



PTO Meeting  
19 February 2014  
7:00 PM

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 March 19, 2014.)*

### I. Welcome

#### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Becky McKeever at 7:11 PM.

#### B. Sign-in Sheet

In addition to the PTO Board and Mrs. Ellis, meeting attendees included: Carrie Lauritzen, Jolene Gelarden, Tammy Vesolowski, Suzanne Regan, Shamus Regan, Linda Osborn, Tom Osborn, Leigh Ann Westland, Tracy Collins, Julie Gideon, Ellie Marinier, Padua Kondamuri, and Wei Zhou.

#### 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, FHH Science Club members were recognized, as the FHH Science Fair was held immediately prior to the PTO meeting. Ingrid Schwarz Wolf, Science Club Sponsor, thanked the PTO for implementing the student recognition program. She also thanked FHH Principal Mrs. Ellis for supporting the FHH Science Fair and the volunteers who assisted with the evening's science fair and the other efforts of the Science Club throughout the school. Mrs. Wolf expressed her pride in the achievements of the Science Fair participants and other Science Club members.

### II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Carrie Lauritzen motioned to approve the January 15, 2014 draft meeting minutes as presented; Tammy Vesolowski seconded the motion. The January 15, 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 1<sup>st</sup> was \$18,821.23. Year-to-date funds raised were \$17,382.20. Program expenses were \$19,261.32, arriving at an ending balance of \$16,942.11.

Spirit Wear sales are final and resulted in a profit of \$796. The PTO has begun to pay expenses for the Fun Fair, which currently shows a negative fundraising balance of (\$1,180.89); this amount includes the deposit for the games, bingo prizes and raffle basket supplies. Approximately \$550 of Teacher Grant expenditures remains unpaid. Art/Music in Action expenditures of \$49.15 were made in regard to the purchase of reference books.

Linda Osborn, Birthday Recognition Calendar Chairperson, asked to increase the Birthday Recognition budget (it is currently \$50 for the entire school year). Consequently, Tammy Vesolowski motioned to increase the Birthday Recognition Calendar Budget to \$100 for the year. Julie Gideon seconded the motion. The motion passed and was approved by a majority of the vote.

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 \$6,774.94. A list of SCRIP gift cards available for purchase was also included. The total value of SCRIP on hand is \$470.

#### IV. Secretary's Report

##### A. Thank You/Correspondence Updates

The PTO received a thank you note from the FHH faculty and staff for its Tasty Tuesday luncheons.

#### V. Vice President's Report

Vice-President Natalie Raffin reported that the deadline for *Frankly Speaking* submissions is March 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### VI. President's Report

##### A. School Board Meeting

President Becky McKeever provided a synopsis of the report received from Ingrid Schwarz Wolf, the FHH PTO School Board liaison, in regard to the most recent School Town of Munster Board meeting:

- School Board member Carrie Wadas had previously submitted her letter of resignation. The School Town received twenty (20) applications from parties interested in filling this position. After all applicants were interviewed, Melissa Higgason, former Eads PTO President, was selected as the new School Board member. Her children currently attend Wilbur Wright Middle School and Eads Elementary School.
- Two or three finalists will be selected by February 28<sup>th</sup> in the search for a new School Town Superintendent of Schools, as Superintendent Sopko is retiring at the end of the current school year.
- During these winter months, safety, as always, has been the primary concern in making weather-related decisions in regard to school closings and/or delays.
- The Munster Education Foundation's yearly fundraiser, the Blarney Blast, is scheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup>.
- The Booster Club's Reverse Raffle is set for April 5<sup>th</sup>.

## B. 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:

- **Potential Credit Card Payment Acceptance at Registration:** The School Town is working on being able to accept credit card payments at registration for the upcoming school year. Details in regard to this possibility have not yet been established.
- **High Ability Program Audit:** Members of the district's high ability team have been diligently preparing for an audit of the program.
- **Eads Charity Walk:** Heather Bognar, new Eads PTO President, announced that Eads Elementary will host a charity walk in support of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation in honor of a late Munster High School student who lost her battle with the disease.
- **Elliott Blood Drive:** Elliott Elementary hosted a blood drive tonight, February 19<sup>th</sup>.
- **Standardized Testing Explanation:** Dr. Phyllis Gilworth, the district's Director of Instruction and Assessment, has met or will meet with parents at Wilbur Wright Middle School and Elliott Elementary to explain standardized testing performed within the district and how the results of such testing are used. The district is working to grant parents access to its electronic data warehouse. Several FHH parents expressed interest in having Dr. Gilworth address parents at our school. Becky McKeever indicated that she will work to have Dr. Gilworth attend the next FHH PTO meeting.

## C. Volunteer Recognition

Becky McKeever gave thanks, on behalf of the PTO, to the following:

- Tammy Vesolowski and her team of Fun Fair sub-chairpersons for their hard work in coordinating the upcoming Fun Fair.

# VII. Principal's Report

## A. Blue Ribbon School Nomination

Mrs. Ellis reported that Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz telephoned to inform her that Frank H. Hammond Elementary is one of eight schools in the state to be nominated to apply for (national) "Blue Ribbon School" status. Mrs. Ellis is working diligently to complete all necessary paperwork, which is due March 21<sup>st</sup>.

## B. Raptor System

Mrs. Ellis reported that the district received a school safety grant and is focusing on monitoring building entrance access, which is a key piece of school safety. Currently, the use of the electronic Raptor System is being implemented. All visitors to the school 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 system, which has the ability to flag the identity of persons included on state sex offender registries. Mrs. Ellis reminded parents that even if their licenses/IDs have previously been scanned into the system, they still must have their licenses/IDs on their persons each time they enter the building. Mrs. Ellis also reported that the district is working on the installation of a system whereby front office personnel will be able to interface with a visitor before he/she even enters the building. One parent inquired if the new safety precautions will allow for the return of "open lunch" for parents. Mrs. Ellis indicated that the

return of open lunch is not feasible for a variety of reasons beyond the monitoring of building entrance access.

### C. Kindergarten Round-up

Mrs. Ellis announced that the Kindergarten Round-up for the 2014-2015 school year will take place on March 12<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM until 1 PM. She noted that attendance at the Round-up is not necessary for the parents of incoming kindergartners but that participation in the Round-up helps to streamline the registration process. All incoming kindergartners are expected to complete their Enrollment Gateway entry by April 30<sup>th</sup>. Parents of incoming first-graders who attended a private or other kindergarten may also wish to attend the Round-up.

### D. Technology Grant

Mrs. Ellis reported that she is participating in the application process for a district-wide \$100,000 State of Indiana technology grant. Thirty-three applicants have been invited to present their applications in Indianapolis; twenty grants will be awarded. Monies received from this grant will be used to extend the district's one-to-one computer initiative to the fourth grade.

## VIII. Committee Reports

### A. Fun Fair - Tammy Vesolowski

Chairperson Tammy Vesolowski announced that the Fun Fair will be held on Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup> from 5 until 8 PM. She announced that she will continue to process pre-orders, even as they arrive late. The baskets for the classroom basket raffle will be displayed in the front lobby of the building beginning tomorrow afternoon. Forms seeking donations for the Cake Walk have been sent home with the students; the Cake Walk will take place on the stage in the Cafetorium this year. Please consider volunteering to help at the Fun Fair; many volunteers are needed!

### B. Variety Show - Leigh Ann Westland

Chairperson Leigh Ann Westland announced that an attempt is being made to scale down this year's Variety Show, which will be held on Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, two days after the end of spring break. All students in grades K-5 may participate in an act of two minutes or less. Each student may participate in only one act this year. Also, new student emcee positions are being created this year. No t-shirts are being offered. This afternoon, teachers were given information sheets to be sent home with students tomorrow, February 20<sup>th</sup>. Applications are due Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>. Auditions will be held on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and March 6<sup>th</sup>, and each act's music is due at the same time. Leigh Ann acknowledged that seven families still have not received their DVDs of last year's show; she is in search of someone who has the technology and know-how to make those DVD copies free of charge.

**C. Nominating Committee - Becky McKeever**

Becky McKeever reminded the membership that she, Julie Landmesser and Nicole Nita are serving as the Nominating Committee for the PTO's Executive Board for the 2014-2015 school year. Letters of intent may be submitted to any member of the Nominating Committee through the start of the next scheduled PTO meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup>. The membership was advised that both current Vice President Natalie Raffin and current Secretary Barb Heritage do not intend to retain their positions on the Board for the upcoming school year.

**D. SCRIP - Becky McKeever/Jill Krieg**

Co-chairpersons Becky McKeever and Jill Krieg announced that the SCRIP on hand is available for purchase after tonight's meeting. An inventory of available gift cards can be found on the monthly Treasurer's Report.

**E. Terracycle – Suzanne Regan**

Chairperson Suzanne Regan announced that in January the FHH Terracycle program collected ten times the required amount of points needed for the program's joint service project with K-Kids. In fact, more points were collected in January than were collected during the entire previous school year. Two pairs of egg-laying geese were procured for underdeveloped communities through Heifer International under this program. Because of the success of this project, the FHH Terracycle program plans to participate in a similar service project next year.

In addition, Suzanne estimates that approximately 25 lbs. of "snack bags" will have been processed before the program reaches the snack-bag deadline imposed by Terracycle. Accordingly, more volunteers are being sought to process the collections. Any parent interested in this volunteer opportunity should contact Suzanne Regan.

**F. Dining for Dollars - Jolene Gelarden**

Chairperson Jolene Gelarden announced that the most recent Little Tokyo fundraising event netted \$100. An upcoming event is scheduled next week at Doreen's Pizza. An attempt is also being made to coordinate an event at the Munster McDonald's. Because the FHH PTO currently does not have its own federal taxpayer identification number, Chipotle has remitted approximately \$450 to the School Town of Munster. This amount is being held for the use of FHH by the district's Central Office.

**IX. Unfinished Business**

**A. Book Storage Room**

At the previous meeting, it was announced that Mrs. Ellis has asked for volunteers to help categorize and organize books currently being stored in Mrs. Derswinski's old classroom. These books, mostly guided readers from the old reading series, need to be sorted by level and organized for teacher use in the classroom for Daily 5 activities. Becky McKeever has scheduled a brief training meeting for Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at 9:15 am for those who expressed an interest in helping with this project.

**B. Family Game Night/Family Movie Night**

President Becky McKeever asked for interested volunteers to organize a Family Movie Night. Materials for a Family Movie Night are available from *PTO Today*.

### C. Hardware/Software Catalog

One of the PTO's 2013/14 goals is to "Optimize building resources by creating a catalog of school-wide hardware and software for use by entire staff." To this end, President Becky McKeever has reached out to Room Coordinators asking them to work with their teachers to create a list of PTO purchased materials in each classroom.

## X. New Business

### A. Raptor System

President Becky McKeever made a plea to parents for patience and encouraged cooperation as the new Raptor System is being implemented.

### B. New Expenditure Approval

A large composite photograph of the current FHH student body has traditionally hung in the hallway leading to the cafeteria. Julie Landmesser's father, Jim Miller, has offered to make a frame for the photograph with a hinged "glass" front so that the photograph may be changed out yearly. He has put together a proposal that estimates the total cost of the project as \$220. The School Town had previously provided an estimate of nearly \$700 for a similar project. Linda Osborn motioned to approve the construction and installation of the composite picture frame by Mr. Miller. Jolene Gelarden seconded the motion. The motion passed and was approved by a majority of the vote.

In addition, Julie Landmesser, who is also a Recess Aide, has requested funds to purchase additional playground balls for recess at a maximum estimate of \$265. Suzanne Regan motioned to approve the purchase of more playground balls for recess. Carrie Lauritzen seconded the motion. The motion passed and was approved by a majority of the vote.

Mrs. Ellis indicated that she will use the aforementioned funds received from the Chipotle fundraiser and currently held in account by the district's Central Office. She will have the school cover any additional balance with funds held in the school's General Fund.

### C. 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:

- BoxTops for Education (subsequent to this announcement, this position was filled by Carrie Lauritzen)
- *Digitally Speaking* Editor
- Golden Opportunities / Entertainment Book Fundraiser
- Junior Achievement
- Registration
- SCRIP Fundraiser
- Spring Clothing Sale
- Veterans Day Assembly

In addition, the following committees are in search of co-chairpersons to work along side of their current chairpersons (either the role of this committee is expanding or one

of the current co-chairperson positions will be vacant next year due to one of the aforementioned reasons):

- Corporate Sponsorship (Local Business)
- Tasty Tuesday
- Yearbook

It should also be noted that due to uncertainty surrounding Grandparents Day, especially in light of school safety concerns, a Grandparents Day committee was not formed for the current school year. Kerry Meyer has offered to chair this committee as she has done in prior years. The PTO will work with Mrs. Ellis to decide what this event will entail going forward. Currently, the event is tentatively scheduled for April 15<sup>th</sup> and will most likely involve a limited number of grade levels.

Please contact any Board member if interested in any of the aforementioned opportunities.

#### D. Other

- Linda Osborn expressed her belief that a half-day kindergarten program is beneficial as a transition into elementary school. Accordingly, she advocates the return of a half-day kindergarten option for the School Town & FHH and has started a petition in regard to the same. This petition can be found at: <https://www.change.org/petitions/bring-half-day-back-to-fhh>.
- On behalf of the PTO, President Becky McKeever expressed sympathy and presented a plant and card to Mrs. Ellis in regard to the recent passing of her mother-in-law.

## XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM.