

## **Huntington School Parent-Teacher Organization**

Meeting Summary

March 11, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

*Meeting held on Zoom due to COVID-19*

**Board members in attendance:** Ann Yarka, President; Maureen McCarthy, Vice-President; Ramie Miller, Treasurer; Meghan Vitale, Secretary

**Administrators:** Joanne Harlow, Principal

**Office of Family Engagement:** Melissa Hidek

**Others:** Ann Marie Crescent, Contact Community Services; 4 parents/community members/teachers

### **I. Welcome**

Ann welcomed everyone.

### **II. Approval of previous minutes**

February 11 meeting minutes were available on the website. Minutes were approved with no objections.

### **III. Board member reports**

Ramie provided an overview of the February financial report. There was one debit in February, for Valentine's cookies for staff, from the administrative account. Total bank account balance stands at \$23,560.97. Ramie noted that many class balances are at \$100 or less after end-of-year purchases last school year; we'll be discussing this later on the agenda. Ann asked about the recent deposit for Athletics, and Ramie said this occurred on March 1 so will be in the next financial report. No other questions or comments.

Meghan showed the latest iteration of the intersection enhancements concept for Sunnycrest/Forest Hill Drive. We were awarded \$840 in TNT Special Projects Funding. Meghan needs to return paperwork to Tina Zagya with TNT, and continue to coordinate with the city's transportation planner to get permits. We'll likely need to get some signatures from neighbors for the road closure. She suggested planning for a Sunday morning in August a few weeks before school starts, with a rain date. We'll need volunteers to help paint. Meghan will create a more detailed, scaled drawing to use for plotting the painted areas on the pavement. She included the purchase of an athletic field striper in the proposal for painting lines.

### **IV. Presentation**

Ann Marie Crescent, Huntington's PAX Partner, provided an overview of the upcoming PAX Tools workshop. PAX helps teach students skills for self-regulation. Ann Marie is employed by Contact Community Service; they contract with the school district. She is working in Huntington this year. PAX Tools is a companion to what students are learning in school (K-4), but adapted for parents to use at home. Six sessions are scheduled over spring break. PAX means "peace, productivity, health, and happiness" and the workshops will cover strategies to help restore peace at home. Sessions are scheduled over spring break – 20 slots for each session – all virtual. They may do an in-person session later on. The session has been publicized through Talking Points message, school and PTO Facebook pages. Deadline to register is March 26. Ann Marie can be reached at [acrescent@contactsyracuse.org](mailto:acrescent@contactsyracuse.org). The program is supported through a New York State grant, from the office of addiction services and support. This program has been shown to reduce substance abuse and addiction issues;

the State of Ohio has seen great success with it. The workshops will also be a great opportunity for parents to express their own struggles with parenting. Will push out more info now that the parent survey about returning to school is done.

**V. Old business**

None.

**VI. New business**

*Additional in-person school days*

Michelle Ratchford talked about the most recent Superintendent's Parent Council meeting that she attended. There were some students from CTE programs that spoke. The Superintendent talked about the reopening plan – how many people had responded to survey, etc. Hoping to open K-5 for five days, and MS four days, HS two to start then hopefully four. Transportation is an issue. Asked parents how they felt about a variety of issues, such as two students in a seat on buses. Full virtual is still an option. Still more meetings to be held. Times will likely stay the same. This would likely start April 12, which is the first day of 4<sup>th</sup> marking period.

Mrs. Harlow reiterated what Michelle said. She does not have more details at this time. They need to acquire more desk shields, and will have 24 desks in a room at 3-foot spacing. Gym is cleared out and was being painted. There is a district meeting with principals tomorrow. They are expecting about 75% of students to be back in the building, with classes likely to be fewer than the 24 that could fit in a room. Remote classes are still large. If parents didn't respond to the survey, the district will assume they'll stay in that pod. Teachers and administrators had to call some parents and do the survey for them. Elementary classes are set, but they are still working on MS.

Ann Yarka asked about lunch in cafeteria. Mrs. Harlow said this isn't decided yet. MS won't be in school for lunch anyways. They are working out schedule for specials and recess. Elementary specials will be in their respective rooms – art, music, gym, etc. Still not sure about using the pool. Art and music are being taught virtually in the classroom now, but that will change. Staff are also working on a MS recess schedule. There are questions about special ed services – how those will be provided with more space being used in the building. District HR has said that all staff currently working remotely will have to return even if teaching fully virtually students. Meghan asked if students can bring their own reuseable lunch containers; Mrs. Harlow and Ms. Brown said that students are doing this and it has not been an issue. Meghan also asked about the classrooms that are now empty because they are being used for remote-only instruction; Mrs. Harlow said this is a special case with the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and they are still working out their plan for when more students return, but she expects all classrooms to be used for in-person students. Meghan asked about keeping more windows open, especially as the weather improves; Mrs. Harlow said she'll remind staff about this.

*Fund requests – 8<sup>th</sup> grade*

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade had submitted a fund request two days prior to this meeting for \$500 from the general fund (along with the \$100 currently in their class account) to purchase T-shirts. An email was sent to staff on Monday with all of their account balances, and noting that the PTO would have limited ability to approve general fund requests this year because the general account balance is only about \$3,000. No other classes have submitted fund requests at this time. Meghan suggested tabling a vote on this request until the April meeting so the Board has more time to consider this and, potentially, email all the staff again and provide a deadline for any additional general fund requests. It will not be possible for each grade to receive \$500 from the general fund, and we had

discussed at the February meeting that the T-shirts were not the best use of money (many of them were not picked-up last year). However, many of the shirts could be distributed in school this year. There was a discussion about whether it was appropriate to provide 8<sup>th</sup> grade with more funds than other classes, and everyone generally agreed with this: they are “graduating” and it makes sense to do something special for 8<sup>th</sup> grade. But, the Board would like to communicate with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade staff and make sure that T-shirts are the only item they will be requesting, and the best use of the money. As for other grade levels, it seems like we need to give them a deadline for requests, or just say that no general fund requests will be approved this year. The Board will discuss further, and then circle-back with Mrs. Harlow, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade staff, and other classes.

#### *Fundraising ideas*

The Board has discussed the idea of a plant sale in the fall (mums), possibly prior to school starting. We are looking for a potential supplier. Maureen has two leads: Joe’s Plant Shack and also the DEC seedling program. The Board will discuss further. If anyone else knows of a potential partner, please let the Board know. A Mother’s Day plant sale might also be a possibility.

#### *Spring photography*

Best Eye reached-out to Mrs. Harlow last week. They are scheduling spring photos with schools, including in SCSD. Everyone on the call agreed that they would like to see spring photography scheduled. It might be possible to host it in the cafeteria, so there is plenty of space. Mrs. Harlow will follow-up. There was also a discussion about an abbreviated version of a yearbook – possibly just the portraits. Best Eye had suggested a “memory book” as a possibility last year, so maybe that would be something to consider again.

#### *Other*

Ann asked about pizza gift cards, which were discussed at the last meeting. Mrs. Harlow said that Peppino’s donated a number of \$20 gift cards already.

COVID testing is schedule for Friday for students and staff. There is no goal for number of tests at this time, but it is available if families would like students tested (asymptomatic).

#### **VII. Administrative report**

Mrs. Harlow spoke earlier in the meeting about the additional instructional days.

#### **VIII. Closing**

Ann made a motion to adjourn. No objections. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

**Next meeting: April 8** (via Zoom)