

Dear Cottage Community,

Welcome to the unusual new school year 2020-21. We understand that these times are very trying for our community in so many respects. We are living during the biggest global pandemic of our lifetime and trying to figure out the new way of going to school for our children, whether it is hybrid or remote. Teachers are under tremendous pressure and could benefit from our appreciation and confidence in them. The school district's School Committee meetings are becoming quite unsettling for many and the greater Sharon community is trying to grapple with a task to stay truly inclusive and tolerant.

To that extent, the PTO Executive Board met and has these goals for the upcoming year:

1. **Create ONE Cottage Community** to foster the environment of support among hybrid families, remote families, remote academy families, teachers and staff. We are all one community and we are in this together. We also welcome the East and Heights students in the remote academies and would like to adopt them into our Cottage family for this year.
 - **WHAT WE WANT TO DO:** We are planning regular community Zoom meetings and events, townhall for Kindergarten and new to Cottage families, strengthen the function of our room parents to serve as ambassadors, prepare care packages for all Cougars, and work with teachers to address their needs.
2. **Promote diversity, inclusion, and kindness** by working with Mr. Madden and the Cottage Diversity Committee to create educational opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, for the children and parents.
 - **WHAT WE WANT TO DO:** In conjunction with the Cottage Diversity Committee, led by Kiana Pierre-Louis and Gisela Aragon-Velthaus, explore ideas such as workshops on implicit bias and micro-aggression, virtual mini-cultural events, and more.
3. **Reopen schools safely** with PPE and supplies that are needed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, as well as to make sure the teachers have everything they need to deliver both hybrid and remote instruction to the children safely and effectively.
 - **WHAT WE WANT TO DO:** We have formed a Reopening Committee, led by Elizabeth Kassab, that is already collecting school supplies and has assembled COVID related welcome gifts for the teachers and staff. We are also collecting lists of supplies that are needed by the teachers, and consulting with Mr Madden on school-wide needs.
4. **Find creative ways to fundraise** to continue school programming, stipends for teachers, and to purchase new items such as an external drop box and audio equipment for teachers. Due to COVID-19 we did not have our annual Fun Fair last March, which brings in almost \$20,000 each year, to fund many of the school's programs and other needs. Because of that, we need to join together to fundraise during these unprecedented times.

We cannot do this without you. We need your energy and ideas. Teachers and parents, please join us for our first monthly PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) meeting of the year on **Thursday October, 1, 2020 at 7pm**. Agenda and Zoom details to follow.

If you have any questions, concerns or ideas you can reach out to any of us individually or email us at cottagepto@gmail.com Also make sure to visit our website at <https://cottagepto.org/> and like our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/CottageStreetSchoolPto>

With Warm Regards,

PTO Executive Board

Heidi Kassner, candidate for Co-President (mom of 2nd grader and 4th grader), heidi.kassner@gmail.com

Linda Cveckova, candidate for Co-President (mom of K, 2nd grader, and 6th grader), linda.cveckova@gmail.com

Reena Kharkwal, candidate for President-Elect (mom of 2nd grader and 5th grader), reena.kharkwal1982@gmail.com

Ann Keitner, Treasurer (mom of 2nd grader and 3rd grader), afkeitner@gmail.com

Lindsay Boyle, Secretary (mom of 2nd grader and 5th grader), lindsay.boyle@hotmail.co.uk