



PTO Meeting
20 November 2013
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 January 15, 2014.)

I. Welcome

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Becky McKeever at 7:12 pm.

B. Sign-in Sheet

In addition to the PTO Board and Mrs. Ellis, meeting attendees included: Tina Certa, Carrie Lauritzen, Ude Eko, Lisa Gomez, Jolene Gelarden, Chad McKeever, Stephanie Orange, S. Regan, Sara Brunetti, Wayne Ault, Patty Oganovich, Tracy Collins, Nicole Nita and Stacie Truvinovic.

II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Jolene Gelarden motioned to approve the October 16, 2013 draft meeting minutes as presented; Carrie Lauritzen seconded the motion. The October 16, 2013 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 \$12,280.28. Program expenses were \$12,037.05, arriving at an ending balance of \$19,064.46. The Book Fair is an ongoing event; accordingly, net revenue amounts have not been finalized. Market Day revenues of \$171.09 do not include profits from the Holiday pie sale. Red Ribbon Week expenditures were made in the amount of \$315.70. The PTO's yearly insurance expenditure of \$599 has been paid. Expenses related to the rehabilitation of the school's informational/directional signs have also been paid. Finally, Veterans Day Assembly expenditures of \$61.25 were made.

IV. Secretary's Report

A. Thank You/Correspondence Updates

The PTO received the following thank you notes: Prior year Co-President Julie Landmesser thanked the PTO for donating a book to the FHH library in her name. Julie Stolarz thanked the PTO for the faculty book fair preview luncheon.

V. Vice President's Report

Vice-President Natalie Raffin had no items to report. However, she did thank Market Day Co-Chairpersons Stacie Trivunovic and Sara Brunetti for providing Market Day samples as refreshments for the evening's meeting.

VI. President's Report

A. Volunteer Recognition

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

- [Nicole Chism](#) for coordinating the fall Box Tops collection drive, which netted over \$2,000,
- [Stacie Trivunovic](#) and [Sara Brunetti](#) for offering Market Day samples at the evening's meeting, as well as at the Holiday Sale Event held this past Saturday,
- [Sara Brunetti](#) for coordinating the Market Day Holiday pie sale,
- [Tammy Vesolowski](#) for chairing this week's Veterans Day Assembly,
- [Jolene Gelarden](#) and [Aleka Dovellos](#) for their continued efforts with the PTO's "Dining for Dollars" program, and
- [Tracy Collins](#) for serving as the editor of the PTO's new weekly newsletter, *Digitally Speaking*.

B. District Presidents' Meeting Recap

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 discussed at this month's meeting:

- **Instruction and Assessment:** Director of Instruction and Assessment Phyllis Gilworth reported that the district's current High Ability ("HA") program is to be evaluated by experts in that field. The district is also working with a data coach to develop a "data warehouse," whereby parents will be able to access student test scores on-line. In addition, the district's Response-to-Intervention ("RTI") program continues to undergo evaluation and review.
- **Financial Audit:** Superintendent Richard Sopko reported that the district is currently undergoing its bi-annual financial audit.
- **Rise Above the Mark:** A consultant who assisted the district with its efforts in regard to last spring's special property tax referendum is developing an informational documentary about state school funding. Additional information may be found at riseabovethemark.com.
- **Superintendent Search:** Representatives from Purdue University, who are assisting the School Town with its upcoming Superintendent search, spoke with the presidents of the Parent Teacher Organizations of each of the five schools within the district for their input in regard to the same.

VII. Principal's Report

A. School Board Members Request for Input on Superintendent Search

Mrs. Ellis introduced School Board Vice President Judy Florczak and School Board Secretary Mary Yorke, who solicited input in regard to the School Town's search for a new district superintendent. Earlier this fall, School Town of Munster Superintendent Richard Sopko announced his planned retirement at the end of the current school year.

One parent inquired as to the expected number of applications to be received. The school board members indicated that experts from each of the four major public universities within the state anticipate that the district will receive a large amount of applicants from both within and outside of the state of Indiana. A post office box has been established for the purpose of receiving applications, and the application process is to remain anonymous until the search has been narrowed to the final two applicants, at which time the identity of the candidates will become public. School Town of Munster School Board members will then visit the school districts at which each of the candidates is currently employed. The new superintendent is scheduled to assume the responsibilities of his or her new position on July 1, 2014.

One parent indicated that she would like the new superintendent to have previous experience as a district superintendent. The school board members noted that while such experience may be helpful, it is not required of the applicants. Another parent commented that she would like the new superintendent to have particular expertise in regard to finance and budgeting, while another parent indicated that she would like a superintendent who is willing to be readily accessible to students, parents, faculty and staff.

The school board members reported that in their previous discussions with parents across the district, among other requests, the following particular requests have been made: 1) someone who will focus on special-needs students, 2) someone who will focus on general population students, and 3) someone with experience with one-to-one laptop computer initiatives.

One parent in attendance indicated that the search should not be focused internally. The school board members made assurances that all candidates, both internal and external, will be reviewed fairly. Experts in regard to the search of district superintendents within the state will be consulted at each of the four major public universities within the state. Three different groups will review each application, which will require each of the candidates to address in writing, his or her past experience, strengths and weaknesses and plans for the future.

A parent concluded that the new superintendent will need to be an innovator in order to maintain the excellent reputation of the School Town of Munster. All other questions or comments in regard to the search may be forwarded directly to the School Board or via Principal Mrs. Ellis or PTO President Becky McKeever.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Party Planning - Patty Oganovich

The Holiday party planning meeting is tomorrow, Thursday, November 21st, at 7:00 pm in the cafetorium. The doors to the school building are required to be locked in the evening; any late-arriving volunteers should call the phone number that will be posted on the door in order to gain entry to the building. All background checks for party planning volunteers must be completed *prior* to the Holiday room parties; all room party volunteers should complete this process ASAP.

B. Scrip - Jill Krieg

Treasurer Jill Krieg reported that she and President Becky McKeever are chairing the Scrip fundraiser this school year. Several gift cards are on-hand and available for purchase after tonight's meeting. An order form, which will include gift cards for

establishments that are not on-hand, will be distributed before the Holidays. In addition, a regular monthly submission date for gift card orders is being planned.

C. Dining for Dollars – Jolene Gelarden

Co-Chairperson Jolene Gelarden reported that diners should present the voucher that was distributed for tomorrow night's Chipotle event when placing their order. The FHH PTO is to receive fifty percent (50%) of all orders placed with such voucher during the hours of 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Munster Chipotle. \$50 was raised at the most recent Little Tokyo event; the owner generously raised this donation to \$100. Another Five Guys fundraiser has been planned for December whereby the FHH PTO will receive twenty-five percent (25%) of orders placed -- as long as orders placed total at least \$400.

Jolene also reminded the membership about the upcoming dining/play event at Jaks on Thursday, January 9th. There is no school on the 10th. It's from 5-9 pm, and for \$25, each student will get pizza, pop, a game card worth \$10 and access to all attractions. This is a \$40 value for \$25. For each ticket sold, the FHH PTO will receive \$5. Order forms for tickets for the event have been distributed; tickets are to be distributed to the students in envelopes marked "To the parents of . . ."

D. Terracycle – Suzanne Regan

Chairperson Suzanne Regan offered a reminder in regard to the items that are accepted under this recycling program: 1) any brand of chip bags and juice pouches, 2) tape dispensers, 3) inkjet cartridges, 4) toner cartridges, and 5) pairs of shoes of any type (with no holes), except for sandals, slippers, crocs and skates. Suzanne also announced that the FHH Terracycle program will donate "Terracycle points" (with a value of less than \$20) to the FHH K-Kids organization in order to assist in procuring egg-laying geese for underdeveloped communities across the globe. The geese will be procured through a self-sustaining program offered through Heifer International, a charity organization working to end hunger and poverty around the world by providing livestock and training to struggling communities. A "goose-o-meter" will be posted in the school in order to gauge the progress of the program in securing the geese.

E. Market Day – Sara Brunetti

Co-Chairperson Sara Brunetti reported that regular monthly Market Day sales totaled over \$170 this month and Holiday pie sales totaled nearly \$800.

F. Spirit Wear - Nicole Nita

This school year's Spirit Wear sale will close at midnight *tonight*.

G. Digitally Speaking - Tracy Collins

Editor Tracy Collins requested that all chairpersons forward electronic copies of all PTO-related handouts to her in order to incorporate such information into the weekly newsletter.

H. School Board - Becky McKeever for Ingrid Schwarz Wolf

Tracy Collins' efforts in regard to *Digitally Speaking* were complimented by School Board member Paula Nellans, who has requested to be placed on the newsletter's distribution list.

It was noted that Wilbur Wright Middle School technology teacher Christine Jeftich has been awarded the Indiana Computer Educators ("ICE") Teacher of the Year award.

IX. Unfinished Business

A. Teacher Grant Process

Teacher grant applications are due from the faculty next Wednesday, November 27th. Members of the teacher grant process team will meet after Thanksgiving to review the applications. Any member interested in participating in the review should contact President Becky McKeever. \$7,500 has been set aside for distribution under this program.

X. New Business

A. BrainPOP Subscription

BrainPOP is an animated education program for students in a wide-range of subject areas. In prior years, the FHH PTO funded the FHH subscription to this program. Mrs. Ellis indicated that this program will be even more helpful to students than it has been in the past, as the program is now directly tied to acuity standards. President Becky McKeever motioned to approve the renewal of this subscription. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote of the membership in attendance.

B. Presentation of Student Awards

President Becky McKeever reported that the PTO is partnering with Culver's to recognize the achievement of student groups, as identified by Mrs. Christina Brunetti, FHH social worker. Each recognized student will receive a free scoop of custard, compliments of the Schererville Culver's. This month, two groups of students are being recognized: 1) Peer mentors Julianna Dodge, Genevieve Johns and Grace Snyder, who all assist with their special-needs classmates, and 2) students in grades one (1) through five (5) who are new to FHH this school year. Recess Aide Tina Certa recommended that these achievements be announced to the student body during the school day in the cafeteria during the lunch period.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.