

## Meeting Minutes -- Hartwood PTO General Meeting, Sept. 17, 2018

- I. **Welcome** – Bill Sparks welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for their attendance. Ashley Nester was introduced to provide curriculum updates.
  
- II. **Elementary Curriculum Updates** – Ashley Nester shared 4 core values that guide curriculum development across FCASD: *Teacher Leadership* – multiple curriculum committees across the district, with many teachers representing Hartwood; *Investing in People* – Professional development so that elementary teachers are moving in a similar direction with professional development; *Comprehensive Resource Reviews* – extensive pilots with new resources monitored to see how teacher and students are doing; *Communications* – inclusive of all stakeholder groups including parents.
  - a. English Language Arts Updates:
    - i. Curriculum guided by cross-district committee of approx. 30 teachers.
    - ii. Journeys- 1 year complete. Teachers were thanked and congratulated for adoption of a new program with related testing scores going up. Teachers are happy with materials.
    - iii. Foundations – final stage of the system being implemented, reaching up to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level to ensure no child behind. Signs of achievement are reported to be evident.
  - b. Math:
    - i. Elementary Math Committee – includes 30 teachers across the district, established to ensure staff was equipped to handle PA Common Core changes and new standards for student work as part of those changes. Accomplishments have included: establishment of unit and lesson plans aligned to PA Core State Standards, procedural fluency and conceptual understanding, implementation of math tasks that promoted reasoning and problem solving.
    - ii. Eureka Math Update: 9 different programs were reviewed by the Math Committee to meet the needs of new PA Core State Standard's. Eureka was selected after full review by committee across district. "Connects Math to the Real World."
    - iii. Oct 29 and Jan 31 – Math Parent Nights are being organized on these dates to help parents get up to speed on Eureka math. More information can be found on the district website and flyers will be sent home.
  - c. STEAM:

- i. Science. Tech. Engineering. Arts. Math. Integrated curriculum. Rooted and aligned to PA Science Standards. Curricular Components include: National Geographic Teacher Edition, Student Workbook, Inquiry Bundle, Mobile Fab Labs (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade), Digital Content, Small Labs
- ii. Spanish Immersion pilot program. Ashley encouraged everyone to attend one of the published information sessions (flyers distributed and information posted on FCASD website). This K class will be first class of 1<sup>st</sup> graders to participate. Informational Updates Oct and Dec.

### **III. Dr. Fischbaugh General Updates**

- a. Great start to the school year. Smooth transitions and start to new year. Students are doing a terrific job with kindness and collaboration.
- b. Bill Sparks thanked Dr. Fischbaugh for her time and energy. Encouraged PTO members to share thoughts and questions for her directly or through the PTO board.

### **IV. Bill Spark's Welcome**

- a. Bill thanked everyone for joining. Encouraged everyone to continue their attendance at future PTO meetings.
- b. Bill shared his objectives for the year, acknowledging that he is relying on the PTO general membership and intends to do things differently this year. He encouraged everyone to reach out to him as the year progresses, stressing that differences of opinion may exist but the intention is always to come to a mutual and respectful understanding on why those differences exist.
  - i. 3 objectives:
    1. Think differently -- about the role and responsibilities of the PTO and members' roles. The needs of the school are different now than what they have historically been, and the energy that we exude as a PTO needs to change accordingly.
    2. Involvement – we need more involvement from everyone, not just financial resources; time and involvement is needed.
    3. Increase the voting membership – number of members and financial support raised.

### **V. Introductions**

- a. All board members and HPTO members in attendance introduced themselves.
- b. 37 people were in attendance, including 6 board members.

### **VI. 2018-2019 Budget Proposal and Membership Vote**

- a. Carolyn Chiquelin, Treasurer, shared copies of the proposed 2018-2019 HPTO operating budget, balanced to break even. 2017-2018 HPTO actuals, with profit

and loss detail, were also shared. Anyone is welcome to review financials at any time. Contact Carolyn.

- b. Carolyn led a changed-based review of the 2018-2019 budget, with focus on proposed changes including the following:
  - i. **Dine and Donate** – increased to cover more marketing and communication and also more and new partnerships.
  - ii. **Holiday Crafts** – last year’s test pilot was a success and drew more interested students than could be accepted based on limited supplies. Budget increased to include more participants.
  - iii. **Magnificent Mondays** –budget increased to cover existing and new partnerships under consideration as well as increased student interest.
  - iv. **Parent Night Out** – budget cut based on significance of expense (\$7,135) and fact that the event was not a successful fundraiser in 2017, netting a \$6,503.66 profit for a total loss of \$631. Board expressed intentions to maintain Adult Night Out as a self-funded event (break even event—all costs covered by tickets sold), not a PTO sponsored / funded event. Continued discussion and planning was encouraged and the Parent Night Out committee was thanked for their hard work, dedication and efforts.
  - v. **Art Show** – budget increase due to need for new materials
  - vi. **Holiday Parties** – budget increased due to increased student enrollment in recent years
  - vii. **Family Movie Night** – budget increase to cover movie license renewal
  - viii. **Summer Reading Program** – budget increase to cover new component to program, the school-wide “Read Out” incentive
  - ix. Indoor / Outdoor Recess Materials – budget increased to cover increase in items needed to be replaced.
  - x. **Staff Appreciation 1<sup>st</sup> Day Gift Baskets and Staff Appreciation Pizza Party** were cut in order to balance budget. Staff Appreciation Luncheon remains as planned event and expense in the 2018-2019 budget.
- c. Bill and Carolyn noted that, overall, the board was challenged to balance the budget based on increased needs, costs and trends (decreases) in fundraising results. If 2018-2019 fundraising fails to meet these budgets, then other sponsored events planned for 2018-2019 may need to be cut due to lack of funding. Carolyn reminded everyone that this is the proposed 2018-2019 just to break even.
- d. Member concerns were expressed over several budget changes, with board responses:
  - i. **Adult Night Out** - Lynn Shurina, chairperson, acknowledged 2017 event losses and stressed that the loss was due, in large part, to the increased cost of the larger venue. She shared her opinion that parents are being penalized for the budget cut for this event, and felt that the board needs

to share responsibility for the decision to move the event to a new location based on a membership survey last year.

1. Bill Stressed that he personally, as well as the board, are interested in parents being social. The decision in venue change in 2017 was based on survey responses and prioritization PTO programs that benefit students.
  2. Board members noted that the budget cut will not eliminate the event from happening. The event can happen as a self-funded, break even event vs. a PTO sponsored fundraiser. There is time between now and the spring to re-approach.
  3. Board members stressed a guiding criteria for balancing the budget—what programs impact students directly, the most? The board did not want to cut critical school support like providing buses for field trips, t-shirts for field trips, or other events and activities that are popular among students. These were priorities over Adult Night Out which has no direct student benefit and carries a significant expense.
  4. Kristen emphasized that we are doing poorly with fundraising. As costs increase across the board, we have to manage the budget expenses.
  5. Gwenn Gdovichin questioned why budget decisions weren't raised sooner. Why are we just looking at the budget now? Credited Lynn for the baskets and work that she does for the event. Criticized the board for lack of respect and concern for membership opinion.
  6. Melissa Kwiatkowski stressed that the expense, not just the 2017 loss of \$600, needs to be considered. We have time until the spring to re-evaluate. We love to have the event, the WHY behind it, why do we do it. It's a tweak from last year.
  7. Bill Sparks reminded everyone that the budget isn't approved as is, then the dollars will have to be cut from other activities. That's why this line item was reduced to where it is.
  8. Amanda Kovach asked if we can attribute funds to Adult Night Out if additional funds become available. Board confirmed that if fundraising exceeds plan, or other funds become available, we can attribute funds to the event.
- ii. **Membership and "Dues"** – Question was raised about costs for membership and voting rights, as well as the reason for the increase to \$20.
1. Board clarified that bi-laws state that you have to pay to be a voting member or to chair a committee, but all parents are

welcome to join the PTO for events, meetings and general volunteering.

2. Reason for the increase from \$10 per membership to \$20 per voting member / parent had to do with cost increases and budget required to get the budget to a break-even point. We are the only PTO in the whole district to provide buses to field trips, t-shirts for field trips. Everything costs money.
  - iii. **New Fundraisers**– Question was asked about new fundraisers and board was criticized for not establishing new options to help drive fundraising.
    1. Carolyn noted that Holiday Crafting was done as a small test in 2017 and is being fully launched as a new fundraiser in 2018.
    2. Board welcomed fundraising ideas from all PTO members.
  - iv. **Voting Rights and Absentee Ballots** – Bi-laws were reviewed related to requirement to be a paid member at the time of voting, as well as absentee voting. Article 7E was cited, which states... “An absentee ballot shall be accepted if it is delivered to a board member at least 48hours prior to the vote...”
    1. Lynn Shurina challenged a closer review of bylaws and clarification of types of votes that relate to these terms- for all votes or board positions only?
    2. Bill Spark and Rick Sumrok moved to allow all votes from members in attendance, paid members or not.
- e. **Membership Vote:**
- i. Bill asked for membership vote on the proposed budget in order to proceed with all PTO events upcoming, specifically Fall Festival. It was noted that failure to approve would require the board to revisit the proposed budget, with potential risk of near term expenses being placed on hold pending budget approval.
  - ii. Vote on Proposed 2018-2019 Budget – anonymous voting was conducted through paper ballots. Announcement of results occurred at the end of the meeting.
  - iii. Proposed Budget passed with necessary 2/3 majority:
    1. Yes / In Favor – 25 votes
    2. No – 10 votes
    3. Abstain / No Vote – 2 votes

## VII. **First Day of School Decorations**

- a. Board thanked Nikki Rosswog and Karina Chavez for their work this year
- b. Nikki shared intentions to propose some changes for 2019-2020 school year that could save costs through different vendor partnerships.

**VIII. Summer Reading Challenge**

- a. Carolyn reported on behalf of Amy Muchnok and Kristen Matthews, noting change to this year's program with the addition of the Read Out reward. Hartwood Students did surpass the Read Out goals so Read Out will be scheduled (Date TBD).

**IX. Book Fair**

- a. Carolyn reported on behalf of Amy Muchnok and Kristen Matthews– book fair is coming week of Oct 8. Committee will be in need of volunteers to prepare for the book fair and work at the fair. Was noted that Set up day -- the Friday prior (Oct 5) – will require volunteers. Busiest night for the Book Fair is the night of Hartwood's Open House, Oct 11.

**X. Fall Festival**

- a. Allison Wegley noted that the Fall Festival will happen on Friday, Oct 19. Will need volunteers again this year. Committee has already met and more information will follow regarding volunteer opportunities.
- b. Mrs. A. reminded everyone that all volunteers for Fall Festival, and other programs, must all required clearances on file with the office.
- c. Allison offered to sacrifice \$100 of her budget to go to Adult Night Out.

**XI. TAP (Teacher Assistance Program)**

- a. Amanda Kovach shared the update that more volunteers have signed up this year and ever before, including lots of new Hartwood parents. Mrs. A did clearance check on all. Teachers all received lists of registered volunteers, who will be asked to do clerical work. Amanda suggested that TAP volunteers reach out to your homeroom teachers to make sure they are aware of your willingness to volunteer. Expect to get contacted directly or by Amanda who might get a request for mass assistance.
- b. Amanda noted that teachers' needs will likely increase around Open House. Some teachers use program more than others. Don't be offended if your teacher doesn't contact you.
- c. Dr. Fischbaugh reminded that teachers are still getting used to Journey's as a program and will likely have a lot of needs related to this.
- d. Amanda noted that the laminator needs 20 mins to warm up. Call Mrs. A and let her know if you are going to be using the laminator and don't have time to wait.

**XII. TAG (Traveling Art Gallery)**

- a. Amanda Louidice, Chairperson, shared updates: no changes in the program. Happens 4x/year. Parents / Volunteers present an artist of the month to each classroom, using pre-assembled materials, activities, and presentations. No art

experience required. All materials are provided. Small project for students at the end.

- b. First TAG month October. Exact scheduling is up to volunteers and teachers to coordinate.
- c. Materials will be posted on the PTO website.

**XIII. HRP / HRH Changes (Homeroom Parent / Homeroom Helper)**

- a. Dr. Fischbaugh expressed her support for this change because it wasn't being executed equally and it wasn't consistent. It was easier for the teachers to reach out for assistance. Suggestion was made to, perhaps, reconsider for primary grade level K – 2 next year. Grades 4,5,6 rarely need assistance.
- b. Board stressed that HRH and HRP functions are still needed and volunteer opportunities exist, the responsibility for organizing has only been transferred to teachers. The opportunities still exist.
- c. Board noted, and Dr. Fischbaugh confirmed, that teachers were notified in advance of the intended changes, prior to the school year. Communication was sent from Bill via Dr. Fischbaugh.
  - i. Amanda Kovach noted that several teachers weren't aware of the changes and expressed a need for assistance.
- d. Board expressed intentions for the following:
  - i. Field trips – volunteers for Field Trips have already been coordinated by the teachers. HRP / HRH program change will result in no change here.
  - ii. Holiday Parties - as was the case last year, a sign up genius will be used to establish volunteers for holiday parties. Will do that again this year. 2 parties – holiday in Dec and Valentines in Feb. Melissa Kwiatkowski and Melissa Jones chair the Parties committee. More information to come.
  - iii. Classroom baskets – a committee will be established to mobilize the assembly of classroom baskets for raffle fundraiser at the Art Show.
  - iv. Teacher Gifts – parents can organize classroom gifts if they would like, or not, for holidays and end of year “thank you.” This will left to the discretion of each set of class parents. The PTO will collect surveys of teacher's needs and interests to be used by any parents for either individual or group-organized gifts.
- e. A few members expressed personal disappointment and concern for the change, and the fact that there was no transparency or vote among the General Membership prior to making the change.

**XIV. Board Communication**

- a. FB posts and website updates – Kristen Gulakowski, Webmaster, handles these. Send drafts as you would like things to appear or Kristen can assist with writing the posts and site updates.

- b. If you use sign up genius for committee sign ups, you will need to get new log-in credentials from Kristen.
  - c. Eblasts must go through Powerschool via Dr. Fischbaugh (via Beth Vukmir / Secretary). Beth will draft the communication on behalf of the board and any committee chairs. Committee chairs can also draft the communication and send to Beth / Sect to forward to Dr. Fischbaugh.
  - d. If you aren't signed up from Powerschool, you won't receive any PTO communication.
  - e. Budgeting questions – direct to Carolyn Chiquelin
- XV. **Membership Update:** Rick Sumrok, General Director, provided an update on our Fundraising / Membership Drive:
- a. To-date, 67 parents have signed up, 7 of whom are teachers or staff. \$2200 has been raised. Budget calls for \$3,000 to be raised through the membership / fundraising drive open through Oct 15.
  - b. PTO board members will staff a table at the Open House on Oct 11 to answer any questions and accept donations for membership and fundraising, as well as PTO directory forms.
- XVI. **Kids Stuff Coupon Books Fundraiser**– sold 27 books for total of \$675. 5 remaining books are available for sale. Contact the board if you are interested in purchasing for \$25 each.
- XVII. **Apparel sale** – Andrea Krushinski, chairperson, shared updates: partnering with Kerr Elementary again this year to help leverage needs for the apparel sale and field day to help meet minimum quantities and volume discounts. 20 – 25 items will be selected for the Hartwood Apparel Sale. Will include water bottles, umbrellas, headbands, etc. Sale will run Oct 19 – Nov 9 this year and merchandise samples will be available at the Open House (PTO table).
- XVIII. **Dine and Donate** -- Emily Cook, chairperson, provided updates:. Co-chair spot is open. Objective for the program was initially to keep partnerships to local restaurant establishments. Recommending branching out to national chains to help increase participation and funds raised.
- a. **Emmerling Ice Cream** - First Dine and donate opportunity on Sunday, 9/30. Flyer will be distributed but will not be required to get the Dine and Donate discount. Just mention Hartwood when you order.
  - b. Upcoming – Gators (date TBD). May approach Red Robin, Chipotle, Chili's.
  - c. Recommendation – discount cards for different restaurants. Consider for future fundraising.

- d. Bill Sparks encouraged everyone to recommend any friends or families who own or work for a local restaurant who may want to participate. Contact Emily Cook with recommendations.
- XIX. **Box Tops, Amazon Smile, Shoparoo, Apples for Students** – Kristen Gulakowski presented updates on behalf of Danielle Bradley: Danielle will step down after this year. Jessica Wilson will shadow Danielle and take over the chairperson role next year.
- a. Box Tops = money to teachers to purchase books for classrooms. Adds up. 3 contests/ grade-level challenges will be organized. All parents are encouraged to send in box tops ASAP at any time or day. Make sure they aren't expired. Cut neatly as they need to be trimmed along box lines before submitting.
  - b. Apples for students – if you register your Giant Eagle Advantage card one time, every time you use it you earn points and they donate to Hartwood. Flyer to come later this week. Info on website.
  - c. Shoparoo - Free app. Download on your phone. Take a photos of your receipt. We accumulate points and they donate to Hartwood. Anyone can do it. Grandparents do it.
  - d. Amazon Smile – you have to sign up on Amazon, select Hartwood. We earn rewards.
- XX. **Open board positions-** Bill shared as follows:
- a. 2018 – 2019: Secretary - Beth Vukmir needs to step down from the board and is resigning her position as Secretary. Anyone interested in this 2 year position should contact the HPTO Board ASAP. Beth will work to fulfill the role until a replacement is determined.
  - b. 2019-2020: President-Elect (Vice President) and Treasurer will be open positions. Nominations and voting will be conducted in the spring of 2019.
- XXI. **Adjournment:** Bill thanked everyone for their time and involvement in the evenings meeting and discussion, and invited anyone to follow up with him or any PTO board members regarding any remaining questions or concerns.

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