
HIGHLAND PARK ELEMENTARY PTA MEETING MINUTES

HPS Library • October 11, 2016

Call to Order

Rachel Kaiser, 6:37 p.m.

Attendees

Joanna Ali, Christine Cardoso, May Corn, Danielle Dumont, Stephanie Duvall, Tina Hamilton, Rachel Kaiser, Jessica Mauldin, Meghan McDowell-Vyse, Jill Morey, Tracy Patterson, Kelly Pierce, Liliana Polley, Syd Seale, Jen Stokes, Brigitte Witkowski, Linda Yamamoto

Agenda

1. Welcome new and returning members
2. Meeting Norms
 - On task (time keeper)
 - Focused agenda
 - Safe and respectful
 - Parking lot: questions, tabled items, concerns to be addressed later
 - Stay positive
3. PTA membership is up to 61 people
4. Guest speaker: Christine Cardoso, Manchester Town PTA President
 - Met with two schools so far; looking at budget, fundraising, events
 - Would like to be more inclusive of children throughout the district (more free family events, less of more directed fundraising)
 - Town PTA meeting scheduled for October 25 at 6:30 p.m. at Keeney School
5. Presentation of last meeting's minutes
 - Minutes are to be approved at the next meeting, in accordance with PTA by-laws
 - Motion to approve: Rachel Kaiser
 - Approved: Brigitte Witkowski
 - Seconded: Linda Yamamoto
6. Presentation of budget for November PTA meeting
 - +\$600 for mum fundraiser, slightly better than last year
 - Six categories of expenses, and proposed funds to be raised/appropriated:
 - Fundraisers: +\$8225
 - Events: -\$1980
 - Enrichment: -\$4225
 - Staff Appreciation: -\$875
 - Charity: -\$300
 - PTA Expenses: -\$845
 - Vote on budget in November; possibly add a separate meeting or change meeting date to accommodate the vote
 - Special thanks to Laura Golas for help in compiling membership
7. Discussion of holiday shop
 - Concerns against:
 - Exclusion of children who can't/don't want to participate
 - Interruption of class instructional time, between the event itself pulling students out of class and staff having to console upset kids (the latter of which can be particularly difficult to address if the reason for non-participation isn't known)
 - Faculty were needed to assist with the operation of the event last year due to being short staffed
 - Staff felt compelled to purchase gifts on behalf of students who couldn't participate in order to avoid hurt feelings
 - While kids may enter the shop with a list of people to buy for, there often isn't enough oversight to ensure that they're sticking to that list while they're shopping
 - Commerce in school is inappropriate

- PTA board originally removed the holiday shop from the budget upon hearing the concerns of school staff, but agreed to restore it on the grounds that it take place outside of school hours, and is organized/executed with a chair and at least 4 volunteers
 - Could possibly be coupled with another event, such as a movie night
 - Could possibly be replaced with an alternative event, like a family craft night (rather than buying gifts, kids are supplied with materials to create a gift instead)
 - Suggestions to improve experience:
 - Color-coded pricing and gift bags to streamline checkout and wrapping
 - \$0.25-2 items for kids who don't have money to purchase gifts themselves (funded by the PTA)
 - Sufficient volunteer force to alleviate the need for teacher involvement
 - Written appeal for the holiday shop to continue during school hours on behalf of Susan Jacobsen, who was unable to attend the PTA meeting due to Board of Education obligations (presented by Liliana Polley, read by Linda Yamamoto)
8. Presentation by Dr. Ali
- Increased achievement in ELA/math/science:
 - Classroom performance: standards-based report cards
 - SBAC scores: New test with an online format, district working on alignment (test changes yearly, Common Core-based)
 - District benchmark assessment
 - Climate:
 - Parent needed for the Climate Committee (meets once a month on Thursday at 8:15 a.m.)
 - Anti-Defamation League parent/staff/student workshops: ADL contracted for October staff training; grade 3-5 students work in their own classrooms ("Why are kids mean?")
 - Social emotional lessons in classrooms, taught by teachers; trainer to return to work on vocabulary
 - Governor's Council: All Abilities Alliance (Jill Morey chairing, facilitated by staff)
 - School families: Increased frequency (was once every other month, now every two weeks starting in October)
 - Pep rallies/spirit sticks
 - PBIS: ALL staff trained (promoting positive behavior)
 - Safety:
 - Parent needed for the Safety Committee (meets once a month on Thursday at 8:15 a.m.)
 - Met with Officer Travis (head of MPS security, fire, and SCO)
 - Did a walkthrough of school
 - Reviewed safety with staff
 - Working with MELC to keep protocol consistent
 - Talent:
 - Hiring and supporting six new staff members (one leaving, looking for replacement)
 - TEAM mentoring
 - Coaching cycles for all staff; personalized learning

Upcoming Events/Fundraisers

1. Meadow Farms orders due Friday, October 14
2. Cross Country Challenge: Saturday, October 15
3. Pie/cookie dough orders due Monday, October 17 (sell 10 or more items and be entered to win a \$25 Barnes & Noble gift card)
4. Homecoming: Friday, October 21 (students can participate in parade, if parent permits; Dr. Seuss theme)
5. Costume Book Bingo: Friday, October 28 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the HPS cafeteria
6. HPS Family Literacy Night: Thursday, November 3 at 6 p.m.
7. HPS Fun Run: Saturday, November 5 at 10 a.m. (about 20 volunteers needed; contact co-chairs Jessica Scorso or Mary Fischer if you'd like to help)
8. Next PTA meeting: Tuesday, November 1 at 6:30 p.m. (we will be voting on the budget, so please attend, if you can – childcare will be provided)
9. HPS Book Fair/Bertucci's Dine-Out: Tuesday, November 22 (book fair is 5-8 p.m. and continues online for two days afterward, dine-out is all day; Dr. Ali will read a story, and the 5th grade chorus will perform)
10. Pepe's Pizza Dine-Out: Thursday, December 1

Adjournment

Rachel Kaiser/Tracy Patterson, 7:44 p.m.