

# MINUTES

## Merrill Middle School PTO Minutes

*Date | time* 9/17/2015 6:15 PM | *Meeting called to order by* Catherine Collier

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### In Attendance

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Catherine Collier, Laura Mitchell, Justine McKinzie, Erica Spoor, Heba Nabhan, Jamie Wasinger, Stephanie Montague, Michael Rossi, Jodi Rossi, Eric Fling, Amy Homburger, Anne Friesen Birky, Carolyn Diercks, Becky Wiggins, Brett Stringer, Joe Welch, Vaso Martellaro

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### Board

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Catherine Collier (Communications) and Joe Welch (Treasurer) and attendees were introduced. Amy Homburger volunteered to serve as Secretary. Eric Fling volunteered to serve as President. Catherine Collier has a possible volunteer for Vice President.

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### Treasurer's Report

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Joe Welch discussed the Treasurer's Report. Expenses and Income last year were roughly even. The PTO is starting the year with a healthy balance in order to fund this year's socials, the online directory and teacher appreciation. The PTO will continue fundraising via the Merrill Community Fund and restaurant nights.

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### Directory Report

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Approximately 100 families have signed up for the Merrill Online Directory. Please [click here](#) to sign up. The service will assist the PTO in communicating with the Merrill community, including sending out volunteer signups and tracking volunteer time. The cost of the service is \$298 per year. In addition to this service, the PTO will provide Brett Stringer with updates to insert in the Jaguar Journal. The Jaguar Journal is an online weekly school report distributed through the [DPS Parent Portal](#) as well as posted on the [Merrill website](#). The website allows for translation so that all members of the Merrill community can stay informed.

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### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Open House

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The Merrill 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Open House will be on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in the evening. Brett Stringer requested 5 parent volunteers for the event from 6:00-8:00 pm and the PTO will send out a request. Interested people should speak directly to Brett regarding what is needed for the event.

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### Student Socials

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The Merrill Fall Social will be on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30-8:30pm. The PTO will provide pizza, drinks and dessert. Approximately 10-12 volunteers are needed for the event and the PTO will send out a request for volunteers. The student council will decide upon a theme for the social.

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## Teacher Appreciation

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Merrill has approximately 75 staff. The PTO will provide a coffee cart on December 17, 2015 for staff to order coffee drinks. The approximate cost of this is \$375. The PTO will request donations to help pay for this expense. It was discussed that students may want to help assist with this expense. The PTO will look into providing parent volunteers to deliver coffee orders directly to staff. Eric Fling will wear an apron that says "PTO President." ☺

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## Restaurant Night

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Laura Mitchell currently schedules restaurant nights and will begin transferring that responsibility to Becky Wiggins and Susan Dolson this year.

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## Book Fair

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In the past the PTO has hosted Scholastic Bookfairs and events at [Bookies](#). While the Scholastic event raised a relatively large amount 2 years ago, the effort to staff and run the event was difficult to maintain. The event at Bookies raised a smaller amount and the discussion centered around improving marketing to raise attendance.

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## International Day May 2016

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Heba Nabhan, the Parent Liaison at Merrill, will work on International Day plans after Winter Break. Currently she is requesting 5 more parents to showcase talents in the Parents Got Talent event. She currently has 5 parents signed up and without 5 more, the event will not take place. She is working on an International Fashion Show with students for November which will take place the Friday before Thanksgiving Break, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

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## Fundraising/Merrill Community Fund

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The fund was established in the 2014-15 school year as a way to provide extras at the school. Donations can be designated by the donor and are anonymous. Currently, donations are not tax deductible (see PTO vs. PTA below). Brett Stringer will help to create a prioritized list of "wants" for fundraising. Michael Rossi volunteered to look into a Merrill Spirit Wear/Gear fundraiser. It would need to be online with a small number of options for purchase. More recently, DPS Athletics purchased 50 jerseys for Merrill Cross Country. Eric Fling mentioned that sharing fundraising info on personal Facebook pages is a great way to get the word out on Merrill fundraising.

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## PTO vs. PTA

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Joe Welch briefly discussed the pros and cons of PTO vs. PTA and indicated a need for more in-depth research on the subject. The group is in agreement that non-profit 501c3 status is needed in order to obtain more donations. Eric Fling and Erica Spoor will research this topic to help the group decide if we should remain a PTO or switch to PTA.

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## Brett Stringer Update

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Great start to the year, advisement going well, working on Personal Success Factors. Athletic teams are getting bigger each year. 48 kids out for Cross Country and 38 for soccer. Co-ed Field Hockey is coming to Merrill in the spring via a grant by the Denver Avalanche. On Wednesday, Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> the school will host [Sweethearts & Heros](#), a free anti-bullying presentation. On another note, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class is smaller than anticipated and classes will be realigned. Lastly, teachers handle library duties and students come in early to help out.

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## Miscellaneous

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Justine McKinzie will look into restarting grocery cards at Merrill.

Brett Stringer has a calendar of events recently completed.

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## Next Meeting

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10/15/2015 6:00 PM, Merrill Library