



PTO Meeting
16 April 2014
9:15 AM

Frank H. Hammond Elementary School
1301 Fran Lin Parkway
Munster, Indiana 46321

PTO MEETING MINUTES

(Draft version, pending review/approval at the next PTO meeting on May 21, 2014.)

I. Welcome

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Becky McKeever at 9:20 AM.

B. Sign-in Sheet

In addition to the PTO Board, meeting attendees included: Julie Landmesser, Claudia Craig, E. Vazquez, L. Gauderman, Ude Eko, Suzanne Regan, Evelyn Regan, Lisa Gomez, Patty Oganovich, Quinyu Ni, Patty Queroz, Sophie Zaromitidis, Lynette Ault, Jen Johns, Mary Beth Tepper, Anzell Barnard, Aleka Dovellos, Tracy Collins, Nina Arzumanian, Linda Osborn, Prabha Niroula and Serena Chen.

C. Student Recognition

President Becky McKeever announced that the PTO is partnering with Culver's to recognize the achievement of various student groups. Each recognized student will receive a free scoop of custard, compliments of the Schererville Culver's. This month, participants in the High Ability ("HA") art, chorus and dance programs (led by Ms. Broelmann, Ms. Pittman and Mrs. Panos, respectively) were recognized. An upcoming evening event in May is being planned to showcase the talents of participants in these programs.

Fourth grade student Lainie Gideon suggested that a student-run school newspaper should be offered as a vehicle for presenting announcements and other school-related news directly to the students. She pointed out that a student newspaper would not only inform the student body as a whole, but also provide an outlet for students who are interested in improving their writing and/or photography skills. She highlighted that local advertisements could be featured in the newspaper in order to defray the cost of publication. A parent sponsor is needed to work with interested students before (or after) school (in the same manner that Ingrid Schwarz Wolf has sponsored the FHH science club and Wei Zhou has coached the FHH Math Bowl team.) Mrs. Ellis indicated that she will present the idea to the faculty but noted that any involvement would be voluntary.

II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Ude Eko motioned to approve the March 19, 2014 draft meeting minutes as presented; Patty Oganovich seconded the motion. The March 19, 2014 draft meeting minutes were approved as presented by a majority of the vote.

III. Treasurer's Report

A. Year-to-date Monthly Budget Report

The beginning balance on August 1st was \$18,821.23. Year-to-date funds raised were \$31,687.18. Program expenses were \$19,896.60, arriving at an ending balance of \$30,611.81.

The net amount of funds raised under the School Supplies program of \$269.71 has been finalized for the school year. Also, the last Teacher Grant expenditure has been made; the total amount expensed under this program for the school year was \$6,383.12.

A detailed report of Scholastic Dollars and SCRIP on hand has been added to the monthly Treasurer's Report. The current Scholastic Dollar Balance is \$6,262.96. This month, Scholastic Dollars were used to purchase raffle prizes for the Book Fair and insulated tumblers for Teacher Appreciation Week. A list of SCRIP gift cards available for purchase was also included. The total value of SCRIP on hand is \$395.

IV. Secretary's Report

A. Thank You/Correspondence Updates

No items were noted.

V. Vice President's Report

No items were noted.

VI. President's Report

A. Presidents' Meeting

Becky McKeever explained that the PTO presidents are given the opportunity to attend a district-wide monthly meeting with other PTO presidents and members of the School Town administration, such as Richard Sopko, Superintendent. The following items were highlighted at the most recent meeting:

- **Calendar for 2014-2015 School Year:** A discussion was had in regard to the district calendar for the 2014-2015 school year.
- **Wilbur Wright Middle School PTO's Inquiry in Regard to Raptor System:** All visitors to any school building within the district must have a valid driver's license or state ID on their person. Upon entry to the school, a visitor's license/ID will be scanned into the electronic system, which has the ability to flag the identity of persons included on state sex offender registries. WWMS PTO inquired about procedures to be followed when such a person has been identified by the system. A "panic key" is located on each secretary/receptionist's keyboard; a stroke of this key sends an immediate message to a School Town administrator and to the Munster Police Department. This key has been used once at Eads Elementary School. As a result, notification was given to an innocent parent that his name is shared by an individual on a sex offender registry; his mistaken identity for this individual was cleared-up within moments at the school, as each offender's photograph is included with his/her information on the registries.
- **Effects of On-line Registration on PTO Membership:** A discussion was had in regard to how potential on-line registration for the upcoming school year may affect PTO membership numbers, as most members submit their yearly dues at

on-site registration. The School Town is currently in the process of assisting each PTO with filing for §501(c)(3) non-profit organization status. Obtaining this status would allow each PTO to set-up a free PayPal account to be used for the electronic submission of yearly membership dues.

- **Eads Elementary School Grandparents Day:** The Eads PTO sponsored its “Grandparents’ Day” event on a Saturday morning. The timing of this event appears to have been well-received by interested parties.
- **Elliott Elementary School Book Fair:** The Elliott PTO has scheduled a Book Fair at the end of May. Each grade’s teaching team has been asked to submit a suggested summer reading list for the students.
- **Transfer Tuition Students:** Current Indiana state law allows for the siblings of current transfer tuition students to attend schools within the district, but the School Town has to update its own policies to meet the requirements of this law; it is anticipated that the School Town will do so within the near future. On a related note, if a current student were to move outside of the district, he/she would be able to finish the current semester at his/her current school. If the student were to move within the district, he/she may finish the current school year at his/her original school.

VII. Principal’s Report

Mrs. Ellis introduced School Town of Munster Director of Instruction and Assessment Dr. Phyllis Gilworth, who spoke in regard to standardized testing.

A. Guest Speaker: Director of Instruction and Assessment Dr. Phyllis Gilworth

Dr. Gilworth noted that this is the first school year she has served the School Town in her current role. She now oversees all curriculum areas and the assessment of all students. She provided a list of School Town of Munster assessments; this list has been included as an addendum to these minutes. The following highlights her discussion:

- The acronym “ECA” refers to an “End of Course Assessment.” Each School Town of Munster student must pass ECAs in the areas of English/Language Arts (English 10) and Math (Algebra I) while he/she is a student either at MHS or at WWMS, depending upon when the student completes the related course.
- Both the ECA and the ISTEP+ are minimum proficiency exams.
- LAS Links is administered to students who have learned English as a second language; these students must achieve a score of “5” in two (2) consecutive years.
- New academic standards stress college and career readiness. Explore and Plan assessments indicate levels or gains in college readiness.
- PSAT is a “practice test” for the SAT. Scores on this exam (in conjunction with a student’s ECA results) determine whether a student must take the Acuplacer Diagnostic as a high school junior. Students who don’t achieve a certain cut score on the Acuplacer must receive remediation.
- Third grade students will no longer take the Terra Nova assessment, which is used for placement into the High Ability (“HA”) program.
- Third grade students will take a Corelink assessment. Parents should be cognizant of the fact that despite the fact that Indiana has recently rejected Common Core standards, all textbooks within the United States adhere to those standards. Using the Common Core as a starting point, the state plans to alter those standards in formulating new Indiana standards. If the state replaces at least 15% of Common Core standards with Indiana-specific standards, state

legislators will have the ability to choose which company will write new Indiana assessments.

- Terra Nova (or a similar assessment) may be administered to second-semester kindergarteners so that they may be cultivated as future HA students. Changes to the HA program in regard to identification and format at the K-2 level are likely to take place.
- The School Town is considering moving to an assessment other than the Terra Nova to assess high ability.
- Generally, 3-7% of students within a district should be enrolled in its HA program. Currently, 24% of School Town of Munster students are enrolled in its HA program.
- The state of Indiana requires that HA students have received a CSI score of at least 126 and have placed in the 95th percentile on his/her assessments. In the past, the School Town has also considered Renzulli scale assessments as a soft-measure in placing students within the program.
- The needs of true HA students cannot be met in a regular classroom. Accordingly, HA is a special education program. The School Town is considering a two-tier system in order to accommodate high achieving students who do not strictly meet the requirements of the HA program. Students already in the HA program will not be affected by any changes in the program's admissions policy.
- In the state of Indiana, the terms "gifted" and "high ability" are synonymous.
- In analyzing the results of assessments, parents should keep in mind that "percentile" does not equal "percentage."
- Current year third grade IREAD results have been finalized. Mrs. Ellis reported that FHH is waiting to receive the paper copies of student reports; it is anticipated that they will be distributed to parents at the beginning of next week.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Teacher Appreciation - Laura Gauderman

Co-chairperson Laura Gauderman reported that Teacher Appreciation Week will begin with a faculty luncheon on Friday, May 9th and continue through Thursday of the following week. Details outlining the efforts of this committee will be published in *Digitally Speaking*. The Tasty Tuesday and Teacher Appreciation committees will coordinate their efforts in regard to this week on the Volunteerspot.com website.

B. Book Fair – Jill Krieg

Co-chairperson Jill Krieg reminded the membership that the Book Fair will be open through 3 pm on Thursday, April 17th.

C. Terracycle - Suzanne Regan

Chairperson Suzanne Regan announced that as part of a collection drive dedicated to small electronic devices, the Terracycle committee will collect items such as calculators, cellular telephones, cam-corders, tablets, digital cameras, GPS devices and toner cartridges.

IX. Unfinished Business

A. 2014-2015 Fundraising Idea Submissions / Presentations for May 2014 Meeting

The PTO membership will decide on fundraisers for the 2014-2015 school year through a vote at the May 2014 PTO meeting. The PTO requests that all fundraising proposals include the following information: timing of the fundraiser, proposed amount of funds to be raised, and number of volunteers required. All proposals should be written and submitted to any member of the Board by the next PTO meeting to be held on May 21st.

B. Committee Chair Openings for 2014-2015 School Year

There will be several committee chairperson vacancies for the 2014-2015 school year due to various reasons including: work schedule conflicts, chairperson commitment to chair another committee and the matriculation of chairpersons' children from Frank H. Hammond into middle school. The following known committee chairperson vacancies for the 2014-2015 school year were announced at the meeting:

- *Digitally Speaking* Editor
- Junior Achievement
- Spring Clothing Sale
- Veterans Day Assembly
- Yearbook (co-chairperson needed to work with current Co-chairperson Angie Weis)

Also, it was announced that additional assistance is needed in procuring corporate sponsorship donations, particularly at the local level.

X. New Business

A. PTO Board Elections for 2014-2015 School Year

President Becky McKeever presented the slate for the PTO Board for the 2014-2015 school year as follows:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| • President | Becky McKeever |
| • Vice-President | Jolene Gelarden |
| • Treasurer | Jill Krieg |
| • Secretary | Julie Gideon |

Jen Johns motioned to elect the slate as presented. The motion was seconded by Lynette Ault and was carried and passed by a majority of the vote.

B. Library Investment

Last school year, a \$6,000 investment in the FHH library was approved for the purchase of a set of electronic reading devices. The recent award of a \$100,000 grant to be used for the extension of the one-to-one computer initiative to the fourth grade has provided the FHH PTO with a focus for this investment. Next school year, each fourth grade classroom in the School Town of Munster will house a classroom set of Google Chrome Books. Currently, the School Town is deciding from which manufacturer they will purchase the Chrome Book devices. The FHH PTO is potentially hoping to piggyback onto the purchase of those devices with the purchase of compatible devices to be housed in the FHH library and to be used by students in grades K-3. School Town IT personnel have recommended the purchase of 7-inch tablets so that small hands will

easily be able to manipulate touch screen applications on the devices. Thirty three (33) devices (a full classroom set) could be purchased if a total of \$10,000 were available for this purpose. Accordingly, Patty Queroz motioned that an additional \$4,000 be set aside for the investment in the FHH library. Jen Johns seconded the motion, which passed by a majority of the vote.

C. *Rise Above the Mark* Documentary

Local viewings of *Rise Above the Mark*, a documentary focusing on the state of public education in Indiana and across the United States, have been scheduled for April 30th at Chesterton High School (5:30 pm) and Hobart High School (7pm). Although there is no charge for the viewings, each school requests that interested parties make a reservation for the viewings by contacting the appropriate school so that accommodations may be made for anticipated audiences.

XI. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 AM.

Addendum

SCHOOL TOWN OF MUNSTER ASSESSMENTS

mClass (Grades K-2) Provided by state-progress monitoring 3 times yearly used to determine if students need additional intervention, are on level or can be challenged.

Acuity (Grades 3-10) *Predictive indicator for performance on ISTEP and ECAs given 3 times yearly.

ISTEP+, iRead3 State mandated; given 1x yearly. Students that do not pass iRead3 must take summer school and retest in the summer in order to be promoted.

LAS Links-Required for ELL students. Students must test until they score a 5 in two consecutive years.

Local Assessments (Chapter, Unit Tests and Benchmark Assessments)

Explore (Grade 8) Indicates level of college readiness (ACT Platform)

Plan (Grade 9) Indicates gains in College readiness (ACT Platform)

PSAT (grade 10 & 11) Practice test for SAT-Determines National Merit Scholars and has potential for scholarship monies. Scores will be used in conjunction with student's ECA results to determine whether 11th graders will be required to take the Accuplacer Diagnostic this spring.

Terra Nova/In-View (Grades 2, 3, 5 and 8) Used for placement in high ability program

ECA-required to be passed in the areas of ELA (English 10) and MATH (Algebra I). Students must also take Bio; however, it is not included as a graduation requirement at this time.