



# NEIL CUMMINS ELEMENTARY

Neil Cummins PTO  
Meeting Minutes  
January 10, 2024

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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 Kraus, 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:

Janelle Henry  
Caitlin Brown



- Call Meeting to Order - 8:20
- Introductions - Board Members & Representatives
- Gratitudes/Questions - 5 minutes
  - Thank you Camilla Behnke for the parent ed talks over the last few months (internet safety and puberty focus)
  - Spritwear - thank you for all of your hard work with the Secret Snowflake. The teachers really appreciate all of the hard work
  - Thank you to Jess Dinday for running the Holiday Store and to the core committee for all of the hard work. The shop was a huge success and a really fantastic tradition
  - Thank you hospitality committee for a wonderful, festive holiday lunch for the faculty and staff
  - Thank you Amanda Dickerman for running the assemblies with Jess Dinday
  - Thank you to Mike for taking photos for all of the fun December events
- Co-President Update - Alana Cohen & Jessica Dinday
  - Readathon is our biggest fundraiser, helps us create community and help our teachers throughout the year
  - The focus is really on raising money and we want to make sure that our PTO team understands how to answer questions and support our Readathon team
- Important Events:
  - 1/8-2/2/24 Readathon (Readathon Day 1/24/24) - Ashley Eklund & Anne Marie Tasto
    - Friday - Assembly Kickoff
    - Readathon kicked off this week. Printed materials went home in kids' folders on Monday and we included a lot of information. We want to make sure people understand what the PTO funds so families know what the Readathon supports.
      - Letter with details, FAQ, and a Pledge Sheet
      - <https://neilcumminsreadathon.com/> lists all of this information so please send people to this site
    - 99 Pledges webpages were sent last night
    - People have already started donating! Already at \$6500
    - We will do weekly challenges throughout to keep up momentum

- Tuesday, Jan 9 - Anne-Marie presented to the faculty. Really pushing that this is a fundraiser and we are also focused on participation
- This Friday, we will be tabling so we would love some help with answering questions, showing support
  - Dressing up as book characters and presenting to the assembly
- Week 1 (January 15) - Participation Focused challenge: working as a class (Greatest Percentage increase in participation)
- Week 2 - Readathon week;
  - Monday 1/22: Books totes will go out
  - Wednesday 1/24: Readathon Day! We would like to have lots of people out cheering and supporting the Readathon during drop off. This could be a great opportunity for the Leadership committee
  - Wednesday - Pig and a Pickle teacher lunch (authors also invited) and they gave us a great deal!
  - PJs on Wednesday the 1/24 and dressing up as favorite book character on Friday, 1/26
- Week 3 - Raffle week - prizes from local businesses like Easy Breezy and Donut Alley
- This info will be included in the Sunday message. Let's make sure that we include classroom coordinators to communicate this message.
- Overhead costs have been greatly reduced this year
- One way to support visiting authors is to buy the books through Book Passage. Great way to also support local business and support our school
- Parent Square Bug - clicking on links through
- Readathon Survival packs will be distributed to teachers including hydration packs, tea, instant coffee, etc
- 3/13/24 Variety Show - Lisa Griffin
  - We will have a parent info session on January 16 in the evening
  - Sign ups open on January 18 and will be open for 2 weeks
  - Preview sessions on January 31 and February 1 - students will explain their performance plan to the committee
  - Show itself is on March 13
  - **We are searching for more help and need more members for our committee**
  - The show will be more streamlined this year
  - 5th graders are the emcees of the show
  - Let's discuss the potential of asking for optional donations at the variety show during our next meeting
- Principal Update - Kyle Shaw

- New PBIS system launched this week at both elementary schools
  - This week our focus is on SOAR and we will share that with parents at the end of the week.
  - Honed in on 6 places around campus where we really are focusing on these clear expectations: playground, bathroom, hallways, before and after school, assembly
  - Signage will go up around campus
  - This is a pilot mode and we will continue to work with students and teachers to adjust as needed
  - This is a really big focus for the staff
  - Question: Is this our approach to set our expectations and clearly state our expectations so everyone understands expected behavior?
    - Yes, we needed to take some intentional time to really teach these expectations to all students
  - This is really about trying to figure out how to shift and change our approach since Covid rather than just keep doing what we were doing prior to the pandemic
  - We need to have a collaborative approach. This means there will be staff accountability, parent accountability, and student accountability.
- Transition to Hall Middle School - Toni Brown
  - I spend a lot of time at Hall and realize that I would like to get to know parents more at the elementary schools and I want to help make the transition to middle school successful
  - I want to make sure you all understand that there is an open door policy and I always am open to talking to all of you
  - We understand that the transition to middle school is a precursor for the transition to high school
  - There are tours of Hall Middle Schools that you can sign up for through the Sunday weekly emails
  - There will be a series of events to help 5th graders transition:
    - Principal will meet with 5th graders and start to talk about middle school beginning in January
    - Then the Hall leadership classes will visit the elementary schools to answer questions
    - Parent Night in May for incoming middle school families
    - 5th graders will walk over to visit the school during the day and the leadership committee works really hard to explain everything to the students which help ease their anxiety about the transition
    - Dr. Brown will then send out emails about scheduling, etc
    - Tuesday before school starts is a Cougar Prep Day and an orientation day for incoming 6th graders and new students

- First Day of school BBQ for all students hosted by PTO
  - Hall PTA is looking for a few positions to fill for the 2024-2025 - 6th grade rep, hospitality, auditor, and secretary
- Tamalpais Unified High School District Bond Measure - Annie Sherman
  - Measure A will be on our March 5 ballot
  - Very important measure and important that people actually vote!
  - Please sign up for a lawn sign and show your support for Measure A
  - Annie is happy to answer any questions
  - This is a facilities bond. In California, the state doesn't provide funds for facilities maintenance/capital costs (parcel tax cannot be used for these expenditures). This includes repairs, etc
  - \$517 million and will help on all five campuses
  - There are over 47,000 houses in the school district
  - There is a facilities master plan on the website that outlines the projects and provides a lot of helpful information.
- Neil Cummins Teacher Rep Update - Karen Emmons
  - Thank you so much for the water bottles and the delicious lunch
  - Thank you for the amazing Holiday Store
  - Excited for Readathon
  - Right now all the teachers are getting back into the motion of being back at school
  - PBIS - we are trying to put ownership on the 5th graders and be clear that they are the leaders and make them more accountable for their behavior. We are trying to make it fun for them to get them excited.
  - 5th graders are starting band and instruments and they are very excited.
  - Thank you to the 5th grade teachers for the focus on Family Life
- Families and Children with Disabilities Fair on March 23, 2024
- PTO Board Updates and Discussion Items:
  - Campus Conservation & Hawk's Garden - Natasha Chalmers
    - The garden is in full winter mode and Dana Swisher has been maintaining the garden over these cold months.
    - We will do our spring prep for the garden on Sunday, February 4th, so bring your kids for coffee/donuts - will plan for what we will plant for spring.
    - Jen Moss's family donated two large galvanized planters and the soil to fill them to the Hawks garden.
    - **Growing Up Green fundraiser at Sloat.** The garden gets 10% back on all purchases. Runs Jan 5-14.
  - Safety Taskforce - Natasha Chalmers
    - Last Safety Meeting took place on 12/13.
    - Definitions: The task force talked about staff/student perceptions of safety at school and emphasized the importance

of having a shared understanding of certain terms around school safety. These included:

- Psychological Safety: place where one can be candid - where someone is comfortable taking an interpersonal risk eg speaking up to ask a question - and possibly even making a mistake (without repercussion)
- Social & Emotional Safety: Defined as an environment where individuals feel safe to express emotions, are free from harassment and bullying, and feel their voice is valued and respected. The goal is for students and staff to feel a sense of belonging and safety.
- Identity Safety: Focused on creating an environment where all school stakeholders feel their social identity is an asset rather than a barrier to success - actively countering negative stereotypes.
- Bullying: Defined per Education Code 48900(r), encompassing severe or pervasive physical or verbal abuse, including electronic communications
- Current Initiatives:
  - Continuous efforts to ensure schools are safe spaces for teachers, students, and staff.
  - Continuation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) support across all schools, including PBIS as discussed earlier by Kyle.
  - Staff training on Antisemitism conducted by the Institute for Curriculum Services, with plans to extend training to parents.
  - Counseling and Support
- School Safety Survey administered by Hanover (one of our school safety consultants). You may recall seeing a survey right after Thanksgiving. Results are in and being organized and these will be reviewed in the next meeting at the end of January.
- Keenan - physical consultants - also conducted site visits and expect final results next week.
- Safe Routes - Anjuli Marotto
  - February 7 - Valentine's Day Walk and Roll to school day
  - Looking for neighborhood captains in hilly or distant locations to help set up groups for walking and rolling to school
  - Maybe Kyle can help lead a group starting at Hillview
  - Spring Rainbow challenge - stamp a card with lots of recurring Walk and Roll Days
- Spirit Wear/Fundraising - Annie Cappetta, Nicole Webb & Karmen Elwazir

- Going really well and just finished Secret Snowflake
    - We have 10 extra Yetis and will be sold through the website
  - Yearbook - Jen Zamzow & Mike Strasser
    - Yearbook cover was submitted and all 36 entries will be on the back of the book
  - Class Coordinator - Siofra Rice
    - February 15 - 2nd grade BLT; waiting to email for after Readathon
    - Getting a lot of questions about how to handle teacher birthdays
    - Maybe it would be better to set clear expectations for class coordinators so it is consistent
  - Parent Education - Camilla Behnke
    - Coordinating with Cove and Kenfield schools to talk about anxiety on February 1 at 6:30 at Cove
      - Let's send something out through Parent Square to make signing up easy
      - If you have ideas on specific topics, let Camilla know
      - Maybe we can loop in the PBIS new initiative
  - Social Media - Alison Revell
    - Lots of focus on the Readathon
    - Please like and share posts
    - Always open to suggestions
    - If you get good Readathon photos send to Mike and Alison
  - Hospitality - Laura Meyers & Jessica Pascucci
    - Happy to support Readathon efforts
    - 2nd grade BLT on February 15
  - Communications - Lisa Griffin
    - Submit by Wednesdays by 3:00pm for Sunday weekly email
  - Events - Lindsay Pasquini & Ashley Grabham
    - May 3 - Spring Festival - considering doing it in the courtyard instead of blacktop and thinking about bringing in a taco truck
  - Lost and Found - Jennifer Leibick & Kimberly Rom
    - All items donated in December
  - Treasurer - Kristine Kraus
    - Make sure to get receipts in on time
    - Kristine sends monthly budgets to actuals to all PTO voting board members
  - Auditor - Lisa Carpenter
    - Currently working with Kristine on the winter audit
- Board of Trustees Update - Amir Movafaghi
  - Transition for board leadership during our last meeting
    - Thank you to Annie Sherman for all of her amazing work as our board president, including the most successful passing of the Parcel Tax measure in years

- SPARK Update - Kristina Wilson & Ellie Strasser
  - Online auction will start on March 13-18
  - We are looking for auction items including hosting parties, donated items and experiences.
  - Looking for parents who are willing to ask local businesses for experiences/goods. This is a very streamlined process and it is pretty simple to help.
  - May 10 - Spring Gala
- CM Rec Center Update - Erin Duggan
  - No update
- Meeting Representatives:
  - SPARK - Tuesday, January 16th @ 7:00 Hall Library - Lindsay Pasquini
  - SPARK - Tuesday, February 6th @ 7:00 Hall Library - Lisa Griffin
  - LCMSD Board of Trustees - Wednesday, January 17th @ 6:00 Hall Library - Laura Meyers
- Next PTO Meeting: **Wednesday, February 7th**, Music Room
- Adjourn - 10:02