

Huntington School Parent-Teacher Organization

Meeting Summary

November 18, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Meeting held on Zoom

Attendees

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

Administrators: Alison Dupree, Principal

Office of Family Engagement: Holly Keating

Others: 4 parents/teachers/community members

I. Welcome

Ann welcomed everyone. Board members, administrators, and OFE staff introduced themselves; participants also had the opportunity to introduce themselves.

II. Approval of previous minutes

October 2021 minutes were available on the PTO website. Ramie motioned to approve, Meghan seconded.

III. Board member reports

Ramie reviewed some details from the October financial report. Current total account balance is \$24,132.37, of which \$3,392.17 is held in the PTO general account. As is usually the case, most of the account balance is held for NJHS (over \$16,000), which they would normally use primarily for their New York City trip.

The only income in October was a single poinsettia/wreath sale, and the outflow was the Square fee associated with that. The poinsettia/wreath sale ends November 19, and that will be reflected in the November summary. To date, we have only sold about 15 each of the plants and wreaths, so not as successful as the fall mum sale; only about \$200 profit at this point. Distribution will be at school on December 4. Coffee sale with Cracked Bean Roastery is also ongoing, and we expect the first deposit from that in January (proceeds are sent quarterly).

Tax filing was due November 15, and was submitted last week.

Meghan spoke about the Sunnycrest/Forest Hill intersection. Per the request of DPW, the flowers and traffic delineator posts were removed to facilitate snow plowing. Meghan will speak with DPW about replacing them in the spring, but preliminary conversations indicated that this wouldn't be a problem since response to the project has been positive. Ms. Dupree reiterated that the project has helped with

traffic flow and safety during arrival and dismissal, and she would support replacing the planters and traffic posts in the spring once plowing is done. TNT is accepting proposals for Special Projects again, with applications due December 31. Meghan will submit another application for more durable planters, more traffic delineators, and additional paint. There is interest in extending the painted (yellow) area along the Sunnycrest Road south side curb to the school driveways. Meghan will coordinate with DPW to see if this is possible. We will wait and see how the mural holds up over the winter.

Apparel sale orders were due November 3. Ms. Archie is running this sale. Ann met with Ms. Archie to collect the cash and checks from the paper orders (although a lot of sales were online), and made that deposit (\$943). We are waiting on an invoice. Papa's Sports has indicated they will aim to deliver product to school on December 3, but they are facing the supply chain issues that the entire country (and world) is facing right now, so that could be delayed. We'll provide updates when we can.

IV. Old business

There was no old (tabled) business.

V. New business

There were no fund requests or other business that required a vote.

Ann asked Ms. Dupree if she had any items to add.

Ms. Dupree said that she has been working with SCSD Facilities to get signs for the parking lot indicating bus lanes and parent drop off areas. Hopefully those will be installed within the next 3 weeks or so.

Ms. Dupree explained that students recently took the NWEA assessment, which is replacing the old STAR tests. NWEA is responsive to students' actual level, whereas STAR was a standardized set of question. NWEA provides a Lexile score and percentile score compared nationally. Teachers have said it's a fairly accurate prediction of state test scores. A second round of NWEA tests will be given in the spring, before the State assessments.

VI. Discussion

There was a discussion about the Gertrude Hawk spring fundraiser. We really need a volunteer to help run this fundraiser; would be great to have someone "shadow" Board members this year. Proposed schedule:

- Brochures delivered to school around Feb 1, get to students by Feb 4
- Orders due March 1 (Tues after Feb break), submit to GH by March 7
- Ask for delivery by March 30 (requires 3 weeks)
- Distribute to students March 31-April 1 (Th-Fr)

There were no concerns raised about this schedule. The admin team doesn't have anything planned at the moment but they will work around this schedule. Meghan will reach-out to our representative and ask for brochures to be delivered to school by the end of January.

Ann ask about the possibility of a Hershey's ice cream fundraiser, in the cafeteria during lunches. NJHS is doing popcorn on Thursdays starting after the Thanksgiving Break, and Sunshine Committee is already selling candy on Fridays, so Mon-Wed might be possible for ice cream. Volunteers would be needed to staff the sale and handle money during lunches. Meghan suggested that Ann contact Ms. Stroman (5th grade), since she has also mentioned this fundraiser in the past.

VII. Office of Family Engagement report

Holly Keating presented some ideas for the School Parent and Family Involvement Plan. Huntington will receive \$6,000 in Title I funds, which can be used for events for families, although every event needs to have an educational component. \$1,000 can be used to buy food. There will be a meeting to review the final proposed plan; this is tentatively scheduled for December 2. The proposal at the moment includes:

- Curriculum night in January 2022. One teacher from each grade to host a night for families to understand curriculum, how they can support student's learning at home. Virtual.
- Paint Night – Sip of Color Syracuse will host. Virtual. Supplies will either be delivered to home or picked up at school by parents. Academic, behavior, and attendance data to be presented in the middle of the event. Geared more towards parents. January or February.
- Virtual Family Reading Night, March 2022. Families will have a chance to win books. One teacher from each grade will host a Zoom meeting in which families share and read books with each other.
- Learn How to Bake an Apple Pie, May 2022. Mrs. Dyer's 2nd grade class will be learning about and planting apple trees in the spring – or adopting a tree – and culinary teacher from ITC will do a virtual baking class for families. Ingredients will be supplied for families or have families pick up at school. (Original plan had been to plant a tree, but SCSD Facilities said this could not be done on school property because of maintenance concerns.)

A parent asked why Sip of Color would be hired for the paint night instead of utilizing our Huntington art teachers. Holly responded that the person that runs Sip of Color is an approved vendor for SCSD and works with the after school program. It was also pointed out that teachers would need to be paid for extension of service if they participate. There was a brief discussion about whether families would be more likely to participate if it's a teacher they know, or if there is a novelty of having someone else. The idea is to make it more of an "experience." This event was intended to be more for parents, although Ms. Dupree said they had initially envisioned it as in-person, with parents in one space and some kids' activities in another, but then they reconsidered this as a virtual event. However, she just received guidance last week that in-person events are allowed, so maybe this could be reconsidered again. Parents suggested that hybrid events would be ideal, as there is a benefit to in-person events but also want to include people who do not feel comfortable at events right now.

VIII. Administrative report

Meghan asked a few questions that the Board had previously discussed, and Ms. Dupree offered responses.

- How is the shortened school day working out for middle school? Any update from the district regarding hiring more bus drivers, or if/when the middle school start time will be moved earlier again?

District is still looking to hire additional drivers. No information on changing the middle school start time. Middle school teachers still have to report to school by 8:15 a.m., and are using the time that would have been first block for various activities including professional development, team meetings, and student data review.

- Any guidance from the district related to modifying masking or distancing requirements as younger students get vaccinated?

No guidance on this. All masking and distancing requirements remain in place. (This was also discussed on a recent CoVideo chat.)

- Is Talking Points still the preferred channel for parent-teacher communication? Some parents have indicated they are hearing a lot less through Talking Points this year than last year. Is there a move away from TP now?

Yes, teachers are still using Talking Points. Parents are always welcome to reach-out directly to teachers if they feel they are missing out on information.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.