**Campbell PTA Meeting
September 11, 2018
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

**Approximate # of Attendees: 52**

1. **Welcome and Icebreaker: Barbara Martinez, President**
* Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year!
* Barbara introduced herself as new PTA president and welcomed new families to Campbell
* Reminder to join the PTA if you haven’t already; only PTA members are able to vote
1. **Overview of New School Year and Changes: Maureen Nesselrode, Principal**
* Enrollment for 2018-2019 slightly higher than prior years
	+ Currently about 440 students enrolled at Campbell
	+ We lost some classes (Montessori and Pre-K special education) but enrollment didn’t decrease because we gained a fourth K and 20 new students across Grades 2-5 from the lottery (waitlist no longer carries over each year, so families enter the lottery every year)
* Maureen gave an overview of new initiatives at Campbell for this year
	+ K/1 using the Wilson ‘Fundations’ general education phonics program
		- We will continue to use the Orton-Gillingham phonics program we use as an intervention with students who need it
		- One thing we’ll be looking for is carryover of spelling into students’ writing; parents have been asking about this, we continue to monitor progress
	+ Grades 4/5 will have an “in-formance” in December (not quite as formal as a concert)
		- Parents of students in Grades 4 and 5 who are in band, chorus, or orchestra can meet the teachers and learn about the schedule, homework expectations, what students are working on – a showcase as opposed to a formal performance
		- If a student didn’t take an instrument in Grade 4 they can start in Grade 5
	+ Gifted art class for students in Grades 4/5
		- About 12-15 students each in Grades 4 and 5 identified as being gifted in art
	+ Grade 5 students have the option of being an ambassador to help with parent tours
		- Interested students must return their applications by September 14
* We are excited about the new school year!
	+ Right now teachers are working on getting to know their students, building classroom community, conducting teambuilding activities, etc.
	+ Many teachers are incorporating mindfulness into their classes (e.g. yoga, breathing) – we expect to see more of this at Campbell and other schools as it picks up across APS
	+ Learn about classroom routines, homework expectations, etc. at Back to School Night
	+ We have a great team in place of highly qualified staff who fit the “Campbell Way,” e.g. experienced with problem-based learning, workshop model, responsive classroom, outdoor learning, etc.
* Reminders:
	+ Thursday folders— Lots of important papers come home in the Thursday folders, so don’t forget to check your child’s backpack on Thursdays!
	+ Twitter—This is a great way to see what’s happening even if your child’s teacher isn’t on twitter, since many lesson plans are similar across grade levels.
	+ Back to School Night (September 12)— We are doing staggered time slots again to help with traffic/parking and to enable parents to attend more than one session.
1. **Overview of Outdoor Classroom Summer Work and School Year Plans: Christy Przystawik, Outdoor Classroom Coordinator**
* Christy gave an overview of the Outdoor Classroom activities she conducted this summer
	+ Worked with Patricia Oveido (Special Education teacher) and Ann Oliveira (Math Coach) on long-term projects to make math more accessible to special education students by building their competence and showing them how they can apply math in real-world settings; will continue to plan and execute throughout the year
	+ Physically worked in the garden many days, e.g. watering, harvesting, weeding, planting
	+ Summer school was here – students and staff from Campbell and Carlin Springs were regularly harvesting and eating things from the garden (we always like to see that!)
	+ Planning for EL Education and credentialing process
	+ Organized all the Outdoor Classroom lessons she’s done over the past several years at Campbell by grade level and by learning standards – this will help ensure teachers have access to Outdoor Classroom lessons if Christy isn’t available
	+ Surprise visit from Channel 7 news to showcase our Outdoor Classroom!
* Start of the school year – Outdoor Classroom orientation:
	+ Pre-K/K – introduction to being outdoors (some students are experienced, many aren’t); practice moving in outdoor spaces and addressing risks (e.g. at the pond); talk about expectations and guidelines for the Outdoor Classroom
	+ Grades 1-3 – discuss expectations and guidelines; talk about hopes and dreams; harvest and taste seasonal produce, e.g. tomatoes, lemon sorrel, ground cherries
	+ Grade 4 – review of guidelines; walking tour; tasting
	+ Grade 5 – reminder of guidelines, emphasizing how they are now leaders of the school and need to demonstrate principles to the younger grades; tasting
* Christy gave an overview of her plans for the 2018-2019 school year
	+ Assisting with EL expeditions, particularly those that overlap with outdoor learning
		- Creating more outdoor experiences within expeditions
		- Incorporating cooking where appropriate, drawing on her background as a chef
		- Technical drawing – successfully incorporated into expeditions last year
		- Service learning – this is a schoolwide focus, so as we plan timing of expeditions we will be looking for ways to add service learning (not community service), e.g. emphasizing the significance of putting yourself out in the community, seeing what other people are contributing and how you can contribute – these are big ideas for elementary school students, but we believe they’re capable of it
	+ Planning lessons with teams and teachers depending on their needs, e.g. right now working with Grade 2 teachers to incorporate math into outdoor learning as often as once per week, working with FLES team on language lessons around monarch butterflies
	+ Supporting teachers in efforts to initiate outdoor learning without Christy – this is a big goal for Campbell, since Christy can only be in so many places at one time! If your child’s teacher is doing outdoor education and you like it, let them know so they’ll keep it up!
	+ Social media presence (Twitter, Instragram) – posts are shared to the private Facebook group (Campbell Elementary PTA Community) and the public Facebook page (Campbell Elementary Parent Teacher Association)
	+ Documenting outdoor learning experiences (e.g. via photos, videos, voice recordings) and cataloging those for teachers (they all have folders where they can access items)
	+ Making connections for parents to highlight the significance of various activities and linking to EL Education, e.g. Ms. Ammons’s class drew flowers in a vase – these were zinnias planted from seed by 3rd graders last year and harvested by Ms. Ammons’s class. We wouldn’t necessarily know that if Christy didn’t tell us!
	+ Interlude’s calming garden is in its second year – began last year when students planted “calming herbs” e.g. mint, lavender, lemon balm
		- Students grew plants from seed, did technical drawings, harvested and dried leaves, made teas – multiple times throughout the year
		- Garden is flourishing and we are going to continue to expand it this year – Christy has already been out twice with the younger Interlude students
	+ 1:1 student experiences in Outdoor Classroom (happens everywhere in school, not just Outdoor Classroom) – could be 5 minutes, 15 minutes – teachers and staff recommend students for these experiences who they think could benefit from them
	+ Coordinating garden work days – first one is September 22 from 9 AM – 12 PM
	+ Outdoor lessons that overlap with SOL standards – examples include:
		- Science: clouds, weather, watershed, plant lifecycle, animal cells, vertebrates and invertebrates, scientific method
		- Writing: poetry, writing about small moments, Grade 5 expedition will have lots of cool writing related to outdoors this year
		- Reading: many teachers do independent reading outdoors
		- Math: anything related to math can be taught outdoors, math is everywhere
		- Social studies: Native Americans, Jamestown, economic scarcity, ancient culture
	+ Intentional outdoor experiences (don’t necessarily overlap with SOLs) – e.g. research; meditation; sit spots to engage senses, increase observational skills; morning meetings
	+ Supporting garden efforts of Campbell’s extended day program
	+ Submitting write-ups to Turtle Tales (monthly Campbell newsletter)
* Anticipated expenditure for 2018-2019 school year: two weatherproofed white boards for the Outdoor Classroom (like in the indoor classrooms) to encourage teachers to teach out there
* Round of applause for this incredibly impressive list! We are so lucky that we can support this program! Follow Christy on Twitter and Facebook to see all the amazing work going on!
1. **Thursday Parent’s Group: Monica Castillo Bugos, Bilingual Resource Assistant**
* Meetings are Thursdays at 8 AM – typically last 30-60 minutes
	+ Parents help with Thursday folders
	+ May also have presentations about activities/services in the community, or teachers share what they’re doing in class and how to support children’s learning at home
* Meetings are conducted in Spanish with English translation; okay to bring babies in strollers
* Maureen explained that while the group began as an initiative to engage Campbell’s Spanish-speaking families, all parents are encouraged to attend
1. **Presentation and Vote on 2018-2019 PTA Budget: Amanda Lowenberger, Treasurer**
* Amanda walked us through the budget – highlights include:
	+ Projected expenses are higher than income this year – this is intentional so we can draw down our reserve to be more in line with VA PTA recommendation
	+ Classroom & Teachers Support increased for K since we have four K classes this year
	+ Principal Discretionary Fund is new this year (standard at other APS elementary schools)
* Discussion:
	+ Q: Why are we drawing down our reserve? Are we planning to increase expenses or are we not planning to fundraise as much/expecting to bring in as much income?
		- We have budgeted increased expenses for 2018-2019, but we also expect slightly increased income due to increased student enrollment
		- We have tried to spend down our reserve in prior years and been unsuccessful, but not for lack of trying! e.g. proposed PTA expenses have been covered by Title I funds or Campbell’s operating budget (which is use or lose)
		- Right now there are no major funding initiatives in this year’s budget, e.g. last year we revamped PA system, year before we renovated the pond
		- We definitely plan to keep fundraising!
	+ Q: What reserve amount are we aiming for?
		- VA PTA recommends having $10k in reserve
	+ Q: Do we have to approve all proposed spending increases tonight?
		- We can propose and approve increased spending throughout the year
	+ We discussed ideas for how to spend down the reserve:
		- Donate to other PTAs, especially elementary schools in need in South Arlington
		- Get students and families involved in service-oriented projects and donate to a specific cause or partnership
		- Fund scholarships for Project Discovery
	+ Maureen pointed out that this year some classes’ expeditions will have expenses that teachers will bring to the PTA that may lend themselves to capital improvement projects (don’t want to reveal them yet because students don’t know yet!)
	+ Barbara asked people to send their ideas about how to spend down the reserve
	+ Note of caution: APS budget will be changing, so some of the things they used to pay for they won’t be able to going forward – we should plan for lean times ahead
* Motion to approve the 2018-2019 budget; seconded; budget approved unanimously
1. **Vote on 2017-2018 Audit: Nathan Zee, Immediate Past President**
* Nathan provided an overview of the Audit Committee and process
* Audit conducted on July 7, 2018 – everyone signed off on the audit
* Discussion:
	+ Q: Is the audit a best practice or requirement?
		- It’s a VA PTA requirement
	+ Q: Have we considered using an external auditor like other APS schools?
		- VA PTA allows an Audit Committee or an external auditor – Campbell doesn’t feel like it would be a good use of funds to pay for an external auditor
		- Maureen told us they used an Audit Committee at the other APS schools where she worked before coming to Campbell, so it’s not an uncommon practice
* Motion to approve the 2017-2018 audit; seconded; audit approved unanimously
1. **Save the Date! Fun Run is October 12: Julia Ahumada, VP for Fundraising**
* Goal is for students to run/be active for 20 minutes – parents are invited to participate
* Each grade has a half-hour timeslot (includes 20 minutes for running followed by 10 minutes for snack) – we let parents know each grade’s timeslot so you can come and run with your child
* Website launches on September 20 for fundraising – the website is up now so you can register students and after it launches you can start asking for pledges
* This is a great event! More information coming home in Thursday folders September 20
1. **New Business**

*We discussed Project Discovery, Campbell’s after-school enrichment program, in lieu of new business*

**Project Discovery: Tammy Bewitz, Project Discovery Co-Chair**

* Tammy gave an overview of Project Discovery and the upcoming Fall session
* Project Discovery is almost entirely volunteer-run, which keeps our costs down
	+ Instructors are mostly parent or teacher volunteers; we do have a few outside vendors
	+ Parent volunteers help with student check-in (comes with discounted registration!)
	+ Tammy and Jenny Morris have managed the program internally for the past few years
* We are always looking for new offerings for Project Discovery!
	+ Parents have suggested classes based on their skills – e.g. conversational Spanish, Latin American culture, Arabic – what can you offer? Language? Culture? Dance? Soccer?
	+ Tammy has been in touch with a STEM coordinator at Nova who can train parents and provide resources – don’t feel like you have to know or have everything to run a class!
* Thanks to Tammy and Jenny for their hard work on this huge effort!
1. **Closing: Barbara Martinez, President**
* Odyssey of the Mind registration will be held later in the year (not as part of Project Discovery)
	+ Odyssey is an international problem-solving/creativity organization where students work in teams to solve a challenge and present their solution at a regional meet
	+ Barbara shared how fun it’s been to be an Odyssey coach for the past couple of years
	+ Pam Clark, Campbell’s Resource Teacher for the Gifted, runs our Odyssey program
		- Pam will hold an informational night on October 3 at 7 PM to discuss gifted services (how students are identified, what the services include) and Odyssey
	+ Campbell needs parent volunteers to serve as Odyssey coaches and judges
		- Training is provided for coaches; seasoned coaches can support new coaches
		- Come to Pam’s session on October 3 if interested in volunteering for Odyssey
* Volunteering at Campbell
	+ Please reach out to the PTA representatives if you’re interested in volunteering
	+ Volunteer opportunities:
		- Parent representative to APS Advisory Committee on Instruction – follow changes being discussed in instructional models at APS and share with PTA
		- Wellness Committee parent representatives
		- Outdoor Lab Family Field Trip – we want to organize a Saturday in the spring at the Outdoor Lab in Fauquier County (as we’ve done in prior years) – volunteer needed to coordinate logistics with Outdoor Lab staff, APS bus service, etc.
		- Room Parents – ideally two Room Parents for every class – follow up with Mecca (Room Parent Coordinator) if interested
	+ To be able to volunteer to do anything with students, e.g. chaperone field trips, etc., parents must be cleared through a background check
		- New families must fill out the background check form; if you’ve completed the form/passed the background check in prior years, you don’t need to do it again
		- Ms. Sim coordinates background checks for all of Campbell – last year we did about 200 background checks!
* Upcoming events
	+ September 22: Garden Work Day, from 9 AM to 12 PM
	+ September 28: Back to School Picnic, from 5:30 PM till dark
	+ October 12: Fun Run; APS Hispanic heritage event at Kenmore is that evening
* Please mark your calendar for the next PTA meeting on October 9, from 6:30 PM to 8 PM
* Thank you all for attending, in person and online!