

Huntington School PTO

February 11, 2016

Meeting Summary

Executive Board members present:

Leeann Wiess

Gia Palermo

Meghan Vitale

Keith Gatling

Five parents were in attendance.

Welcome

Leeann thanked everyone for attending in the bad weather.

PTO Board Members Report

Karate

Leeann reported that the karate program is going well. Students are preparing for a tournament right after the February break.

Box Tops

No update.

Movie Night

Meghan reported that the Family Movie Night event in January went well. Meghan estimated that there were about 60 kids in attendance, which seemed slightly fewer than last year.

Old Business

Bingo night

Leeann reported on the progress for the Bingo Night event, which is scheduled for February 26. Small school supply prizes have been ordered. Winners will get a small prize and a raffle ticket for a larger prize. Large prizes are yet to be determined, but we are looking into a few options. There was a discussion about whether there is adequate time to get the word out about the event, given that next week is break and we're not ready to send a flier home yet. No one objected to the possibility of pushing the event later, either in March or April. Family Dance is currently on the calendar for March 18. The Executive Board will look into either holding Bingo on March 18 (and pushing Family Dance to another date in April), or moving Bingo to April.

Committee participation

Leeann stated that although the Board very much appreciates volunteers, individual PTO members should be participating through established committees. Please do not act on behalf of the PTO unless you are working as part of a committee (for example, contacting other community organizations on behalf of the PTO).

New business

The Internet Safety seminar is scheduled for March 1. The Ryan/McMahon Child Advocacy Center will be presenting. Gia is making a flier, which will be distributed immediately following February break.

Next meeting is March 10.

Gertrude Hawk sale continues through February 23.

Fund requests

National Junior Honor Society has requested \$25 per student for 15 students (\$375 total) for a lunch on their annual trip to New York City in June. This is the same amount we have given them in the past. There was a discussion about this last year, with some parents questioning whether PTO general funds should be used to benefit such a small number of students. The trip is open to the eighth grade NJHS students only (although seventh graders are also part of NJHS). There were questions about other fundraising efforts by NJHS. Mr. Ballenger noted that the students worked the parking lot at the district's central office for the Harlem Globetrotters event at the Dome, but did not make much money. (They have made much more in past years, but it depends on attendance at the event. Groups are assigned events based on a lottery system.) Leeann explained that there is an educational component to the trip (she believes the students have to do research before and during the trip, and act as tour guides during the trip). Meghan made the point that the students provide a benefit to the overall school community, for example by providing child care at PTO events. A parent noted that they do other volunteer activities in the school and community as well. A parent asked how much money we have in our account, and if we can afford to give them the money they have requested. Meghan and Leeann stated that the Board needs to take a look at how much we have raised in general funds in years past and how much we have approved in fund requests, and compare those totals to this year's numbers. Before the end of the year, we also expect requests for buses and for Rocket Fest. A parent motioned to table the request until next month, when we can take a more detailed look at our finances. Keith seconded the motion to table. No one opposed. The treasurers should give a report next time including: the total amount we took in to the general fund and total amount paid out last year, and the same figures for this year to date.

Administrative reports

Mr. Ballenger reported that the building administration has spent significant time recently working on our annual school review. They have been focusing on the special education and English as a New Language (ENL) programs, as well as the continuing incorporation of Common Core standards into instruction.

Added agenda items

Meghan asked for clarification on arrival procedures for walkers, specifically when students are allowed into the cafeteria due to inclement weather. Mr. Ballenger responded that when staff are available, students are allowed into the building during very cold weather. Also, parents have been reminded about times for elementary arrival. If children are here too early, students are let in, but parents are called and reminded about the start times. A parent noted that sometimes there is a staff person at the

front door to tell students to go to the cafeteria, and sometimes there is not. Mr. Ballenger said he will look into this, and try to provide more consistency.

Meghan asked for an update on the upcoming school renovations. Mr. Ballenger noted that he and Mrs. Harlow would like to install more security cameras, and the school has been told to include this in the request for JSCB funding. The Facilities Department has indicated in the past that the largest issue is the bus routing. There was a lot of community discussion a few years ago about this. We do not know what the current plan is. The Board will contact Facilities again, and continue to request more information about how the parents and other community members will be involved in this process.

Melissa Bland (from 21st Century program) stated that there are numerous water fountains in the building that are not functioning. Mr. Ballenger suggested that teachers might have turned them off because students were not using them properly. Mr. Ballenger will check with the custodians on this issue.

Meghan mentioned the new website, which is currently at www.huntingtonschoolpto.weebly.com. This is the free version of the website. Although money was allocated in our Parent Involvement Grant application to buy the domain and upgrade to the paid version of the website, the logistics of this purchase could not be worked out (the website vendor will not take a purchase order). The Board approved the expenditure of up to \$100 from the PTO general fund to buy the huntingtonschoolpto.com domain and to upgrade to the full version of the website through Weebly.com. Meghan stated that she would like to add a blog feature to the site to highlight positive happenings at the school, but we'll need parents and staff to assist with the content. There was a concern expressed about the use of students' pictures. The PTO acknowledges this concern, and will strive to follow the district's documented procedures.

After school program report

Melissa reported that next week is the February break program. Students from H.W. Smith are also participating, but it will be held here at Huntington. The program will run Tuesday through Friday, with field trips on Friday to include the Red House, Hot 107.9, H2Fitness, and Project Adventure. Students are learning DJ-ing skills. The new session starts right after break. There will be a new dance teacher after the break (Dominique Dawkins). The program is looking for a 4th and 5th grade STEM teacher for Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Ms. Radley will be teaching a Lego class as part of the after-school program. The program is sharing some assets with the school during the day as much as the grants allow, especially technology. They are also looking to buy another cart of iPads.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30.