in mind please let me know ([anjulic774@gmail.com](mailto:anjulic774@gmail.com)).
  - Spirit Wear/Fundraising - Annie Cappetta, Nicole Webb & Karmen Elwazir
    - Hawks flannel PJ pants are now available
  - Yearbook - Jen Zamzow & Mike Strasser

- 5th grade will vote on yearbook cover this week
  - Class Coordinator - Siofra Rice
    - See note about teacher gift collection above
  - Parent Education - Camilla Behnke
    - Check the Weekly Newsletter for a link to the puberty talk video and how to RSVP for upcoming Internet Safety parent ed night.
  - Social Media - Alison Revell
    - Send Alison anything you would like to post on social media
  - Hospitality - Laura Meyers & Jessica Pascucci
    - Teacher lunch - Dec 21
    - Will include sign ups for homemade goods
  - Communications - Lisa Griffin
    - Please send weekly content by 3:00 on Wednesdays
  - Variety Show
    - Please sign up to volunteer if you can!
  - Events - Lindsay Pasquini & Ashley Grabham
    - Supporting Holiday Store
    - If you have any Spring Festival suggestions, let us know
  - Lost and Found - Jennifer Leibick & Kimberly Rom
    - Please pick up your items now as we will be packing up and donating soon
  - Treasurer - Kristine Kraus
    - No update
  - Auditor - Lisa Carpenter
    - No update
- Board of Trustees Update - Amir Movafaghi / Beth Blair
  - Our last meeting was probably the longest meeting of the year
  - We spoke about CAASPP scores, but the main topic for discussion was a concerning trend observed on all campuses that impedes teachers' ability to teach content areas. Mr. Christopherson, Michelle Walker and Toni Brown each spoke about their observations and experiences.
  - Basically, the board is very supportive of the idea that we must balance teaching core curriculum with SEL. We cannot teach the core curriculum without addressing these behaviors.
  - This was further exacerbated by bullying behavior that targeted race, sexual orientation, and anti-semitism. The board has now asked Dr. Geithman to be very clear about these bullying behaviors and what the consequences will be if they continue. Since then, we have had a spike in the number of disciplinary actions as these behaviors are being addressed. This change is district wide.
  - Board also gave support for expulsion if there are multiple cases and a student not taking suspension seriously.
  - Additional Commentary/questions from community members:

- There has been a more lenient approach to disciplinary action in the last few years and that might need to change in order to help students and teachers. This disciplinary action will never be public for privacy issues.
  - We need to make sure students and parents understand the expectations and now what is absolutely unacceptable and will result in suspension.
  - The PTO wants to do what we can to help. We want to acknowledge that the behavior starts at the elementary level and we want to support SEL programs and teach kids to be a good friend and a good person. If we have reserves, we want to consider providing support toward building community and kindness on our campus. We want kindness to be the prevailing feeling on our campus. Cohesive language around who we want these students to be.
  - Erin - after school instructors have also noted the lack of respect and entitlement amongst students as well
  - Karen - discipline/behavior was the main topic of conversation at the staff meeting
    - We went over all of the different levels of disruption and the associated consequences for each grade level. Teachers are happy to see that we have a plan and clear expectations. Kyle will send out an email eventually with the common language so parents can also use that language as well.
  - Erin - Can after school instructors be partners on this and have a common language set?
  - It would be great to have a parent ed night once all of expectations are set and once consequences are established
- Moving forward the district is adopting a Behavior Response Plan - this is district wide and will address issues in all age groups
  - Behavior Response Plan components - student support, volunteers in the classrooms to support, review of school wide expectations and how this is taught, and communication to the parents
- The board focused on resource allocation and grants we will be pursuing to help teachers and disciplinary elements for these behaviors. We currently have funding from the safety grants and that will carry us for a certain amount of time. We will continue to pursue more funding for these programs.
- SPARK Update - Kristina Wilson & Ellie Strasser
  - We reached 74% participation in our annual giving drive. We were really happy with that!
  - We are crunching the numbers now as we compare to years past

- This will help inform our communication moving forward
    - For example, we had fewer new families participate
  - We still have ~\$500,000 to go
  - We will now reach out to families specifically who donated last year, but didn't this year
  - Will do a corporate match push moving forward
  - Looking to get more community involvement from grandparents, etc
  - We saved a lot of money on expenditures as we moved toward digital communication
  - We are working on our strategic plan that we started last year
  - Ms. Repo and Ms. McGuinness' classes were the only to reach 100% participation
  - May 10 - Gala
- CM Rec Center Update - Erin Duggan
  - Organizing Summer Camps right now (ceramics, art, flag football, Lego, etc)
  - Camps will mostly be 9am-12pm or 1pm-4pm; we are hoping to offer a lunch option to bridge that gap
  - December 16 at 11:00 - Gingerbread house building at the community center - sign ups still available
- Meeting Representatives:
  - SPARK - Tuesday, January 9th @ 7:00 Hall Library - Lindsay Pasquini
  - LCMSD Board of Trustees - Wednesday, December 20th @ 6:00 Hall Library - Siofra Rice
- Next PTO Meeting: **Wednesday, January 10th**, Music Room
- Adjourn - 9:55