

# Melrose Elementary PTO General Meeting

## August 25, 2015

Meeting called to order at 8:24 am by **Sarita Singh**, PTO President, and **Jane Boegel-Koch**, PTO Vice-President.

Sarita and Jane shared the three main goals of the PTO (Parent Teacher Organization):

1. Assisting the Administration (Principal **Mathew Needleman** and **Stacey Bertucelli**, Magnet Coordinator): Doing whatever we can do to help make Melrose the best place for our children to be.
2. Building Community: On our school campus through events like Harvest Festival, Jog-A-Thon, and many other school spirit events, and in our Melrose neighborhood through supporting local businesses.
3. Fundraising: This goal is the key to helping Melrose maintain our STEAM Magnet status. Each year, the PTO raises funds that allow our students to continue to learn in an environment rich with technology and creativity.

A full list of the PTO Board can be found on the PTO website: [melroseelementarypto.org](http://melroseelementarypto.org).

Sarita and Jane introduced the Hospitality Board. The Hospitality Board was established to help answer any questions new or returning families may have about our school. Their contact information can be found on the PTO website

### **Hospitality Board**

Alyson Cho (fluent in Korean)  
Noe Montes (fluent in Spanish)  
Kate Weber

### **Treasurer's Report**

- **Gina Viola-Peake**, PTO Treasurer shared the following:
  - The PTO raises funds each year that will cover expenses for the next year.
  - That said, the PTO bank account is at zero since we just wrote a check to pay for the new 4<sup>th</sup> grade laptops. This upgrade is part of our overall technology refresh plan. We upgraded the 5<sup>th</sup> grade laptops last year and will upgrade the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade laptops next year.
  - We raised \$106,000 last school year and hope to raise the same if not more through fundraisers like the Pledge Drive, Jog-a-thon, and ongoing fundraiser throughout the year. Details about PTO fundraising can be found on the PTO website.

## School Council Elections

- Elections were held for available spots on the School Site Council and Local School Leadership Council
  - School Site Council: This council works with the school budget and makes decisions about allocating funds.
    - Elected:
    - Rebecca Hobbs
    - Harri O’Kelley
    - Sarah Chapin (Alternate)
  
  - Local School Leadership: This council deals with what goes on during the school day—curriculum changes, school calendar, events, etc.
    - Elected:
    - Julie Marsh
    - Harri O’Kelley (Alternate)

More details about these councils can be found on the school and PTO websites.

Sarita and Jane introduced **Gabbie Leone**, PTO Communications. Gabbie has created a new calendar format on the school website. You can set Google plus alerts that link to the calendar.

Sarita and Jane introduced **Principal Needleman**:

Mr. Needleman discussed the following:

- **Communication**
  - Mr. Needleman stressed the importance of checking the school website regularly for information and updates about the school.
  - In previous years, both the school and the PTO sent out separate newsletters. This year, the school and PTO will combine information and send out one newsletter.
  - If you haven’t already signed up to receive this newsletter, go to the school website to do it.
  - Please become a fan of Melrose Elementary on Facebook
  
- **Curriculum**
  - Mr. Needleman is leading a return to Project-Based Learning in which children are able to incorporate 21st century skills such as information analysis and collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.
  - Singapore Math is no longer the official Math of LAUSD so the District will not longer pay the \$30,000 bill for textbooks.
  - We are transitioning to Eureka Math textbooks that will only cost around \$8,000.

- Eureka Math is in alignment with the Common Core State Standards. One of the lead writers/editors of the textbook is Lacy Endo-Perry, former Math Coach at Melrose.
  - Some parents have requested a tutorial for parents in this method so we can help our children with their homework. Mr. Needleman is looking into scheduling this.
- **Positive Behavior Support**
    - Mr. Needleman reported that overall the behavior at Melrose is quite good.
    - An effort has been made to have a more organized yard, with very distinct play areas.
    - Three rules have been posted: Be Safe. Be Polite. Listen and Follow Directions.
    - There were some concerns raised about lunch time/recess. Students generally eat with their grade level and are encouraged to stay seated until everyone at the table has eaten. They are then excused to play.
    - Parents reported varying degrees of success of this lunch plan.
    - Some kids are rushing and not eating much of their lunches; others are finishing everything (when they hadn't in the past).
    - The enforcement of the policy seems to vary from grade to grade so Mr. Needleman will review the policy with lunch/yard monitors and work towards a consistent plan for all.
    - Principal Needleman is working on added new areas to the yard, but supervision is a concern. Any parents that can volunteer for yard duty would be much appreciated.
    - Parents are also invited to joining Yard Committee. Please contact Mr. Needleman if you are interested.
  - **Beautification/Facilities**
    - Over the summer, the Melrose Business Improvement District collaborated with local street artists to bring more art to the neighborhood.
    - We were lucky to have four beautiful murals painted on our campus.
    - The District assessed the carpet in ARC/DHH building and has approved the removal and the installation of tile. We are optimistic that this could happen by Thanksgiving, but Mr. Needleman shared that in reality it may take a bit longer—hopefully by Spring.
    - The other large project is the renovation of the main bathrooms. We are “on the list” for repairs by the District, but Mr. Needleman has not been given any other details.

Sarita and Jane introduced **Chris Grant**, PTO Director of Family Fun Nights.

- Chris shared that the first Fratelli Friday will be this Friday, August 28. Fratelli's is located at the corner of Melrose and Formosa. They have been a strong supporter of Melrose for years.
- Twenty-percent of what Melrose families spend from 7-10am on Friday will go to the school.

- Fratelli Fridays will take place the last Friday of each month during the entire school year.
- There is a Family Fun Night scheduled for September 25 with the theme of La Noche Latina. This will take place on the yard. More details to come.

**A few upcoming dates to note:**

- PE starts on 8/26
- Music starts on 9/2
- Next PTO meeting: Tuesday, September 8 at 8:15 am

**Meeting was adjourned at 9:37 am.**

**An evening PTO meeting started at 5:30 pm.**

**Additional topics to the ones detailed above included:**

**STAR Enrichment**

- **Lynda von de Steinen**, STAR Education Site Director at Melrose, shared that the new STAR NOVA classes start on September 8. Classes include RockSTAR, Minecraft, EcoStation, and MovieSTAR. You can find more details and register online at [melrose.starinc.org](http://melrose.starinc.org).

**Ongoing Fundraising**

- **Ola May**, PTO Director of Ongoing Fundraisers reminded us of how easy it is to make money for Melrose through things we already do each day:
  - Amazon.com: Enter site through link on PTO website for Melrose to get up to 8% of what is spent.
  - Target: Get a Target REDcard. You get 5% off your purchases each time you shop, plus free shipping with no minimum on Target.com. Once you receive the card, link the card to Melrose via their Take Charge of Education program so that Melrose automatically gets 1% of your purchases! Last year we made over \$800 this way!
  - Ralphy's/Food for Less: Up to 4% of purchases donated to Melrose. Ralph's card can be linked to Melrose via website or in store. If you signed up last year, please renew starting September 1.
  - Escript: Register for Escript, a fundraising program that allows participating merchants and restaurants to contribute a percentage (from 2-10%) of your purchases to Melrose. Many companies participate in Escript including Fresh & Easy, Bristol Farms, and Home Depot.
  - Box Tops: Collect box tops from food, office, home items. Each box top collected is worth 10 cents. Encourage friends, family to collect. Great project for grandparents.

- Shutterfly: Enter site through link on PTO website and Melrose will receive 13% of the purchase.
- A new program added this year is My Coke Rewards—each point code is worth 10 cents.
- Please see the PTO website for details on the programs above and other easy fundraisers.

### **Recycling**

- **Scott Peake**, PTO Director of Recycling, reminded us that every Tuesday, plastic and aluminum can be dropped off at the Formosa valet stop. (No glass or milk jugs.) This is another easy way to make money for Melrose. We raised \$82 on our first recycling day this year!