

PTO Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2013
9:10AM, Hillside Elementary School

Attendance

Yolanda Allen, Christa Amos, Michelle Barton, Lori Benedict, Diane Cohle, Ann Davidson, Marcy DelOrefice, Maura Harley, Sian Keating, Cheri Lotan, Lisa McIntyre, Lisa Nishikawa, Jenna O’Neill, Dana Zdancewicz

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the June 4, 2013 PTO meeting were approved.

Principal’s Report – Diane Cohle

- Mrs. Cohle started with describing the start of the school year as smooth.
- Hillside Elementary has 471 students this year (2013-2014), which is up by 20.
- Hillside has 4 Kindergarten classes, five 1st Grade classes, five 2nd Grade classes, five 3rd Grade classes and four 4th Grade classes.
- New teachers this year are: Miss Lucey teaching 1st Grade this year, after doing her student teaching in Mrs. Cardarelli’s class last year; Ms. Redding teaching 1st Grade; Mrs. DeGeorge teaching 3rd Grade and Mrs. Mignatti (formerly Ms. Garner) is not new to Hillside, but has a new last name; she is teaching 2nd Grade.
- Summer Projects:
 - New treads for the steps to improve safety
 - Various areas were painted
 - Various playground repairs
- New this year: Each lesson taught at Hillside will identify a thinking skill (from essential skills framework). The thinking skill will be explained to the children to help them develop the skill.
- New this year: Nurses have developed new guidelines surrounding food allergies in the school - particularly in the classrooms.
 - For birthday parties, there will be no food allowed that does not conform to the new guidelines. All students must be able to eat the food for it to be allowed. Some grades have agreed to restrict food altogether for birthdays and have informed parents not to send in food for their children’s birthday. The teachers are working to help the children think of other ways to celebrate.
 - Class Parties (3) during the year are the only times when food is recommended or allowed in the celebration. However, restrictions are at the Grade level, no longer the classroom level. All children in the entire grade must be able to eat the food being served.
 - The school nurses will provide Grade Level allergy information to Grade Coordinators to assist them in planning the classroom parties.
- New this year: The new Math Curriculum expands to 2nd Grade this year – Math In Focus.
- New this year: New guidelines regarding teacher observations and evaluations have been issued by the state and T/E is incorporating them.
- PSSA scores for Hillside from last year are the highest scores yet. The PSSAs test reading, science and math for 3rd & 4th Graders.

President’s Report – Dana Zdancewicz

- Dana welcomed the PTO and parents of the school to the first meeting of the new year. Dana then asked the VPs to start their reports.

VP Membership and School Services – Lisa Nishikawa

- Volunteer Update: Lisa stated that we still have some open positions for this year:
 - Publishing Center
 - Drama Club
- Lisa stated that we have filled some big positions over the summer:
 - Yearbook
 - Barnes and Noble Night
 - Costume Sale
 - Volunteer Coordinator
 - School Store Scheduler
- Publishing Center: Lisa discussed the responsibilities of the Publishing Center chair and it was discussed who might be a good candidate. It was suggested that the 1st and 3rd Grade Coordinators reach out to their Class Spokespersons/Core Parents for a volunteer, since the 1st and 3rd grades are the class that participate.
- Lisa also mentioned that at the upcoming Open House we can solicit for volunteers for the open positions.

VP Social Functions – Marcy DelOrefice

- Marcy stated that a date is needed for the Staff Breakfast.
- Kids Movie Night Out – Marcy asked whether this event will take place this year. Mrs. Cohle stated that it will not.

VP Cultural Arts – Carla Ojha (not present)

- Christa Amos presented the details for the Hillside Talent Show. Christa stated there will be an announcement in the Hillside Highlights. Talent Show is for 3rd and 4th Graders and will take place in late November. Christa stated that she will coordinate with Beata for dates for the event – target is November 22nd, the Friday before Thanksgiving Break. Christa also stated that she is working on the flyers that will go out via backpacks and asked Mrs. Cohle if she would review the flyer for approval.
- Christa also stated that she will need the list of volunteers from the volunteer coordinator (Yolanda Allen). Yolanda responded that she had the sign up sheets from the PTO mailbox and will start working on the lists.

VP Fundraising – Ann Davidson

- Ann stated that all positions under Fundraising have been filled – great news. Current campaigns are Box Tops; Target on Facebook (until Sept. 21st – one vote every 7 or 5 days); Handels Spirit Day (Rebecca Zellefrow coordinating) on Wednesday, September 18th, 4-7 pm; Spirit Wear, Innsbrook (Larisa Leon), Pizza Bingo on Friday October 11th (Dana Zdancewicz & Mary Kate Stein), and the Hawky Campaign.
- Ann stated that Innsbrook is always a successful fundraiser and that their products are of excellent quality.
- Ann also stated that she is ordering Hillside Glow Sticks to sell at events – perhaps the first will be Handels. Michelle Barton mentioned that she learned from Rebecca Zellefrow that Handels does not like the schools to sell anything on their property, they may not give permission. Michelle continued on to say that Rebecca mentioned that Handels doesn't even allow us to hand out the Spirit Day flyers on their property. Families need to bring the flyer from the Opening Day packets or print from the PTO website.

Treasurer – Sian Keating/Maura Harley

- Sian presented an overview of the budgets and how much money some of the fundraisers brought in last year – some of the smaller ones:
 - Handels \$436
 - Box Tops \$840
 - Target \$836
 - Staples School Kits \$76 (this event needs more advertising)
- From all sources the PTO raised about \$30K last year.
- These funds support many events – some examples:
 - 4th Grade Party
 - Hillside Folders, Assignment Books
 - Pride Day
 - Cultural Arts spent \$17.5K
 - Each Grade Facilitator was given \$300 from the PTO to divide up amongst that Grade's teachers or spend themselves for the teachers' classrooms
- Sian introduced Maura Harley – Assistant Treasurer. Sian and Maura discussed that they are approaching this year as a Team. Sian and Maura will work together so that the PTO can go to either of them with questions and Maura will be well versed on all issues for next year as Treasurer.
- Sian and Maura then discussed budgets. Each VP needs to communicate to their committee chairpersons that they need to be budget conscious. If anyone needs to know what their budget is, Sian or Maura should be contacted. If budgets are exceeded, the PTO Board will need to approve increases.

Secretary – Michelle Barton

- Michelle mentioned that the PTO has a lot of mail in the Office from over the summer and the beginning of the year. Michelle had been asked by the office staff to tell everyone to please pick up their items, there is very limited space. Michelle brought some items into the meeting for people to take with them. Michelle stated she has organized the mailbox and the office has been sorting some items for the PTO (forms for volunteer sign ups, etc). Michelle also mentioned the email that she sends out with reminders for the mailbox – Michelle cleans out and organizes the mailbox weekly and will send out the reminder email to those that have mail to be picked up about 2 times a month, depending on the volume of mail.
- Michelle passed around a print-out of the PTO Chair List which is an Excel spreadsheet combining the word document that Pam Emel had created with Committee, Chairperson, Email and Committee Description and the Excel spreadsheet on Google Docs that Lisa Nishikawa inherited that contained Committee, Current Chairperson, Returning (Y/N), 2013-2014 Chairperson. Michelle stated that the 2 original documents are not in sync because they are not always updated at the same time.
- Michelle described the new document, that is under construction, contains:
 - Committee Name
 - Chairperson Name(s)
 - Chairperson Phone Number (cell or home)
 - Chairperson Email addresses
 - Committee Description
- Michelle stated this will replace the document currently on the PTO website. Michelle asked that everyone fill in any missing information in their sections. Next step will be to enter phone numbers (Michelle needs them for the Student Directory anyway) and then we can post on Google Docs for the PTO to verify and/or correct.

- Michelle asked for feedback on the Ads section of the Directory. To date, \$1200 worth of Ads has been sold and money has been collected. The budget for printing directories is typically around \$500. Because of the format of the Directory (Book Fold) we need a multiple of 4 pages – Michelle stated that she currently has 14.5 pages of content, she needs to fill out 1.5 more pages. Michelle presented an idea to promote the After-school Clubs on the back page of the ‘Yellow Pages’ section. Marcy stated that another idea would be to promote specific Social and Fundraising events. Ann and Marcy agreed to choose a few events each for Michelle to list on the back page. Michelle stated she has created a different cover page for the ‘Yellow Pages’ and an index page – so we will just have a small area with a blank half-page.
- Christa Amos mentioned she has a ‘cleaned up’ version, in color, of the hawk logo. Christa asked permission from Mrs. Cohle to provide it to the PTO to use in marketing. Michelle Barton requested a copy for the Directory.

Committee Reports

- Yearbook: Christa Amos is taking on the job of Yearbook Committee Chairperson this year. She stated that she met with Flava Pehna (last year’s chair).Christa asked if anyone knew if a vendor contract had been signed for the 2013-2014 yearbook. No one at the meeting knew of a signed contract. Sian stated the budget for yearbooks is \$1200. Christa discussed the logistics: collecting photographs, naming convention of files, submitting the photos and a Grade Level Shutterbug to be determined by Grade Coordinators. Christa stated more details will come, but these are the items she is currently working on and she will communicate the new logistical guidelines to the Core Parents committee.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- None

The meeting was adjourned. The next PTO meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 9, 2013 at 9:10am at Hillside.