



PTO Meeting
21-22 August 2013
6:00 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 September 18, 2013.

Note: The first PTO meeting of the 2013-2014 school year was held in duplicate on Wednesday, August 21, 2013 and Thursday, August 22, 2013 in order to accommodate members attending classroom orientations in the school building on each of those respective evenings. Agenda, structure and content (except where noted below) were identical.)

I. Welcome

A. Call to Order

The first PTO meeting of the year was called to order by President Becky McKeever at 6:08 p.m. on both August 21, 2013 and August 22, 2013.

B. Sign-in Sheet

In addition to the PTO Board and Mrs. Ellis, meeting attendees on the evening of August 21, 2013 included: Tina Certa, Vanja Savic, Galvin Kauffman, Pete Piskol, Natalie Tomich, Ude Eko, E. Vazquez, Karin Saltanovitz, Julie Landmesser, Tracey VanBuskirk, Kim Morgan, Carrie Lauritzen, Laura Adams, Lisa Merz & Brian Merz, Julie Gideon, Marcy Smitka, R. Garcia, Jen/Scott Stevens, Shilpa Patel, Holly Harle, Dusanka Pilja, Kyle & Melissa Goad, Anupama Subramanian, Kenya Adamson, Ali Illyas, Diana Illyas, Renee Castro, Juliann Acevez, Jamie Grogan, Juan & Letty Ramirez, Samantha Munoz, Debbie Hansen, Jen Johns and an unidentified parent.

In addition to the PTO Board and Mrs. Ellis, meeting attendees on the evening of August 22, 2013 included: Tammy Vesolowski, Linda Osborn, Bridgette Jones, Patty Queros, Stephanie Orange, Patty Oganovich, Jolene Gelarden, Aleka Dovellos, Cheryl Brody, Suzanne Regan, Mary Beth Tepper, Susie Dodge, Nicole Nita, Wayne Ault, Julie Giba, Becky Stephan, Yoko Silver, Karyn Condes, Rosalida Reyna-Cordova, Laura Gauderman, Sara Brunetti, Twana Skrobot, Tracy Collins, Renee Downs, Murali Bitla, Leigh Ann Westland, Stella Lebron, Paula Serrano, Gen Thompson, Lynette Ault, Shaun Kondamuri, Angie Konstantinopoulos, Robin Poulsen, Georgia Geis and Natalie Tomich.

II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

On August 21, 2013 and August 22, 2013, Jen Johns and Tammy Vesolowski, respectively, motioned to approve the May 15, 2013 draft meeting minutes as presented; Natalie Tomich and Stephanie Orange, respectively, seconded the motion. The May 15, 2013 draft meeting minutes were approved as presented by a majority of the vote.

III. Treasurer's Report

A. Introduction

New Board member Jill Krieg introduced herself as Treasurer for the 2013-2014 school year and provided an overview of the regular monthly Treasurer's report.

B. 2012/2013 Year-End Budget Report

A recap of last year's budget report (August 1, 2012 - July 31, 2013) showed a beginning balance of \$18,770.38 and an ending balance of \$18,821.23. Actual total fundraising for the year was \$37,959.99. Actual total program expenses were \$37,909.14. A year-to-date monthly budget report will be provided at each PTO meeting.

C. Review of Forms to Be Submitted

Whenever money is transferred to/from the Treasurer, a specific colored form must be completed for each situation (blue for reimbursement requests, pink for check requests and orange/salmon for deposits). These forms are available in the main office. A documentation trail is necessary for all transactions. Items for reimbursement must be itemized on the reimbursement request form if the purchase of personal items is included on the submitted receipt(s). Jill Krieg should be contacted with any questions. Becky McKeever noted that all of last year's books, notes and transactions were reviewed by two separate parties, one of whom was Jill Krieg in order to acquaint herself with her new duties as Treasurer.

IV. Secretary's Report

A. Introduction

Returning Board member Barb Heritage introduced herself as Secretary for the 2013-2014 school year and provided an overview of the regular monthly Secretary's report.

B. Thank You/Correspondence Updates

The PTO received thank you notes for all the appreciation efforts during last school year's Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week from: Julie Stolarz, Julie Stooksbury and Susan Watterson. The PTO received thank you notes for classroom supply reimbursements awarded at the end of last school year from: Lynette Ashby, Julia Derwinski and Judy Vega. The PTO was thanked for all its efforts during the 2012-2013 school year, such as "Tasty Tuesdays," Teacher Appreciation Week, classroom supply reimbursements and "Four Star" T-shirts, from: Betty Lukoshus and Julie Stolarz. The PTO also received thank you notes from the following newly retired faculty and staff members for their retirement gifts and for all the efforts of the PTO throughout each of their respective tenures at FHH from: Susan Bobos, Jan Kowalisyn, Debbie Markovich, Ivy Mastey and Gayle Pleitner.

Becky McKeever explained that "Teacher Appreciation Week" refers to the one week each spring during which students and the PTO express particular appreciation for all efforts of faculty and staff members. "Classroom supply reimbursements" reference the fact that traditionally the PTO has provided FHH teachers and staff with a reimbursement for classroom supplies at the end of each school year. The exact amount of reimbursement has fluctuated over the last several years; last school year, the reimbursement amount per individual teacher was \$150. Teachers may save receipts for purchases made throughout the year or may make an end-of-the-year

classroom purchase. Traditionally, not all teachers have applied for reimbursement. It was also explained that traditionally the PTO has provided retiring FHH faculty and staff members with a retirement gift of \$10 for each year of service.

V. Vice President's Report

A. Introduction

Returning Board member Natalie Raffin introduced herself as Vice President for the 2013-2014 school year and provided an overview of the regular monthly Vice President's report.

B. *Frankly Speaking*

Committee chairs were reminded that the deadline for contributions to *Frankly Speaking* is two weeks before publication, which occurs every quarter on the day that grades are posted to Power Parent.

C. Trophy Case

Parents were reminded that space is available in the trophy case in the front lobby for the display of students' personal items, such as collections, souvenirs, etc. Usage applications are to be made with FHH Social Worker Mrs. Christina Brunetti, who determines whether such applications are appropriate based on educational and informational criteria. The first display of the school year has been scheduled for next week.

VI. President's Report

A. Introduction

Prior-year Treasurer Becky McKeever introduced herself as President for the 2013-2014 school year and provided an overview of the regular monthly President's report.

B. Volunteer Recognition

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

- Suzanne Regan for creating an inviting entrance to our school with her hard work in regard to the summer landscaping efforts of the Beautification Committee and
- Chris Ashcraft for recruiting and organizing volunteers for registration, thereby helping to streamline the registration process for all FHH families.

C. Presidents' Meeting Report

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, which was held at the end of the last school year in May:

- School Town bus transportation has been reinstated for field trip usage.
- The district's second International Festival has been scheduled for October 13th from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Munster High School. This festival will showcase Munster's diversity through various cultural offerings, such as food, music and dance.

- The School Town underwent its district-wide accreditation process last spring. The AdvanceEd report was presented at the meeting and is available on the School Town’s website.

On the evening of August 22, 2013, Wayne Ault asked if any field trips have already been planned for this school year. Examples of planned field trips included the following: the fifth grade trip to Camp Goodfellow, the fourth grade trips to Indianapolis and the Challenger Learning Center, and the second grade trips to County Line Orchard and Buckley Homestead.

VII. Principal’s Report

A. AdvanceEd Report

The district underwent its accreditation process last school year as part of a five-year cycle. Mrs. Ellis reported that overall the process went very well and noted that the final report from AdvanceEd has been posted to the School Town’s website.

B. Parent Support

Mrs. Ellis commented on how the amount of parent support at FHH has had a huge impact on the school’s “Four Star” status. She reported that Frank H. Hammond Elementary received designation as a “Four Star School” from the Indiana Department of Education. She also acknowledged that most PTO efforts are done in conjunction with the building’s academic objectives.

C. Request for Topics of Interest at PTO Meetings

Mrs. Ellis has requested that parents submit requests in regard to topics that she should address at future PTO meetings. For example, as a way to address one potential topic of interest, she would like to invite Munster Police Officer Ghrist to be a guest speaker at a fall PTO meeting to address the issue of bullying and new state laws relative to bullying.

D. Electronic Communication

Mrs. Ellis noted that PTO meeting agendas are usually posted in advance of the meetings and distributed via the School Messenger system. Therefore, parents could make an effort to attend meetings that are to be of particular interest to them. Parents should recognize the importance of providing the front office with current e-mail addresses, as Mrs. Ellis is able to communicate with FHH families through the use of this medium in a timely manner. Families who do not have access to e-mail should be aware that critical information can also be found on the FHH website.

On the evening of August 21, 2013, Julie Gideon inquired as to the availability of prior year ISTEP scores. Mrs. Ellis explained that there were technical issues with last year’s testing process, and as such, scores have not yet been released; she anticipates that they *may* be released by the end of August.

On the evening of August 22, 2013, Natalie Tomich inquired about the efforts that the school (and/or district) was making to address the issue of safety, aside from the closed-lunch policy that began during the last school year. Mrs. Ellis explained that safety procedures are constantly being reviewed. For example, the possibility of making a grant application from the State of Indiana for an electronic access control system is currently being explored. Schools work directly with the Munster Police Department in developing their safety procedures. As a matter of policy, safety

procedures employed in circumstances such as a “Code Red” cannot be published. A presenter at a recently attended school safety conference commented on the advanced nature of safety procedures at schools located in the State of Indiana in comparison with those located in other states.

VIII. Committee Reports

Becky McKeever noted that on a regular basis committee chairpersons are given the opportunity to present volunteer requests and other committee updates. In the interest of brevity, committee chairpersons submitted information in advance of the first meeting of the school year, and Board members summarized the following committee announcements:

Back to School BBQ

Chairperson Jen Johns invites all families to join us at the Family Fall Fest Back to School BBQ on Wednesday, August 28th from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. on the grounds of FHH.

- Participating families will enjoy dinner, games, teacher raffles and fellowship with fellow FHH families.
- Additional information, RSVP (\$15/family) and volunteer forms were to have been sent home on Tuesday, August 20th.
- RSVP and volunteer forms are due for a quick turnaround on Thursday, August 22nd.

Golden Opportunities Coupon Book Fundraiser

Co-chairpersons Patty Oganovich and Stephanie Orange announce that *Golden Opportunities* coupon books are scheduled to be sent home with all students on Monday, August 26th.

- FHH had participated in an *Entertainment* coupon book fundraiser for the past several years, but the *Entertainment* book company filed for bankruptcy within the past year.
- The price of each *Golden Opportunities* coupon book is \$25: \$10 will come back directly to the FHH PTO.
- Parents should note that numerous merchants featured in the book make their coupon offer value more than once and of those that do, most are valid *every* month!

Art and Music in Action

Chairperson Susie Dodge announces that the Art and Music in Action program can always use more volunteers.

- It's one of the best ways for parents to get involved in their children's education at FHH because volunteers are actually in the classroom, helping kids learn about famous artists and musicians.
- Susie will assign each volunteer a monthly topic at least once during the school year; volunteers coordinate with their child's teacher the best time to come in to talk to the class.
- Most of the work is already done, too! The PTO keeps file folders full of information about each topic and related project ideas. They are kept in the PTO closet and available for the use of all volunteers.
- Showing YouTube videos on an artist is also very popular and makes things easier for volunteers.
- Now that FHH has a closed lunch policy, this is one of the few opportunities where parents can still be involved in their children's day.
- Interested parents may contact Susie Dodge at susandodge1@hotmail.com.

Birthday Recognition Calendar

Chairperson Linda Osborn reminds parents that the Birthday Recognition Calendar bulletin board recognizes each student during the month of his or her birthday.

- Parents are asked to remind their children to look for their names during their birthday months.
- Students really enjoy finding their name on the wall, and it is a nice way to recognize students' birthdays - especially since parents are no longer able to send-in edible birthday treats for their children's classmates.

Terracycle

Chairperson Suzanne Regan announces that the Terracycle program is proud to announce that we are now part of a charitable shoe recycling effort.

- This program will allow us to share our outgrown belongings with those who are less fortunate.
- All sizes and styles of shoe (including adult footwear) are accepted (except slippers and sandals).
- As with all other Terracycle programs, the school earns money just by participating.
- Just bring in your outgrown shoes and place them in the blue Terracycle bin. They will be boxed-up, mailed off, and sent to developing countries where footwear is in short supply.
- Suzanne would like to thank you in advance for being part of this charitable effort.
- Terracycle also accepts empty inkjet and toner cartridges, plastic (scotch-type) tape dispensers, and used cell phones, as well as the empty packaging from any brand of snack chip and juice pouch.
- Terracycle keeps all these items out of the trash and earns money for FHH in the process.
- Parents with questions may contact Suzanne Regan at drmsvoss@hotmail.com.

Beautification

Chairperson Suzanne Regan announces that the Beautification Committee is still accepting new members.

- Volunteers need no special knowledge or prior gardening experience.
- All work is done outdoors and in the fresh air.
- The Beautification Committee is a fun and easy-going group that takes a lot of pride in our beautiful school.
- Interested parents may sign-up tonight to serve on the committee or check the box for "more information," and Suzanne will email you.

Book Fair

Co-Chairpersons Chris Ashcraft and Jill Krieg announce that the fall book fair will be in November.

- It takes many volunteers to run this event, but it's an easy one to work.
- Volunteers help students shop and may even work during their children's class shopping times.
- Volunteers will also be able to help our school and buy some holiday gift items, all at the same time!
- Interested parents may sign-up tonight to serve on the committee.

Veterans Day Assembly

Chairperson Tammy Vesolowski announces that FHH's Second Annual Veterans' Day Assembly is scheduled for Wednesday, November 13th.

- On this day, FHH will honor all veterans - especially those with a connection to FHH.
- Several volunteers are needed; both on the day of the event and in preparation thereof.
- Interested parents may contact Tammy Vesolowski at yessomommy@att.net (email), (219)545-9373 (cell), or (219)513-6034 (home).

Fun Fair

Chairperson Tammy Vesolowski announces that it's not too early to begin thinking about the FHH Fun Fair, which is scheduled for February 28, 2014.

- It is the single largest FHH PTO fundraiser of the school year, and many volunteers are needed.
- Interested parents may contact Tammy Vesolowski at yessomommy@att.net (email), (219)545-9373 (cell), or (219)513-6034 (home).

On the evening of August 21, 2013, the following questions were raised in regard to *Golden Opportunities* coupon books: Tina Certa asked what the timeline for return would be and whether the coupons were valid only in Northwest Indiana. It was noted that payment, order for additional books and/or the return of unsold books will be required to be made by September 13th. The *Golden Opportunities* book is primarily a local coupon book with offers available in Northwest Indiana and Chicago's south suburbs. Natalie Tomich asked what other organizations make the book available for purchase. It was noted that the complete list of local organizations offering the book is not known to the FHH PTO.

IX. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was noted.

X. New Business

A. 2013/2014 Goals

The proposed 2013/2014 PTO goals were presented for review. President Becky McKeever noted that the goals will be opened for discussion and voted upon at the next PTO meeting to be held on Wednesday, September 18th.

On the evening of August 22, 2013, Suzanne Regan inquired about the proposed goal of funding a scholarship program to offer financial assistance for families in need. Becky McKeever explained that the PTO has offered such assistance for several years but that such funding was used during the last school year for the first time. The PTO would like to increase the visibility of this program. All applications are made through Social Worker Mrs. Brunetti and are anonymous to the PTO Board and its members.

On the same evening, speaking in regard to teacher support, Mary Beth Tepper asked if Mrs. Debbie Markovich, retired FHH kindergarten teacher, received a gift from the PTO upon her retirement at the end of the last school year. Becky McKeever noted that although Mrs. Markovich announced her retirement after the last day of the last school year, her retirement gift was processed at the same time as those of the other retiring faculty and staff.

B. 2013/2014 Budget

The proposed 2013/2014 PTO budget was presented for review. Treasurer Jill Krieg noted that the budget will be opened for discussion and voted upon at the next PTO meeting to be held on Wednesday, September 18th. Jill acknowledged the following typographical error located at the bottom of the page: the proposed ending balance will be as of June 30, 2014 (rather than June 30, 2013, as noted therein). She also highlighted the following items: The sale of *Golden Opportunities* coupon books will replace the sale of *Entertainment* coupon books as the fall fundraiser; the Scrip gift card sale and the Spring Flower sale will not be listed as fundraisers until the structured details of both programs have become more apparent; the proposed expenditure of PTO supplies has been increased from the prior year budgeted amount to account for the potential purchase of copy paper; the proposed field trip funding expenditure has been decreased from that of the prior year to account for the return of School Town bus usage; the amount of proposed expenditure for the Teacher Grant Program has been decreased from that of the prior year to emphasize the competitive nature of that program; the proposed appreciation expenditure has been re-titled to "Volunteer Appreciation/Student Recognition" in order to provide a more accurate description of the manner in which those funds are planned to be spent. Jill also explained that the PTO would like to decrease its yearly end-of-year carryover cash balance.

On the evening of August 21, 2013, Natalie Tomich noted that in prior years she requested the regular posting of "classroom wish lists" and asked why no such lists have been posted on a regular basis to date. Becky McKeever noted that the school-wide implementation of such a program would be an on-going cumbersome endeavor and as such no particular plan is currently in place to implement such a program; she also noted that approximately forty-five (45) faculty and staff members are invited to participate in a classroom reimbursement at the end of each school year as a way to offset teachers' out-of-pocket classroom expenditures.

On the evening of August 22, 2013, Wayne Ault requested examples of items granted under prior year teacher grant programs. Examples given included classroom subscriptions, the purchase of on-line educational programs, and continuing education opportunities.

Also that evening, Natalie Tomich asked for details regarding the purchase of "Four Star" t-shirts for the student body at the end of the previous school year. Becky McKeever explained that the PTO Board was approached by Mrs. Ellis after the last PTO meeting of the previous school year in regard to providing a tangible reward for student efforts in regard to this achievement. Becky noted that several reward ideas were discussed (including ice cream treats and other star-shaped trinkets) before deciding on school t-shirts. It was thought that the distribution of such a tangible reward may have practical future uses such as the promotion of pride within the community and easy student identification on future potential field trips. Becky also noted that faculty and staff t-shirts were purchased through a generous donation from the K-Kids organization.

Finally, on that same evening, Angie Konstantinopoulos commended the PTO for its proposed forward-thinking investment in the library, as proposed at the end of the previous school year.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m. on both August 21, 2013 and August 22, 2013.



PTO Goals 2013-2014

- Teachers:
 - Further develop Teacher Grant application process to encourage thoughtful applications that emphasize the competitive nature of the program
 - Develop a regular communication system for sharing information between teachers and PTO
 - Provide ongoing support through PTO committee volunteers
 - Support professional development

- Students/Families:
 - Continue to offer increased field trip funding to offset costs to families at all grade levels
 - Fund scholarship program to offer financial support for families in need of book fees/laptop fees
 - Expand Dining for Dollars program to include additional fellowship opportunities for fundraising
 - Explore opportunities to promote community among FHH families

- Communications:
 - Create scheduled school-wide PTO communications utilizing School Messenger and email distribution
 - Evolve Room Coordinator program to become specifically a classroom resource based on individual teacher's needs
 - Create a committee to assist in designing flyers, posters, email templates for communications

- Technology:
 - Optimize building resources by creating a catalog of school-wide hardware and software for use by entire staff
 - Continue to transform the library to a media center with enhanced technology resources

Frank H. Hammond PTO 2013-2014 Budget

Beginning Balance 08/01/13	\$18,821.23
Fundraising	
PTO Membership	\$1,500.00
Spirit Wear	\$500.00
Golden Opportunities	\$3,500.00
Book Fair	\$5,000.00
Market Day	\$1,800.00
Box Tops	\$2,000.00
Meijer Rebate	\$100.00
Target Rebate	\$500.00
Terracycle	\$100.00
Fun Fair	\$10,000.00
Kidz Clozet Sale	\$1,000.00
School Supplies	\$700.00
Dining for Dollars	\$1,500.00
Total Fundraising	\$28,200.00
Program Expenses	
Friends Here to Help	(\$150.00)
Back to School BBQ	(\$500.00)
DARE Program	(\$1,300.00)
Red Ribbon Week	(\$500.00)
PTO Supplies	(\$500.00)
Educational Grant Fund	(\$750.00)
Field Trips	(\$10,000.00)
Landscaping	(\$500.00)
Art/Music in Action	(\$50.00)
Birthday Recognition	(\$50.00)
Insurance/PTO Today	(\$600.00)
Miscellaneous	(\$500.00)
Academic Night	(\$1,000.00)
Teacher Grants	(\$7,500.00)
Technology	(\$2,000.00)
Equip/Educ. Supplies	(\$1,500.00)
Variety Show	(\$100.00)
Grandparents Day	(\$400.00)
Staff Appreciation Week	(\$1,500.00)
Tasty Tuesday	(\$1,000.00)
Dare Graduation	(\$1,000.00)
Volunteer Appreciation/Student	(\$750.00)
Field Day	(\$750.00)
Assemblies	(\$1,000.00)
Library/Media Center Improvement	(\$6,000.00)
Classroom Supply Reimbursement	
Total Program Expenses	(\$39,900.00)
Ending Balance 06/30/14	\$7,121.23