



Blanche Sims PTO Meeting
Tuesday, August 28, 2018
7pm

❖ Welcome & Introductions

- In attendance were:
 - Ken Nuss (Principal)
 - Nicole Shuler (3rd Grade Teacher)
 - Erica Lentz (President)
 - Teresa Robinson (Vice President)
 - Dawn Fischer (Communications Coordinator)
 - Jennifer DuCharme (Co-Treasurer)
 - Laura Hasselbach (Volunteer Coordinator)
 - Katie Auffenorde (Secretary)
 - Ashley Hensley
 - Tricia Atkinson
 - Nicole Sandstrom
 - Kelly Eastman
 - Tim Pringle
 - Sonja Francese
 - Julie Rubino

❖ Title 1 Update

- Nothing new to report; still waiting on paperwork as parents are still registering kids
- Mr. Nuss provided information as to what it means to be a Title 1 school:
 - 3 Lake Orion elementary schools are Title 1; Blanche Sims, Paint Creek, and Orion Oaks
 - Means that due to a certain percentage of our population is able to qualify for free/reduced lunch programs and therefore, the government gives us extra funding for special programs
 - It is highly regulated by the government and the funds must be used in very specific ways; all students who attend the Title 1 school may make use of the programs funded
 - Examples of how these funds are spent at Blanche Sims include: Kindergarten Kick-Off and Learning Support Services (LSS)
 - Around Mid-September parents will receive information regarding a Title 1 meeting to be hosted (this is required by the government)—all 3 schools schedule 1 meeting for parents to gather and learn about Title 1
 - The goal of the program is for students to be as successful as possible; there is a student component which seeks to diagnose where the child(ren)'s issues are and another parent component which includes encouraging parental involvement in schools

❖ Principal's Report

- Cannot wait for the kids to start!
- Lots of wonderful things planned for the 2018/19 school year
- Mr. Nuss explained the schoolwide behavior system, "the Step System;" this keeps behavior expectations consistent for the kids throughout the building, no matter which grade/teacher
- Mr. Nuss also explained that Blanche Sims is a "Cultures of Thinking School;" the year is focused on teaching kids positive mindset stances that include:

- Persistence
- Resilience
- Optimism
- Empathy
- Flexibility
- In the 2018/19 school year, emphasis will be placed upon the “7 Habits of Highly Effective People”
 - Mr. Nuss has been trained in these habits and is bringing this to the teachers
 - Based upon the kid’s program “The Leader in Me”
 - The 7 Habits involve teaching kids to embody the following habits:
 - Be Proactive
 - Begin with the End in Mind
 - Put First Things First
 - Think Win/Win
 - Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood
 - Synergize
 - This program has been used at other Lake Orion schools and Mr. Nuss has witnessed it take kids to another level of learning and achievements
 - It has stood the test of time for all humans to use to be successful
- New Teachers have joined the staff this year:
 - Robin Ross—former LSS staff member and now teaching 5th grade
 - Stephanie Winter—New to the Lake Orion District, but has taught in Arizona and Michigan for many years and comes highly recommended
- New District-Wide Allergy Protocol
 - Classrooms will be Peanut/Nut Free
 - Cafeteria will allow Peanuts/Nuts
 - Focus on Birthday treats being non-food items
 - For classroom parties, food must be pre-packaged with nutrition labels
 - Strike a good balance for those kids with allergies and those without
 - The PTO will have heightened awareness for activities and will seek approval through Mr. Nuss
- Communication
 - Mr. Nuss feel strongly that all kids and parents should LOVE school
 - To achieve this, he welcomes all parents to reach out if any issues arise
- PTO
 - Mr. Nuss enjoys that our PTO focuses on giving kids experiences versus an emphasis on numerous fundraisers
- Twitter
 - Please follow Mr. Nuss on Twitter!! He tries to post photos of kids and classrooms daily
 - His “handle” is Blanche Sims Elementary@SimsElementary

❖ Teacher’s Report

- The teachers wish to thank all parents for the great turnout at Meet & Greet/Popsicles on the playground—welcome to new parents and excited to being the year!
- Thank you to the PTO for the purchases made to benefit classrooms
 - Specifically, “Storyworks Jr” bought for the 3rd grade; provides so much material for reading. Science, social studies, etc. for the classroom

❖ Treasurer’s Report

- Necessary to vote on software program for use of the Board; the Board voted unanimously to approve the use of PTO Today’s Finance Manager; the cost is \$129 annually
 - Going forward reports from this software will be made available at each PTO Meeting
- Continuing to work on a final budget for the year
 - Typically, the budget is finalized each year after the Fun Run (our largest fundraiser) and after teachers’ budget requests are submitted and approved

- Beginning new Teacher Voucher system for this year
 - Each classroom teacher will receive \$150 to use in any way they see fit for his/her classroom—this can be used at any time during the school year and is separate from special budget requests that must be submitted to the PTO for approval by October 2018
 - Specials/LSS/ASD/Speech will receive vouchers as well, but may be slightly different than classroom teachers
 - Once the budget is finalized, the PTO Board will provide ongoing reports to all parents
 - PTO determines expenses for the year by first coming together with Mr. Nuss to what his budget can cover and where the PTO can fill in with “extras” that the school’s budget cannot accommodate
 - Examples of PTO funding include:
 - Transportation fees for all class field trips
 - Special request items for teachers as mentioned above (classroom equipment, supplies, etc.)
 - Technology needs; in the past the PTO has purchased iPad carts, laptop carts, etc. for the media center
 - Ways the PTO earns money were discussed:
 - Kroger Rewards—this is HUGE! Can sign up all members of the family who hold Kroger rewards cards and they give us a portion of each purchase made; can makes us thousands of dollars basically doing nothing!
 - Instructions for linking your Kroger rewards to Blanche Sims can be found on our website and will be sent home in hard copy form
 - Fun Run—Our largest and really only fundraiser for the year
 - “Flock-A-Friend” Fundraiser—for a fee, we place flamingos on the lawn for friend’s and loved ones!
 - Box Tops—Similar to Kroger Rewards; earns lots of money for little work!
 - Hold two drives—Fall and Spring so please clip for us!
 - Unfortunately, the PTO cannot participate in the “Amazon Smile Program” as you must be a 501C3 organization; we have looked into obtaining this status, but it is too expensive for us to pursue given the minimal benefit
 - For the 2018/19 school year, we have begun with a large surplus of money! Looking to make some large technology purchases and expanded our budget for inhouse assemblies and teachers

❖ Welcome Packets

- Welcome Packets will be sent home with kids the first week of school
- Includes tons of information from Blanche Sims and the PTO; information will include:
 - PTO Events and Meetings
 - How to Sign up your Student to Display in the Front Showcase
 - Volunteer Forms (Opportunity to volunteer to help the PTO make the school year great!)
 - Our Volunteer Coordinator, Laura Hasselbach, will reach out to those who submit this form regarding opportunities to help
 - The PTO appreciates help however, whenever we can get it—even if you can only help with “at home” tasks or a few minutes here or there at an event
- Watch for your packets coming soon and be sure to check out all the valuable information included!

❖ Spirit Wear

- M&B Graphics just started designing our spirit wear for this year
- PTO is working with them to perfect the graphics
- We will offer a wide range of products from inexpensive T-Shirts to higher end polos, etc.
- Hoping to get ordering information out ASAP so that orders can be turned around quickly in time for LO High School’s Spirit Week in early October

❖ “Flock-a-Friend” Fundraiser

- As mentioned above, you pay the PTO to go and place Flamingos in the front yards of your friends and family!
- Information will be in the Welcome Packet for you to set-up your “flockings”
- We will only schedule flockings during the fall and spring as winter is too dangerous to our flock (ha-ha)
- We offer different # of flamingos for difference price levels
- It’s a really fun way to raise money for the school
- The PTO would LOVE help from any parents interested in helping us do the night time set-ups of the Flamingos—it’s a “Flocking” good time 😊

❖ Fall Move Night

- Friday, 9/21 will be our Family Movie Night; this is free for all Sims families
- Still trying to decide on a movie; putting up 3 options for Sims parents to vote on
 - Peter Rabbit
 - Honey, I Shrunk the Kids
 - The Sandlot
- Free popcorn is served
- Families bring blankets, pillows, chairs, etc. and kids wear PJs; we line the floor of the cafeteria for a fun night at the movies!

❖ Fun Run

- Scheduled for 10/5 during the school day; each grade runs at their own time and parents are encouraged to come and cheer them on
- For the past 2 years, we’ve had an obstacle course, but looking to do something new this year
- Would like to do a Color Run
 - The PTO is currently looking for a color supplier that is at a reasonable cost—we appreciate any recommendations!
- The PTO hosts a “Kick Off” assembly on 9/27 to get the kids excited and donation paperwork is sent home that day for parents
 - Kids collect and turn in donations during the week leading up to the Fun Run
- We have different incentives for each donation level; there are levels for both individual students and siblings where all family members receive the incentive for a specific donation level
 - These are awarded after the Fun Run takes place
- Each student will receive a T-Shirt (white or light gray for the color run, with instructions on how to keep the colors after washing)
 - The PTO is currently looking for sponsorships to offset our costs on the T-Shirts
- Possible Fundraising Idea: have older students collect “bids” during the Fun Run and the class that receives the highest number of bids receives some type of incentive

❖ Spirit Sticks

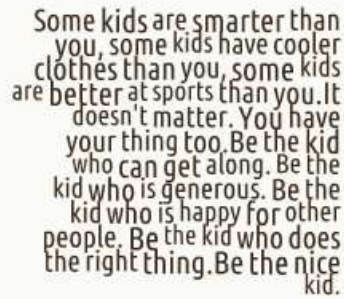
- The PTO is bringing Spirit Sticks to Blanche Sims!
- To start the year, each student will receive a key to hold their Spirit Stick Collection, a Spirit Stick reflecting their grade level, and a Fun Run Spirit Stick as a gift from the PTO
- We’ve received tons of feedback from the other LO elementary schools that these are a huge hit and kids love collecting!
- PTO is still working on how we will sell these—perhaps at lunch and definitely at PTO events
- The cost to the student will \$1 per stick

❖ Approved Teacher Budget Requests

- Already approved a few budget requests from teachers: book bags for Mrs. Clendennin’s classroom and Periodicals for the 3rd grade
- PTO has also purchased all the paper and envelopes we need for the year

❖ Hallway Mural

- The PTO is going to add a mural to the hallway in the coming months
- This is the saying the mural will feature:



Some kids are smarter than you, some kids have cooler clothes than you, some kids are better at sports than you. It doesn't matter. You have your thing too. Be the kid who can get along. Be the kid who is generous. Be the kid who is happy for other people. Be the kid who does the right thing. Be the nice kid.

Bryan Skavnak, Author of Happy Golf Starts Here

❖ Red Wings Assembly

- Detroit Red Wings Team Building Group will be holding an assembly for all students on 11/14 at 2pm
- This is a free assembly and the Red Wings will donate a complete field hockey set (with pads, net, etc.) to Blanche Sims
- They do not necessarily bring along players to these types of assemblies

❖ Other Assemblies

- The PTO has increased the budget for inhouse field trips and assemblies to \$2000 for this year
- Will be polling teachers for their recommendations
- Currently looking into an assembly hosted by the Detroit Lions; no players come, but they bring their mascot and have several different theme options for the assembly
- Other ideas include bringing in Animals, Cranbrook, etc.
- Mr. Nuss tries to get free assemblies as often as possible; love making use of local resources such as the LO Marching Band, the Oakland University Theatre Department, the Oakview bands and choir, etc.
- Always welcome any parent input/ideas as well so don't be shy!

❖ Popcorn Fridays

- First Grade teacher Mrs. Lovely brought this idea to our attention
- PTO would come in perhaps once a month and pop popcorn; kids can bring in \$0.50 to buy the popcorn
- The PTO packages it up and sends it home with the kids
- We do need to obtain approval related to the district allergy protocol

❖ Other Events/Volunteers

- The PTO always needs volunteers to run/help out at our events throughout the year; please don't hesitate to reach out if you're interested in helping; we appreciate anything from a few minutes to as much time as you can give us!
- Cirque Amongus is coming to Blanche Sims!
 - For our end of the year celebration, we will be bringing in the Cirque Amongus (approved by 5 Board Members at a previous meeting)
 - All students spend a whole day learning how to do various circus acts and get to put on a show at the end of the day—complete with costumes and make up
 - It's a day they will never forget!
 - We will need 120 volunteers to get this event going so expect lots of information to come from the PTO about this throughout the year
 - Dates are the evening of 6/11 for a parent meeting and 6/12 for the circus to come
 - Parents must volunteer if they want to come and watch due to space constraints

- Throughout the year the PTO will send home lots of information about all of our events; we try to host something fun each month of the year!
- ❖ Shared Calendar App
 - For the PTO board only; proposed use of a calendar app to keep track of sending home flyers, permission slips, etc. for our numerous events
 - This will work as a master calendar; helps not bombard parents with too much information and keep track of “flockings”
- ❖ Variety Show
 - The PTO hosts a Variety Show each year in March to showcase the talents of our amazing students
 - Information will go out to parents immediately following Winter Break; practices will be held throughout February
 - Kids will perform for their peers at school during the afternoon and an evening show for parents and family on March 1
 - Lots more to come, but the PTO would love parent volunteers to help out at practices and performances!