

UPPER ST. CLAIR PTA COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING WITH STATE PTA REPRESENTATIVES MINUTES
March 4, 2015
11:00 a.m.

This meeting was held at Fort Couch Middle School.

- Introductions were made.
 - Bonita Allen and Mark Connor came to speak with members of our Executive Board and the presidents and vice presidents of each unit. Our HS PTSO president and vice president were also in attendance.

Mark:

- Impressed with everyone that is here, shows involvement and a connectedness of your schools. Would like to know why we are here.

Brooke:

- We had some issues over the winter break involving our paper work with a few of the units. This prompted us to take a close look at what our bylaws are.
- For a few years now, we have discussed the issue of our HS PTSO being a Reporting Organization and not having a vote in the PTA Council.
- Many of our units are contemplating PTO and other Parent-Teacher options to find out what is best for our schools and our kids.
- Council wants to represent every unit, whether PTSO, PTO, PTA. We would like to stay cohesive and have every unit on equal standing with the ability to have a say in what is decided at the Council level.
- We have experienced divisiveness in our District regarding the International Baccalaureate Program, and we would like to avoid that here at Council.

Bonita asked the question – Was the HS organization ever a PTA?

- Brooke and Kristy confirmed that the HS PTSO dates back to 1995. Since the PTA's were established in 1993, we think that NO the PTSO was never a PTA.

Mark:

- Many schools start as a PTO but don't understand the difference, and then join a PTA so they can depend on leadership that they need.
- The question is – What is this Council trying to accomplish?

Brooke:

- We would like to have all units come together to share and better all committees, including membership, directory, etc.
- We want the HS to have an equal vote. Right now we want the HS PTSO to have an equal vote at our Council table.

Mark:

- That is great that you want to all work together.
- We have many well defined, researched programs from the national PTA.
 - PTA.org – the “Schools” link has programs for families engaging in reading for literacy in K-5. This program is powered by Kindle.
 - There is the School of Excellence award, involving family engagement and getting kids and families involved.
- Pittsburgh Public Schools have both PTAs and PTOs, and probably more PTOs. They work together with no problem.
- As far as PTA Council goes, there is “nothing that says we have to be a PTA Council.”
- Council does not have to have bearing on the schools it connects.
- If non-PTA, you could not take part in the School of Excellence program.

- For any of these programs, see what works for you. We are about educational outcomes, community connectedness and family engagement.

Bonita:

- Regarding the HS, why not include the HS unit president and vice president by them becoming PTA members?

Brooke:

- Where would that fall in the by-laws?

Bonita:

- A community member can join any PTA whether their child is at the school or not. The Executive Board portion of by-laws would include verbage that states “HS PTSO has guest seats”. Executive Board would be made up of elected officers, unit presidents and alternates, and 2 guest PTA members as designated by the board.
- Council could pay their dues by a standing rule saying “membership is paid as a courtesy by council.”

Kristy Lee

- Is this situation typical? To vote at a school where one has no membership? We have a concern over having a vote where there is no vested interest.

Mark/Bonita

- You do not have to have a child in the school where you have a PTA membership. Many aunts, uncles, grandparents and parents that no longer have children at the school become members to support the school.

Daphna

- What are the advantages of a PTA? In California most of the schools had PTOs.

Bonita

- The national organization. Dues are \$5 per membership. \$2.25 to national. \$2.75 to state.
- Information to PTA members on topics that are research based that work.
- Information emailed to all officers.
- We have a voice in the programs that affect education.
- Title 1 – parent involvement, family engagement. Title 1 is defined in the law for funds to be set aside for engagement. And one of your schools is a Title 1 school here.
- National PTA has propositions they are supporting for student drivers – how we are teaching our students to drive.
- We are an advocacy organization.
- Assistance with how we run the books, setting up the books for audits.

Mark

- There are 3 buckets.
 - Family engagement. We have a great anti-bullying program.
 - Advocacy – national and state. Briefs coming to us.
 - Arts – Reflections and more. Emphasis on bringing the arts back to school.
 - Also – awards and recognition.
- Sometimes we feel like it’s just us fighting to get all this done, but we are connected to 55,000 PTA members across the state. Schools have same problems and issues. Some schools don’t get connected if they are doing it by themselves. If they could make connections and utilize best practices, the state can highlight and duplicate these.

Bonita

- There are classes online of courses regarding information that would be helpful with family engagement.
- Reflections is a big draw. State results are just in and USC has 6 State placements. 3 in 1st place, 2 in 2nd place, and 1 in 5th place. These students are invited to the state convention in Erie for a breakfast in April. 1st place winners go to the national convention in June. National picks 1 student nationwide across all categories and age ranges to attend the national convention for free and have their art on display.
- Regarding dissolution, the state representative needs to be invited and come to the Executive Board of each unit that is interested and speak to the Executive Board. The Executive Board decides if they want to vote to take it to the general membership to dissolve their PTA, and this vote takes 2/3rds to bring it to the membership. Then the state representative is invited and attends the general membership meeting and speaks to the general membership regarding dissolution, The present members vote at this meeting to dissolve. This also needs a 2/3rds vote to dissolve.

Joyce

- Questions about the accounts. The day that a vote passes in the general membership meeting of each unit, we are dissolved immediately that day. Are our accounts going to be drained?

Bonita

- My advice is to drain your accounts before you dissolve. The money needs to go to an “organization with the same mission.” The mission of the PTA..look at the bylaws...the mission of another 501c won’t be exactly the same. Spend all you money.

Mark

- We can’t take your money and we don’t want your money.

Bonita

- Hand over your books, I will let you pay your bills, make sure money is designated for upcoming bills.

Brooke

- If Council dissolves, would it affect current Reflections?

Bonita

- If you have no PTA Council, then the students that are winners from your individual schools all get judged in a larger pool with other schools that do not have PTA Council either. Students go into a larger pool for “Council” level.

Mark

- You don’t all have to dissolve. There are options for some to dissolve. There are advantages of being connected together.

Brooke

- Thank you for your time. We will be in touch. Would you prefer email or a phone call?

Bonita

- Phone call please.

Meeting adjourned 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rachelle Engel