

Huntington School Parent-Teacher Organization

Meeting Summary

April 8, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Meeting held on Zoom due to COVID-19

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

Administrators: Joanne Harlow, Principal

Others: 1 teacher, 1 parent, 1 community member

I. Welcome

II. Approval of previous minutes

March 11 meeting minutes were available on the website. Mrs. Harlow made a motion to approve, and Ramie seconded. Minutes were approved with no objections.

III. Board member reports

Ramie reviewed the March financial summary. The only outflow was \$129.60 from the general fund for the web site renewal (good for 2 years). The only inflow was a deposit of \$137.00 in locker money to the athletics account. Current total account balance is \$23,568.37, with \$3,429.60 in the general fund. Ramie noted that there is \$132.80 in checks pending for reimbursements for the Reading Night pizza (3rd grade) and art materials for watercolor activities.

Meghan said that she had checked the PTO mailbox that morning, and the check for Terry Cameron (art) had mistakenly been put in our box. She put the check into Ms. Cameron's mailbox, and send her a text message to let her know.

The other pending reimbursement is for Jen DeCarlo for pizzas that were given to families as prizes for Reading Night. She had submitted multiple copies of the same receipt, so we need verification of the purchases. She will be sending Ramie a copy of her credit card statement to verify.

There were no other questions/discussion about the current financial report.

There was a discussion about the remaining fund balance and end-of-year requests. At the last meeting, we had discussed sending an email to teachers asking them to submit requests before the April meeting. Meghan had drafted an email, but she did not send it yet because (a) there was so much going on in April with the break and return to school and (b) there is still time to vote on requests at the May meeting. There will only be about \$100 per class available from the general fund balance after the approval of the 8th grade request (for \$500. Discussed later in meeting). \$100 for all grades PK-7 would be \$900, plus \$500 for 8th grade would be \$1,400. Also, PTO had previously approved \$200 for plants for the intersection project, so that would bring the total to \$1,600, leaving a little over \$1,800 remaining in the general fund to start next year.

There was a discussion about possibly combining funds to do something for the whole school rather than individual grade-level requests. Meghan suggested the Skippy Ice Cream truck. Ms. Brown said that the

kindergarten team had already been discussing this. Ms. Patrick knows someone at the company and was going to look into the cost. Meghan said she thought the cost in past years had been \$2 per student, but we'll need to confirm. Mrs. Harlow expressed interest in this idea, and that it would be only for in-person students, so about 300 kids. Hershey's ice cream might be another possibility, at a lower cost, but not as "fun" as the ice cream truck. Ms. Brown will follow-up on the cost. Meghan will not email the teachers about additional fund requests until we get more information about Skippy.

Discussion returned briefly to plants for the intersection project. Meghan said that she is hoping to get plants donated, or at least be able to get them at a discount, so maybe spend less than \$200. We are also interested in a plant sale, so maybe there could be some "negotiating leverage" there. Maureen is going to look into additional options for plants: Barbagallo's, Hafner's, and the company that took over the Evergreen garden center on Thompson Road. Peggy Chase mentioned that the City often gives plants to schools from the City greenhouse. These are annuals, though, and we need potted plans for the intersection project. However, we are interested in the City's plants to possibly plant around the flagpole or the school sign. Peggy will look into it, and get back to us. Maybe we could get a few volunteers to do the planting later in the spring.

Meghan discussed the upcoming Executive Board Elections. Elections are always at the May meeting. President and Treasurer must have served on the Board for at least one year prior to their election, so the only positions open to new members are Secretary and Vice-President. Bylaws state that "nomination forms will be sent home with all students with adequate time before the May PTO meeting." Last year we could not do this because no one was in school, so we accepted email nominations directed to Melissa Hidek as our "designated volunteer." We will send paper forms this year for the in-school students; Mrs. Harlow suggested that Melissa could make these copies. (Meghan confirmed via email after the meeting that Melissa will assist with this task.) Meghan will update the nomination form. We will continue to accept emailed nominations as well (to Melissa). Nominations will be due April 30. If more than one person is nominated for a position, we'll use a Zoom poll (anonymous) to vote; we tested polling at this meeting and it worked well. The election process will also be advertised via Facebook, email, website and Talking Points.

IV. Old business

8th grade fund request

This request was tabled at the March meeting. The request is for \$500 from the general fund, to be combined with \$100 in the 8th grade account. Meghan exchanged emails with Emily Carpenter, who confirmed that the request for T-shirts will be the only request from 8th grade. Ms. Carpenter did not provide confirmation of the cost, but the \$6 per shirt estimate is in-line with last year. Mrs. Harlow has advised 8th grade to make the shirts "generic" – no date, no reference to the pandemic – so they could also be used as incentives in the future if the 8th graders do not all pick-up their shirts this year.

Ramie made a motion to approve, and Mrs. Harlow seconded. There were no objections. Motion was approved.

V. New business

A parent asked if there were any plans for the 8th graders in NJHS since they can't go on the New York City trip this year. Mrs. Harlow said that, at present, there are no plans. Also, this year's 7th graders were not inducted into NJHS last year.

VI. Administrative report

The after-school program has been focused on providing services during the day for remote and non-in-school pod kids. That will need to change starting next week. Mrs. Harlow said they will try to bring those teachers into the building during the day now to work one-on-one with students. Before school program will be starting up, probably April 19. It will open at 7:00 a.m. for elementary students and provide supervision for an hour. They need to gauge interest – maximum 15 students due to space limitations, unless they can use a different location in the building.

State assessments for grades 3 through 8 will be given this year, but are not mandated and will only be given to in-person students – no participation requirement. No accountability attached to the assessment. One day, multiple choice only, about 45 minutes. ELA is April 20 (middle school) and April 21 (elementary). All computer-based.

Mrs. Harlow said the school is ready to welcome back students 5 days per week (4 for middle school) on April 12. At capacity in elementary. Middle school families are still calling and requesting to switch to in-person, and there are a few spots left. Probably can't get on bus list for about 2 weeks if families called late. Yesterday was a staff day to make calls to families to make sure they are ready for the return to in-person on Monday.

A parent asked if the 6th grade team will be teaching only to in-person students, or teaching in-person and remote students concurrently. Mrs. Harlow said that the middle school students (6, 7, and 8) that were previously remote but are returning on the 12th have been placed into one classroom group. The former Pod A and Pod B students will be combined in the other three classrooms. Teachers will rotate; students will not. In the three Pod A/B classrooms, teachers will only teach to in-person students. For the one classroom with returning Pod D students, teachers will teach to the in-person and the remaining remote students concurrently, but there will be an additional staff member assigned to that classroom to assist with managing the concurrent teaching.

Going forward, if a student tests positive for COVID-19, only the students sitting immediately adjacent to that student will have to quarantine (not the whole classroom). This requires that students have assigned seating for the semester.

The Regents for algebra and living environment will not be required for graduation. The school will get info out to 8th grade parents.

Picture Day is scheduled for April 29 and 30. Remote families can come in the second afternoon. Everything online – no handling of order forms or money. Maggi made a schedule, and teachers have signed up. Information will be going home with students this week.

VII. Closing

Meeting adjourned at about 7:30 p.m.

Next meeting: May 13 (via Zoom)