



PTA MEETING MINUTES

Subject to approval

April 5, 2018

Approximately 20 parents and the Executive Board were in attendance.

President's Report – Todd Holden

- STEAM – Todd discussed the primary priority from Ms Vasilakis and she would like:

- 10 new ipads

- 10 robots

- 10 iPads

She has a lesson plan in mind. We should continue to keep STEAM funding in mind each year and fund \$2-\$3K each year. The iPads can be bought from wherever we want. There is a new Apple program announced that may provide a discount. 2018 iPads came out 4/1 for 2018. Ms. Gallo has the school pricing. We don't have to pay sales tax.

- **Parent Q:** Is there a suggested amount for each family to give towards STEAM?

A: No – we plan on fundraising through the events, the Spirit Sale, the Read a Thon and through direct donations. Around \$50 per family if we were to divide our goal equally. We hoped to allow parents to give what's within their means.

- We will send an updated graphic to update on total fundraised.

- **Parent Q:** Do we need the ipads? How many hours a day will the kids be on the screen? Studies have shown that technology in the classroom does not improve learning.

A: It will be incorporated into the lessons with Ms V. There will additional screen time, but it won't be going home with them. This is a DOE initiative – programing for all.

- **Parent Q:** OSMO technology is geared towards smaller kids and originally we planned to do both so that we cover all grades. The robots are geared towards older kids. Osmo doesn't need teacher training, while robots do. We should be buying a combination of both of these things. We had also discussed using it to replace some of the activities during center time. So instead of the Splash Math, the kids could do the math module. This is something to be used by all the teachers not just Ms. Vasilakis.

A: Future conversations are needed with Ms. V and Ms. Gallo. Parents would like a say with her. Can we invite her to the next meeting? This will be discussed at the next SLT meeting. It's been integrated for next school year.

- **Parent Statement:** Jennifer Verdon - SCREENS IN CLASSROOMS:

In the heart of Silicon Valley is a nine-classroom school where employees of tech giants Google, Apple and Yahoo send their children. But despite its location in America's digital center, there is not an iPad, smartphone or screen in sight. In a day and age in which educators are trying out new tech tools, and students are increasingly huddled around screens, a return to paper seems almost innovative.

The curriculum is a hands-on, experiential approach to learning that contrasts sharply with the rush to fill classrooms with the latest electronic devices. The pedagogy emphasizes the role of imagination in learning and takes a holistic approach that integrates the intellectual, practical and creative development of pupils.

A global report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggests education systems that have invested heavily in computers have seen "no noticeable improvement" in their results for reading, maths and science

We've seen a seismic shift as technology now dominates the educational landscape. In almost every classroom in America today, you will find some type of screen—smartboards, Chromebooks, tablets, ipads, smartphones. From inner-city schools to those in rural and remote towns, we have accepted tech in the classroom as a necessary and beneficial evolution in education.

Studies have shown that students who are raised on a high-tech diet not only appear to struggle more with attention and focus, but also seem to suffer from an adolescent malaise that appears to be a direct byproduct of their digital immersion. Over two hundred peer-reviewed studies point to screen time correlating to increased ADHD, screen addiction, increased aggression, depression, and anxiety. This includes the ability to make friends in person, take responsibility for actions, display good manners, use polite language, control emotions, and temper, follow verbal directions, and develop empathy for others.

If studies are showing that this is true, why would we have allowed these “educational” Trojan horses to slip into our schools? Follow the money. Education technology is estimated to become a \$60 billion industry by 2018. With the advent of the Common Core in 2010, which nationalized curriculum and textbooks standards, the multi-billion-dollar textbook industry became very attractive for educational gunslingers looking to capitalize on the new Wild West of education technology. A tablet with educational software no longer needed state-by-state curricular customization. It could now be sold to the entire country.

People like Rupert Murdoch would go on to invest over \$1 billion into an ed-tech company called Amplify, with the stated mission of selling every student in America their proprietary tablet—for only \$199—along with the software and annual licensing fees. They hired hundreds of videogame designers to build educational videogames—while they and other tech entrepreneurs attempted to sell the notion that American students no longer had the attention span for traditional education. Their solution: Educate them in a more stimulating and “engaging” manner. We now know that it creates a vicious and addictive ADHD cycle: The more a child is stimulated, the more that child needs to keep getting stimulated in order to hold their attention.

When students use a screen it's easy for them to remain in their own discrete spaces and to avoid the difficult nature of interacting with peers when a screen functions as a mediating force. When students sit side by side without a screen the dynamic is significantly different. Kids make eye contact with each other more. They negotiate physical space and make a series of small decisions like: Who will hold the pen? How will they orient themselves so that multiple people can write at the same time?

I think these small interactions hold significance. A 2014 study published in the Journal of Computers in Human Behavior found that screen time has a negative effect on the ability of children to read facial cues. This study raises serious concerns about the long-term consequences of technology use on social skills development among school-age children. A 2016 study at Michigan State University found a correlation between laptop usage in university classes and lower test scores.

I could go on and on but what it boils down to is a concern about student learning and I have skepticism regarding the idea whether technology is necessary or appropriate. Tech tools simplify the work of compiling information and conducting research, but they also allow students to skip steps, which may cause them to miss out on crucial parts of the learning process. What tool, we should ask ourselves, will promote critical thinking, interpersonal skills development, and problem-solving skills? We should embrace the tech age, but with caution.

Voting on By Laws – Motion carries

Treasurer Report

3/31 Ending Balance is \$17,513.85 – does not include April donations

Expenses

	Amount
Totals	\$260.00
Babysitting (Mar)	\$90.00
Anila Hathiramani (Reim for Website)	\$170.00

Income

	Amount
Totals	\$1,521.45
Chipotle Fundraiser	\$329.25
Bake Sale (P-T Conf)	\$780.00
Fundraiser (Online Mixed Bags)	\$87.20
Annual Appeal	\$300.00
Steam Fundraiser	\$25.00

Approval of March Meeting Minutes

SLT Meeting Update – None, meeting has not yet taken place.

PTA and SLT Nominations for the 2018-2019 School Year

- Stacey Shick would like to remove herself from the nominating committee. Jonathan Salazar will replace Stacey.
- Nominations are:
 - Ashley Salazar for President
 - Rebekah Pokart-Cobanargi for Vice President
 - Vartges Saroyan for the SLT position
 - Stacey Shick Samuels run for Secretary
 - Paul Goldfarb will run for Treasurer

Other

- Read A Thon – will be launched right after the second round of state testing. We get 80% of the money raised.
- Spirit Sales due 4/24
- TGI Fridays for restaurant fundraiser and Buffalo Wild Wings. Could we set up by end of the year?

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 10th.