



## **RJ Murray Middle School PTO Meeting Minutes**

**8/21/2023**

(150 N Holmes Blvd and Virtual via Microsoft Teams)

**Individuals present:** Dr. Seward, Cathy Newman, Danie Waler, Shelly Erb, Sandy Rider, Antonia Mamas, Franni Heilman, Jennifer Lee, Jennifer Roberts-Darcel, Emily Martin, Lourdes Ramon, Demara Sherman, Jonathan Growlick, Ailee Somaru, Angelique Kelly, Matt Kelly, Paula Rivera, Nate Beidle, Carrie Groleau, Robin Kingery, Mary Alston Kerllenovich, Becky Chapman, Brett Maguire, Jacob McElroy, Evans, Alex, and Kelli

### **Meeting called to order at 5:30pm**

**Dr. Seward on Beginning of the School Year:** A great, smooth first week especially for our 6<sup>th</sup> graders who seemed right at home. Murray hosted to first DOJO store and students in all grades made purchases! They will finish the DOJO store sale tomorrow.

**Dr Seward: What is the DOJO store?** Items sell for 1 to 100 points and students earn those points on Class Dojo for doing well in class or in the hallways and showing good character. It is our PBIS or Positive Behavior Incentive System.

**Do we need inventory or volunteers for the DOJO Store?** Both are welcome. Teachers have been surveyed on what kids want. AP Holly Smith would be our contact on creating an Amazon list wish for items. Mary Rieder and MMS staff have been working the store, but we could always use volunteers. Junk food, candy, Takis, snacks, stress balls, fidgets, poppers are always well-purchased by students

**Murray Sports:** Our RJMMS-sponsored sports are Volleyball (Boys & Girls), Girls and Boys Basketball, and Cheerleading. All other sports go through the St. Johns Middle School Athletic Association. The SJMSAA is looking to have sports return to playing RJMMS campus in the 2024-2025 school year. All that needs to be done will not be ready for this school year, but we are working to host our own practices and games on the outdoor fields again!

**Could we add another sport?** This would be done through the Athletic Association. Parents would love to host a swim team at the Solomon Calhoun Center nearby.

**St. Johns Middle School Athletic Association** – for more information on Middle School sports visit <https://www.sjmsaa.org/>

**How can we help the PTO? What board positions will be open this year?**

Currently, the President, Vice President, Business Liaison (Franni is happy to assist with this position but cannot commit to it full time), Volunteer Coordinator (Ailee Somaru is interested and welcomed as our new Volunteer Coordinator) and Social Media Guru (Cathy has an applicant for Social Media-Jennifer Roberts-Darcel) are open. Danie Waler will be back as Secretary and Paula Romero-Rivera will be the Treasurer.

**The Welcome Wagon: Our first Teacher Appreciation Event:** Will be this Friday August 25<sup>th</sup>. A sign-up genius will be emailed and posted on Facebook and Instagram tonight. We will need coffee, drink, and snack donations. Franni and Antonia are willing to help walk the cart and deliver donations to our teachers on Friday. Parents interested in donations can drop off donations with students in our Front Office. Please give to Ms. Anderson and label items “FOR PTO” Teachers are completing a likes form. They love coffee, Celsius, bottled drinks (no glass containers please) and also healthy snacks and yummy guilty pleasures. We want to offer everyone something and respect our teachers’ diets and health.

**Are we an official 501C3?** Yes! Cathy fills out our paperwork yearly. While she is stepping down as president as of 9/1, she filed paperwork for this year and is happy to assist for the next three years if need be in order to help us keep our status. This status allows businesses to make their donations tax deductible.

**What volunteer opportunities are there?** There is not currently a copy need. Later in the year we will need test proctors. PTO carts and appreciation days always need volunteers. Same with dance and event chaperones and party/reward days.

**What about testing?** The Florida FAST testing has progress monitoring 1, 2, and 3. The first starts next week with 7<sup>th</sup> grade on Mon and Tues. We don’t need proctors currently but look for sign-up geniuses in times of need.

**Will Murray have dances this year?** The dances were very successful last year and parent participation is a must. We would love to have another Sweetheart Social and an 8<sup>th</sup> grade dance. Last year the 8<sup>th</sup> grade dance was just Murray, but years past it was combined with Sebastian at the High School. Would we like to combine this year or keep them separate? Please talk to your contacts at Sebastian!

**Who is in charge of staff birthdays?** Sandy Rieder did them last year and would love to continue this year. She is waiting on the staff birthday list. We loved this last year and it helped the staff feel loved and appreciated.

**How else can we help teachers feel appreciated?** The admin would like to continue the tradition of a coffee bar in the Front Office, Iced Tea in the Teacher’s Lounge, and Popcorn on Fridays for teachers. The school has popcorn purchased for the year but could use help with **donations** for coffee and tea. The Front Office coffee

maker is a Keurig and the disposable pods would be a great donation through out the year as well as creamers and sugars. Tea and sugar for iced tea is always welcome too. Leftovers from staff appreciation carts are put in the lounge for teachers to grab and go. Just drop off donations in the front office!

**Do we have an events calendar yet?** Not yet, but it is coming!

**What is our first social event?** Is anyone interested in hosting a Trunk or Treat at our school? We can schedule a day in October to host. Get sign ups for cars and candy and invite our community. Interested? The PTO is very interested! Should we include a silent auction to raise more money with community donations? We could make baskets!

**Carrie Groleau** introduced herself as a new RJMMS parent and member of PTO. She is an experienced PTO board member and would love to help with Teacher Appreciation events. She has lots of decorations to share too.

**Do we have plans for Teacher Appreciation Week?** We sure do! This May 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> we plan to tell our teachers that they are STELLAR! Carrie Groleau and Shelly Erb have some donations to share. Let's make this Teacher Appreciation Week THE BEST!

**What is the deal with student IDs?** Virtual attendee, Jonathan, was worried about 6<sup>th</sup> graders not having IDs. Dr. Seward said not to worry. Leonard's will be sending IDs to everyone soon. Returning students, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, should use IDs for lunches and books every day! Please bring and wear IDs daily.

**Fundraising Ideas for the Year?** Could we have parents pay for birthday shout outs on our digital marquee? Yes, Mr. Cofield and Ms. Smith can post. Could we charge \$25 for a shout out? The PTO is very interested. We could earmark that money to go toward the purchase of a birthday rock that families could pay to rent and paint for birthdays. Does anyone have a connection? Let us know at the next meeting!

**Financial Goals for this year?** We have a few financial goals. We are always looking to fund teacher requests, but a specific goal is to purchase one or two Bulldog Mascot outfits. Could we create a Donors Choose application? Beaver Toyota plans to start matching in September!

**Good News Alert:** Dr. Seward is happy to announce a replenishing of the front of the school, painting and landscaping this September, be on the look-out!

**Are there any Spirit Night this year?** Absolutely. Danie has first semester booked:

- Papa John's 8/30
- Zaxby's 9/26
- McDonald's 10/17
- Carnival Sweets 11/18
- Panera 12/13

Could we reach out to Applebees? YES!

Chipotle is tentative for January. Any other ideas? Let Danie know!

**Upcoming Dates:**

Welcome Wagon (donation cart for teacher appreciation): August 25<sup>th</sup>

Papa John's Spirit Night: *August 30th*

Volleyball Tryouts (all grades): *September 4th*

Leonard's Pictures: *September 8th*

Interims: *September 12<sup>th</sup>* (Remember to make a PARENT HAC account, don't just rely on your student to log in-call our registrar if you need assistance)

Girls and Boys Basketball Tryouts: *December 4th*