

**Huntington School PTO
Meeting Summary
March 9, 2017**

Board members

Leeann Wiess
Meghan Vitale
Emily Pascale
Ann Yarka

Administrators

Mrs. Harlow, Principal

Parents/staff/public: About 10 people

Board member reports

Leeann reported on karate. They will have a test this coming Monday, and the tournament will be the following Monday. Test and tournament were delayed due to the snow days.

Mary Beth reported on Box Tops. Mr. Gover's class turned in the most Box Tops for February. We should be getting a check in April.

Old business

We finally received payment for 5 Below Fundraiser. We made \$63.33. As a reminder, we made \$56 from Moe's.

The community meeting about building renovations is scheduled for Thursday, March 23 at 6:30 p.m. PTO will be assisting with outreach to parents and the community.

New business and upcoming events

Leeann said that Bingo Night is tomorrow night, March 10. We have prizes from SkyZone, the MOST, the Zoo, and Black Mamba Skate Park.

Emily reported on the Gertrude Hawk sale. All orders have been submitted. Delivery is scheduled for week of March 20. The amount for orders was down this year, continuing a trend from the past few years. We might be looking for a different fundraiser for spring next year, and we welcome suggestions. Leeann noted that parents have asked for something not food-centered. Ms. Bland suggested a Barnes and Noble "book fair." Meghan asked if Gertrude will pull the fundraiser from us if our sales get too low. Emily said no, it will be our choice. Ms. Jones noted that other neighborhood groups do Gertrude Hawk, so it's a saturated market. Mrs. Harlow said that Honor Society does well with Avon, but some parents noted issues with delivery of the product as well as difficulty with sales. Jenn suggested a "walk-a-thon" type event. Meghan noted that we've shied away from fundraisers that require the school and/or students to buy product up-front (like some of the other candy fundraisers). We'll continue to review options for next year.

The next meeting is April 6 (note that it's the first week of the month because break starts April 14). There is no school on April 14 (Good Friday). April 24 was a contingency day, but school will be in session.

Lisa noted that Honor Society is doing a pancake breakfast fundraiser at Applebee's on Erie Blvd on Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

The spring Family Dance is March 31.

A photo of the Huntington School/Girl Scouts group at last year's Earth Day cleanup was on the front of the OCRRA insert in last Sunday's paper. We'll be doing clean up again this year on April 22 – watch for more details.

Ms. Bland stated that the afterschool Irish dance club will be doing a performance on Wednesday, March 15, at 4:30 p.m.

The Art Show and Book Fair is also March 15.

Funding requests

There were no fund requests.

Administrative report

Mrs. Harlow informed everyone that Jaimie Alicea has been appointed as permanent superintendent of the SCSD, as of last night's Board meeting. He had been acting as the interim superintendent since former Superintendent Contreras' departure.

The Art Show and Book Fair are March 15, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Everything will be upstairs in the hallways and in the library.

Middle School Band concert is scheduled for March 16 at 7:00 p.m.

Pennies for Patients is going on. It is a contest between the classrooms.

NYS ELA assessments (grades 3-8) will be March 28-30. Letters will go out next week to let parents know about procedures for testing and the process for those that choose to opt-out. Mrs. Harlow reminded everyone of changes in the testing procedures, including: no time limits for any students, the tests are no longer tied to teacher or principal evaluation, and there are fewer questions. The school is hoping for greater participation from students this year. Low participation last year impacted our school designation, which was dropped from "school in good standing" to "local assistance plan" school. Elementary tests start at 10:30 a.m. Middle school tests start at 8:30 a.m. (They cannot overlap due to staffing requirements for proctoring.) All students will be required to sit for the minimum recommended amount of time (per NYS recommendations – typically 70-90 minutes), then students that need more time will be able to go to a space in the school where they will not be disturbed. Math tests are May 2-4.

Middle school 5-week reports should be in mailboxes tomorrow, along with a letter from Mrs. Harlow regarding a presentation on the morning of March 24 about "sexting." In the last few weeks, social media use in and out of school has caused a number of behavior issues in school. The Police Department will be here to present to all middle school students. The letter from Mrs. Harlow invites parents to come as well. There were a few questions about cell phones in school. Mrs. Harlow stated that staff cannot prohibit cell phones in buildings. The school district does not have a ban, and there's no way to enforce a ban anyways. Staff cannot physically take a phone away.

Ann asked if there is a device to jam cell phones. Mrs. Harlow and parents confirmed that there is no such device that can be used in the schools. Ms. Jones noted that a “jamming device” would be a safety issue for staff, since there are no phones in the classrooms and teachers often use their personal cell phones. Leeann stated that the cell phone policy has not changed, that is: you can have phones, but off and put away during school. Mrs. Harlow confirmed that this is the policy, but it is just not enforceable.

Mrs. Harlow explained about the recent robocall to middle school parents. There was a recent incident with a 7th grader whose behavior escalated. The student left the classroom, was very angry, and broke glass. Other students heard this and were scared. Staff members were able to isolate the student and handle the incident. Another student texted their mother during the event, and the mother called the Superintendent. Mrs. Harlow decided a robocall was necessary to clarify what had happened. She tries to do robocalls as close to an event as possible, but in the evening. Mrs. Harlow stated that there are some serious behavioral and emotional issues in the 7th grade class this year, but that plans are in place for each of these students. The school has increased supervision and reduced transition times. A few students have been referred for superintendent’s hearings and alternative programs. Jenn asked why, if the student is suspended, and they taking the bus and why are they allowed back in the school? Mrs. Harlow stated that if a student is suspended they are not allowed on school grounds. Jenn reiterated that suspended students have been in school.

The student advisory council is working on a talent show, scheduled for May. Mrs. Harlow anticipates that flyers about auditions will go home in the end of March.

Nina Vergara introduced herself. She is one of four Family Engagement Facilitators in the Office of Family Engagement (which used to be Parent Partnership Network). The office is a support system for families within the schools. They work closely with Parent University. Ms. Vergara invited parents to reach out if we need any assistance. On March 15 there is an ESSA meeting at ITC at 5:30 (childcare and refreshments will be provided). This replaces the February SPC meeting. This month’s SPC is scheduled (tentatively) for March 22, but may be cancelled.

After school program report

Ms. Bland reported on the after school program. Irish dancers will be performing on March 15. The Garden Club recently picked up a lot of litter on the school grounds. The club has inherited the garden by the pool door. They consolidated all the tulips into one of the raised beds, and will be turning the other one into an herb garden. They have over 25 items sprouted in the basement and ready to plant. Leann noted that it is nice to see the garden getting used again. Mr. Dehm is aware that the Garden Club is using the raised beds, and he is fine with it. Ms. Bland said that the students would like to put roses into the plot by the pool door. She stated that she will be at the school over the summer to maintain the gardens. Emily said that there is \$217 in a garden account. Ms. Bland also noted that they have bigger pots to put by the front doors. Ms. Jones suggested a plot of marigolds, in the shape of a paw print, for the area by the pool door. Ms. Bland also said that the students are building a replacement birdhouse for Plymouth Ave.

Added agenda items

SCSD Board of Education Commissioner Dan Romeo acknowledged that the middle school behavior issues that Mrs. Harlow discussed are not unique to Huntington; schools across the district are facing similar challenges. He commended Huntington for doing a “great job” handling these issues.

Mr. Romeo asked if there is someone at Huntington that is dedicated to communicating school events and “good news” to the Board of Education. Some schools send a lot of notifications to the Board members. Mrs. Harlow said that the school does have a Twitter account, which she and Ms. Buchanan (librarian) post to fairly regularly. Mrs. Harlow also submits a list of events each month to Mike Henesey (communications office).

Mr. Romeo announced that the Board will be holding another Community Forum on March 29 (time and place to be determined), similar to the recent one at Nottingham. Emily asked what prompted the Board to start these meetings, noting that it is a change from the past. Mr. Romeo stated that the new board members that took office in January have made community engagement a priority, and the members work well together. Mrs. Harlow offered Huntington as a possible location for a future forum.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.