

Huntington School PTO

March 10, 2016

Meeting Summary

Executive Board members present:

Leeann Wiess
Meghan Vitale
Keith Gatling
Emily Pascale
Angie Vigliotti-Martinez

Nine parents/community members attended.

Welcome

Leeann welcomed everyone.

Board member reports

Karate

Leeann reported that the students just had their test and tournament. Everyone who was eligible to move up in rank did so.

Box Tops

Mary Beth reported that Ms. Joanne (pre-K) had the most Box Tops last month. We are still waiting for a check, and we still owe prizes to winning classes.

Internet Safety presentation

The McMahon-Ryan Child Advocacy Center presented an Internet safety seminar on March 1. Leeann said that the presentation was good and there was some useful information; unfortunately, turnout was extremely low (even with refreshments and child care provided).

Gertrude Hawk fundraiser

Emily reported that delivery is scheduled for March 18, and orders should be sent home with the students that day. We could use some volunteers that day to help with the deliveries to classrooms. The total sales were about \$8,000, with a total profit for the school of about \$4,000 (not including online orders). The proceeds are distributed 50% to class accounts and 50% to the PTO general fund. There were quite a few late orders, but the company has been good about accommodating these.

Updates on old business

Bingo

The board has decided to postpone Bingo Night until April, most likely April 15. Mrs. Harlow indicated that there should not be any conflicts in the building that night. This will be "Family Fun" bingo, with winners receiving raffle tickets for prizes (no cash). We are still trying to find something for a "grand

prize” that would be family-friendly. Melissa Bland suggested a SkyZone gift card, and offered to look into that. All agreed that would be a great prize.

Family Dance

The last Family Dance of the year will be Friday, March 18 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Leeann is coordinating with the Middle School ESL department to sell refreshments.

Earth Day

Meghan noted that last year, we organized an Earth Day cleanup, in conjunction with ENA’s Skate Park committee, on the OCRRA clean-up day. We had a small turnout and had hoped to build the event this year. However, this year’s county-wide clean-up days are Friday, April 22 and Saturday, April 23, and the 22nd is the last day of school before spring break. Also, ENA said that they will be occupied with their community garden project that day. Therefore, the PTO will partner with the local Girl Scout troop (which Emily leads) on the cleanup. Watch for more details.

Next meeting

Next meeting is April 14. Elections for Board members for next year need to take place at the May meeting, so we’ll need to start that process at the April meeting.

Funding requests

Honor Society lunch on NYC trip

The group discussed the request from National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) for \$25 per student for 14 students for lunch on their New York City trip (total request of \$350). This was tabled at the February PTO meeting. Mr. Curinga spoke about the trip. They stay in Manhattan, but do not use a tour guide company to save money (Mr. Curinga does all the planning). The students do a lot of fundraising through various means. There are many ESL students that participate in the trip, and many students whose families do not have the means to pay for the trip. Angie said she went on the trip last year and it was fantastic. Meghan inquired about the total cost per student. Mr. Curinga stated that the total cost per student is \$525, which includes 2 nights in a hotel (3-day trip), a show, visits to landmarks, the liberty cruise, and transportation via charter bus. Mr. Curinga clarified that although 7th and 8th graders can join NJHS, only 8th graders can go on the trip. Emily stated that the NJHS account holds about \$13,000. Mr. Curinga indicated that the popcorn sales go to the ropes course at Adams Eden trip, which costs about \$3,000.

Jenn motioned to approve the request, and Keith seconded. Leeann asked for a vote. There was no opposition, and no abstentions; the request was approved.

Staff baby shower reimbursement

Mrs. Harlow discussed a fund request from a teacher for reimbursement for a staff baby shower. Staff decorated the lounge using their own money. There is a social sunshine committee in the building, which also supports these types of events and the teacher received \$35 from the committee. They are asking for an additional \$25 reimbursement from PTO. Emily indicated that there is \$226 in the “office” account, and that this would not require a vote if Mrs. Harlow is requesting the money from that

account (rather than the PTO general funds). Mrs. Harlow agreed to use the office account. No vote was necessary.

Administrative reports

Mrs. Harlow provided the administrative report on various items.

Target is no longer doing the Take Charge of Education program. We received a check last week for \$164, and we anticipate this will be the final check.

March 11 is the Panther Pride Rummage Sale. Volunteers are needed to help staff the event. The school received numerous donated items, including gift cards and a check from Pyramid Companies. The event will be held in library, and items will be organized by grade level and “priced” by panther paws.

Mrs. Harlow would like the PTO to hold donations (such as the Target check and the donation for the rummage sale) so that we can decide as a group how to spend this money. Mrs. Harlow suggested that Mr. Woody has the Box Tops check, which probably got deposited into the ECA account. She would like to earmark the Pyramid check as a PBIS line item for future use. The Target check will go into the general account.

There will be another school apparel sale. Fliers will be coming out soon.

Mrs. Harlow spoke about the recent upgrade in our school accountability status. We are now a “school in good standing.” The administration is very proud. The State is still working to provide the complete data used in this determination, which includes student achievement scores, violent incidents, attendance, etc. When she receives that information, she’ll distribute it to parents.

State assessments are coming up in April. The district will be sending postcards, doing robocalls, etc. to encourage parents to have students take assessments. Our large number of opt-outs last year did not affect our accountability because it was averaged over two years, but that won’t be the case this year. Going forward, our participation rate will impact accountability designation. Parents that choose to opt out will still need to send a written note. District administration will be encouraging students to take tests. There are a number of changes this year that will, hopefully, encourage fewer opt-outs (no time limits, fewer questions, and the tests no longer factor into teacher evaluations.) Melissa suggested letting students know that if they opt out, they will have to sit in the ISS or BIC rooms reading a book (because those are the only available rooms). A parent suggested that since the tests are now shorter and there are no time limits, she’ll be more likely to keep her student in the testing. The school will start distributing information soon. Mrs. Harlow emphasized that she wants the experience to be much less stressful for students this year.

Added agenda items

Becky Jackson spoke about the Eastwood Neighborhood Association (ENA) community garden project. ENA has had a small committee working on creating a community garden for awhile, and they will be building it this spring at the corner of Avon and Mosley (near Eastwood Heights, the old junior high). There will be 20 garden plots available to community members. The Huntington Garden Club (which is

part of the after school program) will have a plot. Becky distributed a flier and spoke about some gardening workshops coming up at Paine Library. The garden build will be on April 9 from 9 a.m. to noon at the community garden, and on April 23 the compost and wood chips will be delivered. Syracuse Grows oversees the 20+ community gardens in Syracuse. Melissa stated that fourth and fifth graders in the after school program can join the Garden Club, and she is hoping to carry this enrichment program through the summer. The students have started plants from seeds, and are ready to transplant to garden.

Mary Beth asked if we had received the profits from the Moe's fundraiser yet. Leeann stated that we have not, and she will continue to contact them.

After school program

Melissa reported on the after school program. The Lego program is building a model town, integrated with the Social Studies curriculum. There is a new dance teacher, and they transform Mr. Gover's room into a studio. The dance program provides shoes. The DJ group has been learning layering and spinning skills, and they DJ'd a dance over February break. There was a team building exercise as part of the February break program, which was a great experience with the combined Huntington and HW Smith students. They are adding soccer and lacrosse to junior high fitness groups, and also looking to purchase some guitars to teach to elementary and junior high students.

The school will likely partner with the 21st Century program for summer school. Summer school would be half day, with 21st Century program in the afternoon. The program will probably run for the month of July. Nothing is finalized yet regarding summer school, but information will be made available to parents as soon as possible.

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