

SJLES PTA MEETING MINUTES

Date & location: Wednesday, September 1 at 8:00pm, Zoom

In attendance: (21) Meg Halvorsen, Meg Ballman, Jenna Groman, Ashley Callaway, Caroline Chisholm, Emily Vainieri, Mary Brown, Maria Laskey, Linda Ferguson, Sandi Cresswell, Jane Fisher, Dan Notari, Sarah Day, Tiffany Burns, Kathy Etheridge, Siva Kumari Burada, Tara Scully, Sara Goggin, Dina Zhuravel, Kyung Oh, Seungho Park

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 6 at 8:00pm, Zoom

AGENDA:

1. Introduction
2. Budget Review and Vote
3. Walking Wednesday
4. PTACHC Update
5. Principal Report
6. Adjournment

MINUTES:

1. Introduction: Meg Halvorsen, President, opened the meeting with a welcome to all attendees, and all attendees introduced themselves. Meg H. provided an overview of what the PTA does at SJLES, and reviewed the calendar of events planned for the year. She noted that PTA meetings will continue to be held the first Wednesday of each month at 8pm; meetings will continue to be held on Zoom for the foreseeable future. She shared the current Bylaws, which includes details on each job, rules, and guidelines. She noted that the PTA has already been busy for this school year, holding popsicle playdates for students and a welcome back breakfast for staff; other activities are currently being planned including Original Works and Paint Nights. To-date, we have brought in \$800 in PTA memberships and sold \$1,400 of spiritwear. Students will receive the full PTA calendar, membership information, and the Paint Night flier this week. Meg shared two goals for tonight, in addition to general discussion and planning: a vote to approve the budget and decision regarding Walking Wednesday.
2. Budget Review and Vote: Meg H. presented the budget that Kathy Etheridge, Treasurer, prepared and answered questions.
 - a. Due to the current situation with the Free State PTA, there are no current MD PTA dues. However these are being left in the budget under the assumption that this will get resolved.
 - b. A fridge was requested by teachers for a pumping room. This request was pushed to HR, but if they are not able to provide, our budget will allow for this.
 - c. Expenses are higher than income due to both uncertainty in event planning and cautious planning. Historically May Day is the biggest fundraiser, and it hasn't

been held in 2 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have added early fundraisers (paint nights, movie night) to try to help balance this, and we are actively working to cut down expenses where we can.

- d. Field Day is a high expense - historically all students have received t-shirts. We can either purchase reusable soccer pennies (to cut out of the budget in future years) or skip this altogether. Mr. Notari and several attendees noted that they don't see other schools providing shirts and they are never worn again - they can just tell grades what colors to wear. Emily shared that Waverly PTA gives out bookmarks with a list of activities that students can check off - this may be a significantly cheaper alternative.
- e. Spiritwear is only included in income, because we intend to profit, but both expenses and income are tracked.
- f. Expense lines for Related Arts, Team projects, Student Access, etc. are team-based budgets to support needs.

Following discussion, Emily Vainieri moved to approve the budget and Sandi Cresswell seconded. All 'ayes' were recorded and the budget was approved.

- 3. Walking Wednesday: Meg H. provided an overview of this activity that was traditionally planned by the PTA to encourage physical activity during recess. However she noted that it takes a lot of volunteers, during the work-day, and is weather-dependent, and questioned whether this is an activity the PTA wants to continue. Jane noted that some of those that are normally available to volunteer may already be volunteering for outdoor lunch - this is a more important use of resources. Mr. Notari shared that it was hard to plan due to uncertainty regarding the number of volunteers. All attendees agreed that we should focus available volunteering resources to help execute outdoor lunch, and we can revisit in the future should needs change.
- 4. PTACHC Update: Tiffany Burns, PTACHC Representative, shared an update from Monday's PTACHC meeting. Dr. Martirano was present to discuss what the school year would look like and stressed his belief that virtual would only be a last resort. He is working with medical scientists to increase safety in every way possible, including air filters, UV lights in cafeterias, etc. Tiffany also noted that there are upcoming county meetings that will impact redistricting and overcrowding - these are legislative issues, but we can decide if we want to have a public position.
- 5. Principal's Report: Mr. Notari provided an update on the start of school, sharing how wonderful it is to have staff and students back together. He recognized the concerns that everyone has regarding the rising cases of COVID-19 in the community, but praised the staff that are taking care of the children and staying late to make sure everything is done. He shared that Back to School Night will be held concurrently in-person and virtual. The school is back to normalized instruction - teaching looks the same, but there are nuances such as plexiglass in the cafeterias and double transportation runs. Outdoor lunch and the car loop have been challenges, but they are working on it. The students have been happy to be back and have fallen back into old expectations and routines

without issue. The staff really appreciated the welcome back breakfast, and they are well stocked with k-cups and sugars, but creamers would be appreciated - the PTA will provide these. Mr. Notari then generously took the time to answer many questions, sharing the following feedback:

- g. Outdoor lunches: Outdoor lunches are currently following recess weather guidelines - up to 95 degrees or down to 20. They will adjust as needed. The school is accommodating all outdoor lunch requests, although some students may need to bring towels to sit on. They cannot accept tent donations due to liability issues. They will be asking for final decisions on lunch seating soon and will then look at the volunteers to help staff outdoor lunches. The PTA offered to help organize these volunteers.
 - h. Buses: It generally takes about 2 weeks to balance/manage routes, so please be patient as they work through the challenges. They will adjust routes and it will not continue being this late. Switching students to being picked up causes other challenges with road backups. Attendees noted that the text messages about buses have been really helpful.
 - i. They are not doing any in-class snacks so that masks stay on in the classroom, even for grades with late lunches. They will reevaluate this if needed.
 - j. The CARES Act money does not go directly to the school, but they do receive items from it - tents, extra staff, laptops, evening school tutoring, etc. Tiffany B. shared that Dr. Martirano said the money is being used for one-time expenses, mainly to keep the schools safe (e.g. filters, tents, laptops, etc).
 - k. The school is receiving new guidance on what will happen for students who need to quarantine, and is waiting for central messaging.
 - l. Laptops aren't being used much yet, but grades 2-5 will be using them regularly. This will be discussed more at the back-to-school night.
6. Adjournment: Meg H. shared that she will send out a Sign-Up Genius to volunteer for specific things - both helping at events and flexible volunteering (e.g. preparing paint canvases at home). Future meetings will be organized the general PTA meeting for big-picture updates and discussions, and then attendees will be invited to remain after the meeting for detailed planning for specific events - this will help streamline the meetings and allow people to stay online only as long as needed. She then closed the meeting.