

Oct.24th, 2017

Parent Participation Program Update

St. Matthew's Parish Education Committee

Enrollment:

Receiving this year's package of PPP applications was the biggest yet! To date we have 238 families. Only 11 of these families chose to do Pay in Lieu this year, also our lowest amount. Two of these families inquired about volunteering and how that would work which is encouraging! There are so many options of volunteering that can work for everyone's schedule and a goal I would like to see in the future is every family participating in volunteer work.

Roles:

Thanks to you amazing people of the PEC, new volunteer positions were opened this year which truly helped me in placing people with scheduling issues. For example, families who work full time with only being able to do pancake breakfasts, a team that maxes out at 20 families, left a lot of families struggling to make hours work for them. The introduction of the Saturday Maintenance team has alleviated this issue. This new position (with a team of 10) has been a great addition and a much-needed volunteer option. The feedback was very positive from the lead after the first Saturday on Sept.9th. They are scheduled every second Saturday from 1-3 and probably could have stayed longer to get all done that was needed. There are a lot of things that need maintenance now that the school is in its 5th operational year and having this team will be invaluable.

4 School-Wide Supervision Responsibility:

I have to say, this school wide 4-shift requirement has been awesome!!!!!! It has offered a HUGE relief in a problematic area of PPP. With all the extra help, we are sometimes even "over staffed", particularly in the morning. In looking at the schedule going into the colder months, this will lessen. People are scheduling themselves in the beginning of the year and the end, most likely due to weather. Regardless, it has been great seeing all the families helping out in this area. My only recommendation to this is perhaps a once a quarter shift? Four times a year but placed throughout? For example, Summer (early September or June), Fall (Late September, October, November), Winter (December, January, February) and Spring (March, April, May).

On Volunteer:

With the implementation of the new “On Volunteer” system this school year, I found that besides it being a learning curve for everyone, people have been receptive to it. Once one becomes familiar with it, it’s very easy to use. One function of it that has been particularly great for families is the “Check-In/Check-Out” function. Every family is assigned a private 4-digit pin number. On the day they are scheduled to supervise one of their 4 shifts, they simply go to one of the Chrome books in the lobby to Check-In using this 4-digit pin. Then when they are done supervising, they Check-Out. This time stamps their logged time. This “Check-In/Check-Out” system is used for half the PPP positions. The other half of the PPP positions, which are “Commitments” (in which the family commits to a particular volunteer role and as long as they have met their obligation of attending meetings and the events, their 40-hour PPP obligation is met) does not use the Check-In/Check-Out system but rather, the schedule is slotted into their portals already and the Team Lead has authorization to “Verify” their team’s hours only. Each area of commitment has an assigned Lead. For example, the Saturday Maintenance Team. Their lead is Jansen Tomas. After the Saturday maintenance is done, she can go onto her portal and view her team for that day. If they have all showed up, she can check off the verification box. She can also mark someone as a “No Show” if they were not there or can adjust someone’s hours if they were late. If someone has not attended all their required commitment hours, they will have to make it up elsewhere.

The great thing about the new system is the self-accountability of the parent. They all have a portal and in the portal, it shows the 40 hours being equivalent to \$800. Once the parent completes something they are scheduled to (library, teacher helper, supervision, soup kitchen etc...) it will show the reduction of not only their 40 hours, but also their financial responsibility. It is a great incentive to see that money being reduced every time the parent participates.

The families in the school who are part of the CISVA, PEC or Pay In Lieu have already had their portals adjusted to show a zero balance.

Feedback:

I have had some feedback from several families regarding the volunteering for school field trips not counting for hours. It’s not just from one group of parents which is why I am bringing it up. It is upsetting to these families that on top of the hour increase to 40 hours from 30 and 4 extra shifts on top of this, that they cannot have their time vouched for when volunteering on school field trips. This is a touchy subject. There will always be the certain families that do volunteering no matter what school they go to. And there will always be the opinion that people should want to be a part of their child’s field trip, even if it does not count for hours. But the reality is and what the concern I am hearing is that families are already having to adjust their personal schedules to allow for the extra hours and shifts required now and it would be great if the volunteer hours were allowed to count towards their PPP obligation. In remembering last year’s

walkathon, we struggled to get volunteers to help out. I think in situations like this as well as field trips, if volunteering was offered PPP hours, we'd get more help and parents would be happy that this was an option.

Overall the start of the school year in regards to the Parent Participation Program is a great one. We have the highest number of participating families yet and I love to see this! It builds community and shows our children how rewarding volunteering can be!!!

Tania 😊