

Huntington School Parent-Teacher Organization

Meeting Summary

October 14, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Meeting held on Zoom due to COVID-19

Attendees

Board members: Ann Yarka, President; Jennifer Schultz, Vice President; Ramie Miller, Treasurer; Meghan Vitale, Secretary

Administrators: Alison Dupree, Principal; Mary Ellen Roberson, Admin Intern

Office of Family Engagement: Holly Keating

Others: 4 parents/community members

I. Welcome

Ann welcomed everyone to the first PTO meeting of the 2021-2022 school year. Board members, administrators, and OFE staff introduced themselves; participants also had the opportunity to introduce themselves.

II. Approval of previous minutes

May 2021 minutes were available on the PTO website. Ramie motioned to approve, Meghan seconded. No objections and no abstentions; minutes were approved.

III. Board member reports

Ramie presented the September 2021 financial report. Total account balance as of September 30, 2021, was \$24,101.60. He noted that the recent mum sale spanned two months, with revenues in both August and September, but final payment to the vendor (Hafners) in September so this is why the general account shows a "loss" for September. Overall, though, the mum sale resulted in a profit of \$558.74.

Ann asked if the class account should be credited \$100 at the beginning of the year. Ramie stated that the bylaws specify that any balances over \$100 in class accounts at the end of the previous year (June 30) will be rolled over to the general account, and that money stays in the general account. Classes can replenish their accounts by participating in PTO fundraisers or by doing their own fundraisers. Meghan explained that in past years, proceeds from PTO fundraisers either went all into the general account, were split 50/50 between classes and general account, or went all to class accounts, depending on the fundraiser. Spring fundraiser (historically, Gertrude Hawk chocolates) went to the class accounts, but students have to indicate their class (grade level) on the order forms to receive credit for the class account. Mum fundraiser profits all went to general account.

IV. Old business

There was no old (tabled) business.

V. New business

There were no fund requests or other new business.

VI. Discussion (20 min.)

Meghan proposed rescheduling the November meeting from November 4 to November 18. There are two conflicts on November 4: parent-teacher conferences and a public meeting being held by Syracuse Parks Dept. at Huntington at 6:30 p.m. Everyone agreed to reschedule the November meeting. Meghan will update website and Facebook.

There was a discussion about typical PTO-run events, possible events for this year, and fundraising ideas. Ms. Dupree stated that due to the number quarantined/exposed students and teachers in the building and the community at large, it is advisable to continue with virtual meetings and that in-person events are unlikely at this point in time. The Board agreed that the November meeting would be held on Zoom, and we will re-evaluate the situation in January. Family Dance in November would typically be the first PTO event of the year, but will not be held this year. Meghan noted that typical events include: fall and spring Family Dances, winter and end-of-year semi formal dances (middle school), Family Fun Bingo night (April), and Earth Day cleanup (April). We will assess the situation for in-person events in late winter/early spring. The Board is open to ideas for virtual events, but also needs volunteers to run those. Nothing was suggested at this time.

Ann mentioned some of the fundraisers that the Board is currently working on and/or considering. This includes a World's Finest Chocolates candy bar sale, but we were hoping to be able to sell those at in-person events, so without events we are reconsidering the feasibility. We might be able to start with a small number of cases, and try to sell on Election Day. Meghan noted that the PTO historically held an Election Day Bake Sale, but that even pre-COVID we had been struggling with a very low number of donations to the sale. Peggy Chase reached out to the elections commissioner, who confirmed that Huntington will be a polling place and that the PTO would be able to set up a table to do a candy sale. The Board will discuss; we will need volunteers who can staff the table during polling hours.

Ms. Dupree mentioned that a class was selling candy bars in the guidance office at school – not sure what grade. Meghan noted that they should coordinate with PTO if they need to make a deposit to their account (use the deposit form on our website, and money needs to be counted by a Board member and a staff member).

Ann mentioned that PTO is setting up a holiday plant/wreath sale, also with Hafners. We will need to access the building to do the distribution (Meghan will fill out a building permit). Ann asked if we would be able to make copies of a flyer to publicize the plant/wreath sale. Ms. Dupree said that 900 copies (to go to all students in the building) would need to go to print shop and be mailed home. Meghan asked

about lead time, and Ms. Dupree said to plan on about two weeks. We could make small numbers of copies in the family engagement room.

Meghan spoke about the coffee sale that PTO is doing in partnership with the Henninger PTO through the Cracked Bean Roastery. Cracked Bean is selling a custom blend – MidKnight Blend – at the café on James St and on their website. Bags of beans are \$13, and \$3 will be donated to either PTO.

Holly Keating spoke about her role as the new Family Engagement Program Aide at Huntington. She is here to help families in many ways. She will also be working on the plan for Title I funds, and needs input from parents. Two parents have volunteered to be Huntington’s representatives to the Superintendent’s Parent Council. Meghan asked if we could get updates at the PTO meetings about the topics discussed at the SPC meetings; Holly said she will try to relay that information or encourage SPC reps to also participate in PTO.

VII. Administrative report (15 min.)

Ms. Dupree said she did not have anything specific to report, but was happy to answer questions.

Peggy Chase asked how COVID testing is going in the schools. She noted that a new symptomatic testing site is being set up on W Genesee Street. Ms. Dupree said that parents are asked to get their students tested if students show symptoms. If students come back to school with symptoms again, they will again be sent to the nurse and parent will be called. The nurse communicates with parents and asks for proof of a negative COVID test.

Meghan asked about the loss of instructional time for middle school with the later start of the school day that will go into effect on October 25: what is being lost in the day? Ms. Dupree said that the middle school will follow a condensed schedule rather than eliminate any block. It was decided that this would be the least disruptive way to handle the shortened day. Meghan asked if consideration was given to eliminating the “intervention” block, especially for 8th graders who are taking Regents classes and already have difficulty covering all the material required for the Regents exam and have lab minute requirements for science. Ms. Dupree responded that intervention block cannot be eliminated because that is an academic support block and students should be receiving math and ELA support in that time. Other PK-8 buildings have made similar choices to condense the schedule since they share some staff.

A parent asked about the minimum grade level for the before/after school program, i.e. can pre-K students attend? Ms. Dupree said that the after school program is for kindergarten and above; pre-K is not included because pre-K is a voluntary program. Meghan asked if students must attend the after-school program in order to attend the before-school program; Ms. Dupree will check on the requirement for this year.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.