

SJLES PTA MEETING MINUTES

Date & location: Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at 8:00pm, Zoom

In attendance: (15) Meg Halvorsen, Mary Brown, Jane Fisher, Meg Ballman, Tara Scully, Dan Notari, Emily Vainieri, Linda Ferguson, Kathy Etheridge, Sandi Cresswell, Maria Laskey, Tiffany Burns, Chelsea Berube, Shelly Post, Martin Brooks

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 4, at 8:00pm

AGENDA:

1. Welcome
2. Monthly Updates
3. New Items
4. Open Positions for Next Year's Board
5. PTACHC Representative's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Principal's Report
8. Q&A
9. Adjournment

MINUTES:

1. Welcome: Meg Halvorsen, PTA President, welcomed attendees to the meeting.
2. Monthly Updates:
 - a. Thank you to Emily Vainieri and Sandi Cresswell for coordinating a very successful Book Fair! Students had a wonderful time, and one even remarked, "This is the best day of my life!"
 - b. The Book Fair raised \$2,718 for the school, and \$2,718 for the PTA, for a total of \$5,436!
 - c. Thank you to all of the volunteers who have been contributing in a variety of ways: Kyle for fixing broken furniture in the staff lounge; Christine Denherder for dressing up as mascot Harry Spotter; Angie Kramer for maintaining the school marquee, Mary Brown and Jane Fisher for assisting with the health screenings; And a multitude of volunteers who have helped Ms. Peddicord in the Art Room with prep for the art show.
 - d. The Bagel Bin fundraiser was a success, bringing in \$368 to the PTA.
 - e. 245 Bingo tickets have been sold so far! We are glad to be able to expand the number of attendees thanks to the outdoor setting.
3. New Items:
 - a. Staff Appreciation, May 2-May 6. Staff will be teleworking Monday 5/2.
 - b. Recycling bins: 46 bins are being delivered, for each room of the school!

- c. Walk/Bike to School Day - Wednesday, May 4
 - d. Stuffed animal donations: Meg H. was asked by a community member if there is an organization that will accept these donations, but didn't know the answer. Jane commented that she had seen some information on NextDoor and will share. Tara added that Frisky's Animal Rescue will often take them.
 - e. PTACHC Scholarship program donation: PTAs have the opportunity to donate any amount toward these scholarships for graduating students. There is no data in our files on past donations. This item is not currently in the PTA budget. It will be discussed during budget planning and considered for 2022-2023.
4. Open Positions for Next Year's Board:
- a. Vice President 1. This position provides assistance where needed.
 - b. Treasurer. This position would have the opportunity to train with current Treasurer Kathy Etheridge, who has been cleaning up documentation and preparing for a smooth transition. Meg H. thanked Kathy for all of her hard work behind the scenes
 - c. PTACHC Representative 2. This position will have a chance to work with PTACHC Rep 1, Tiffany Burns. Attends PTACHC meetings, which are held on the first Monday of the month.
 - d. Position descriptions are on the website, and updates may be made to those soon.
 - e. It is urgent that the PTA find a new Treasurer, as the organization cannot exist without one.
 - f. Meg B to advertise for these positions in the next PTA Newsletter.
5. PTACHC Updates, Tiffany Burns, PTACHC Representative 1
- a. March Recap: Tiffany submitted notes to Meg Halvorsen and Meg Ballman last month
 - b. April Updates: It is budget season and parents need to understand how the school budget works.
 - c. The superintendent makes the budget, which we can think of like a wish list of every single item the school district wants and needs. The budget goes to the County Executive who can revise the budget, but cannot add a single dollar to it. That is why the superintendent needs to ask. The budget moves from the County Executive to the County Council, which holds public hearings and offers a chance for parents to advocate for these funds.
 - d. The Blueprint Mandate is requiring many changes that are not currently funded, e.g., pre-K programs. The district will need building capacity, salaries, and funding to provide these.
 - e. Parental advocacy is important. There are opportunities for parents to share personal testimonies and input at these public hearings.
 - f. We are in an election cycle and also a redistricting event. SJLES PTA can partner with other school PTAs to invite local candidates for Q&A sessions and learn what they are planning to do for schools.
—Tiffany was disconnected. Continued later in the meeting when she returns.
6. Treasurer's Report: Kathy Etheridge, PTA Treasurer

- a. We received a donation this month
 - b. We received \$110 from Amazon Smile. Please keep it up, this helps!
 - c. We paid the inflatable deposit.
 - d. We have Book Fair income noted, but we haven't yet paid Scholastic out of these funds yet, so this number is higher than what Meg H. reported.
 - e. Can we sell Spirit Wear? Yes, let's consider Bingo Night. Probably not May Day.
7. Principal's Report: Dan Notari
- a. Thank you to all the volunteers who are showing up to fix things, help out, organize the lost and found, help with the art room. Thank you for the Book Fair, and for bringing out the mascot. Kids love seeing the mascot on Fridays!
 - b. PBIS Buddy Bingo was held recently. Grades K and 3, 1st and 4th, and 2nd and 5th get together and build a sense of community across the school. Benefits of this were shared with parents in an email. Next Buddy event will be Earth Day.
 - c. New Initiatives ahead:
 - i. Strategizing with Chelsea Berube and other admin interns on ways to bring the kids together and what programs will look like next year.
 - ii. Discussing changes to the 3 R's. The kids have mastered these, and there are other options that could better serve the school. A new list of proposed adjectives will be shared with staff and parents for feedback, to choose what best fits who we are as a school, the kids who are in it, and what we want them to aspire to.
 - iii. New survey released to parents to help inform the school on areas of improvement. Additional surveys coming soon.
 - d. Looking ahead to Kindergarten and 5th Grade closing ceremonies
8. Q&A
- a. What is the context behind the "Finish Strong" talks that upper grades have received? Kathy and Shelly shared feedback that their kids felt this was a reprimand, and wanted to know how to frame it to their children. Tara shared that her child's takeaway was about bullying prevention. Principal explained it is a proactive step to refresh the kids about school expectations. Typically around this time there is an uptick in disciplinary situations at the school.
 - b. The school community may need education about the difference between bullying and conflict. Kids are going to have conflict at school. They're going to have it with parents and siblings. Just as people have conflict in the workplace.
 - c. Discipline at school comes in the form of teaching. "Jaguar Reflection" gives the child a chance to think about their behavior and how it affects others and what can be done differently. Vs. Office referral when the student has a conversation about the rules at school and why these rules exist.
 - d. The school is looking at what type of evening events can be held next year to help frame some of these items. i.e. , nights about the curriculum, SEL, math nights, PBIS nights, etc, to inform parents on key topics.
 - e. Always send feedback to Mr. Notari

- f. Discussion with Ms. Berube: Were grade level volunteers helpful? Yes, but COVID restricted our ability to utilize them. The approach is likely to change next year. Ms. Berube will seek input from team leads.
 - g. Can we auction off tickets for Kindergarten and 5th Grade graduations? Yes, 2 sets of 2 tickets. These celebrations are likely to be limited to parents only due to the fire code in the room.
 - h. Can we offer Principal for the Day in the auction? Yes, but let's do 1 "Principal for the A.M.," "Principal for the P.M.," "Asst Principal for A.M.," "Asst Principal for P.M."
 - i. Can we have access to the bathrooms for Bingo Night? It depends on what the reservation says and whether a custodian is available. Meg H. to check and Principal to check with Ms. Wolfrey to be sure the school is following the policy correctly.
9. PTACHC report continued – Tiffany Burns
- a. High School #13 is coming, and two additional new schools. There is going to be a redistricting event. There is hope that only feeder schools would be affected, but PTACHC is expecting a ripple effect throughout the county.
 - b. Survey released called HoCo By Design. It is important for parents to take time to carefully fill this out. School expenses continued to rise and revenue doesn't keep pace. We cannot exempt developers from paying to help fund schools.
 - c. Update: We can now have food indoors at events now that the mask mandate is no longer in effect.
10. Additional Questions/Discussion
- a. May Day is May 21; Rain Date is June 4. The ban on food indoors was a big factor in deciding to have a rain date. Now if it rains on both days, we can have food inside.
 - b. Kathy: Can the silent auction be held in the gym? Yes, exploring the possibilities. This would allow more space and make it less crowded. Work with Ms. Carty and Mr. Frantz.
 - c. Tara: Can the PTA help with the expectations refresh by hosting a 1-2-3 Magic seminar or other? Principal: Yes, assess over the summer what types of programs you would like to see. All options are currently on the table.
 - d. Tiffany: We should consider more parent workshops as part of our mission. Let's get parent experts involved and see how can host seminars in the future. Kathy agrees. This item to be added to the summer planning agenda.
11. Adjournment: Meg Halvorsen adjourned the meeting. Members may stay on to discuss Bingo Night and May Day plans after the meeting.