

SJLES PTA MEETING MINUTES

Date & location: Wednesday, October 12 at 8:00pm, Zoom

In attendance (34): Candace Knott, Jenna Groman, Shannon Kennedy, Natalie Blake, Sandi Cresswell, Nina Philipsen, Meg Halvorsen, Dan Notari, Emily Vainieri, Chelsea McWatters, Angie Kramer, Brittany Gutierrez, Linda Ferguson, Sara Goggin, Mary Brown, Meg Ballman, Kathy Etheridge, Dr. Chao Wu, Tiffany Burns, Pey Lian Lim, Jane Fisher, Olabisi Keshinro, Karen Wilson Chinedu Agbakwuru, Chidimma Agbakwuru, Amy Goldsmith, Carsten Vala, Ashwini Anjanappa, Liz Petrella, Corinne Plank, Tara Scully, Ashley Callaway, Karen Wilson, Vanessa Zawodny

Next Meeting: November 9, 2022, time TBD

AGENDA:

1. Welcome
2. Board of Education Update
3. Monthly Updates
4. Current / Upcoming Activities
5. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee
6. Education Enrichment Grant Program
7. Treasurer's Report
8. PTACHC Update
9. Gifted and Talented Advisory Council (GTAC) Parent Representative
10. Principal's Update
11. Adjournment

Minutes:

1. Welcome: Meg Halvorsen, PTA President, opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
2. Board of Education Update:
 - a. Dr. Chao Wu joined the PTA meeting as our Board of Education (BOE) Cluster Representative to provide updates from recent BOE discussions. Meg Halvorsen reminded attendees that the PTA is a nonpartisan organization and not a political platform for any candidates. He shared current plans for new schools and school renovations, including High School 13, and urged attendees to look at the proposals and share feedback with the Board. He also discussed the proposal to switch school start time.
 - b. Q&A:

Q: Can you provide an overview of the BOE at-large seat and how this is different from other board members?

A: There are 7 BOE members and 5 council districts. Each district elects one board member, and the remaining 2 board members are elected county-wide - these are the at-large seats.

3. Monthly Updates:

- a. Back to School Night was a lot of fun, and it was great to see the community together again! Thank you to Linda and Corinne for organizing the 5th grade bake sale.
- b. The first restaurant night at Jimmy John's was a success - thank you, Tara!
- c. The first online Spirit Wear sale went great - thank you to Linda for organizing! We sold 314 items - the tie-dye was most popular. Everything will be at school by the end of October and will go home with students. We still have some old inventory as well that will be sold at the Turkey Trot.
- d. We have met our goal for membership - 50% of teachers and 30% of families. Thanks to Emily for managing!
- e. Campus Enhancements began this past weekend with weeding and cleaning. More will be done on the 29th to thin out overgrowth. Thanks to Kathy for all your work!
- f. Today was Walk to School Day - thank you Sayli and Liz for organizing!
- g. We need Silent Auction solicitors for May Day - contact Kathy to help. *Tara and Meg volunteered.*
- h. Poll results are in - people preferred 8pm virtual meetings vs. 6:30 at SJLES. We'll make sure to have opportunities to connect in person.

4. Current / Upcoming Activities:

- a. The coat drive is happening until October 25 - thank you Christine! It is being done earlier this year, so kids have coats as soon as it gets cold.
- b. Original Works is in-progress - thank you Jane and Mary! Packets with completed artwork and ordering information will be sent home next week.
- c. Picture day is on Friday - order forms and instructions were sent home.
- d. The first quarter assembly is coming up. It will be a Miss Electricity performance by HCC.
- e. The food drive will run October 25 - November 7.
- f. Turkey Trot is November 13 (rain date November 20).
- g. The Toy Drive will be done in November and support Toys for Tots Baltimore. There will be both a box at school to collect toys and an Amazon wishlist.
- h. Trunk or Treat is coming! Thank you to Vanessa, Brittany and Karen for organizing. There are 15 cars signed up and the 5th grade is going to do pumpkin painting as a fundraiser.

5. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

- a. Ms. Blake and Ms. Kennedy presented a proposal from SJLES' DEI Committee, made up of 9 committee members.
- b. The committee wants to implement a Diversify Our Hallways Project, to make the school be more representative of the populations and cultures of the school. If the students see themselves in the halls, they will have a sense of belonging and community.

- c. The DEI Committee is looking for a partnership with the PTA, to help move ideas to reality. The Committee will follow-up with the PTA when there are specific asks. *Jane volunteered to help.*
 - i. Suggestion: 5th Grade Seminar is doing Unheard Perspectives, which may be an opportunity for student input.
- 6. Education Enrichment Grant Program
 - a. This new program was created to help connect the PTA budget to programs that will enrich and enhance curriculum and students' educational experiences, support teachers and staff in creative and innovative thinking, and provide a critical link between the PTA and staff. Thank you to Emily for developing this new program!
 - b. The program will be open to all teachers and staff to apply, and is in addition to regular instructional support reimbursements. It is intended to be broad and open-ended - we want to explore what is needed to inform future decision-making.
 - c. The fall application cycle has \$3,200 available. A simple application will be due November 11 and awardees will be notified November 28. We may also have a spring cycle if funding allows.
 - d. Q&A:
 - Q: Should there be a reflection on impact and information / photos that are returned to the PTA?
 - A: Yes - we plan to make this optional, but would like this information.
- 7. Treasurer Report
 - a. We continue to be in a strong cash position and are well-positioned to continue to support planned activities.
 - b. In the past quarter the PTA supported motor room improvements, provided grade level and teacher support, supported the Back to School picnic and playdates, held a back to school breakfast for teachers and staff, provided supplies to the staff breakroom, and refreshed the planters in front of the school.
 - c. We have met membership goals, and have also had income from spiritwear, last year's yearbook, and restaurant night.
- 8. PTACHC Update:
 - a. Tiffany shared this month's PTACHC Update. She and Nina have created a [Google doc](#) to track updates from PTACHC meetings.
 - b. In this month's meeting there was a Town Hall with the BOE candidates, a presentation from Dr. Walker on county program innovation and Dr. Lu shared the priority list for capital expenditures (renovations / new infrastructure).
 - c. We should make sure we are following news, staying active, and advocating for our students.
- 9. Gifted and Talented Advisory Council (GTAC) Parent Representative
 - a. The GTAC has reached out and is looking for at least 1 parent representative. More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).
 - b. Responsibilities include attending quarterly meetings, share updates at PTA meetings, and support future events.

- c. SJLES has not had a GTAC parent representative for some time. We have 2.5 GT teachers and want parent involvement.
- d. *Sandi and Carsten volunteered.*

10. Principal's Update:

- a. Mr. Notari thanked the PTA for all the planning, collaboration and cooperation.
- b. The SJLES staff is amazing - lots of energy from returning staff and the new staff are bringing fresh perspectives and new ideas.
- c. He is really proud of the state of the instructional program. There is a lot of collaborative planning and alignment between teams. They will continue to monitor progress, access, and opportunity. MAP data is coming in now, and will be used to determine needed interventions. Our reading specialist team has grown since last year (1.5 vs 1.0 last year).
- d. A lot of enrichment is being done. GT reaches all grades (K-5) through seminars, primary talent development lessons, and more.
- e. Dr. Martirano spoke at the principal's meeting about monitoring progress and building capacity to better understand and use available data.
- f. Everyone should pay attention to school start times - it is currently proposed to be 30 minutes later next year.
- g. Q&A:
 - Q: What's your recommendation for how to best advocate?
 - A: Send feedback to the BOE through our cluster representative. The PTA cannot have a stance - it must be supported by the full membership. But someone can send a petition (not on behalf of the PTA) or create a form letter to share to those interested

11. Adjournment: Meg Halvorsen summarized feedback and adjourned the meeting.