PTA Meeting Minutes

Date: November 21, 2024

Time: 9:32am

Location: Virtual

1. Call to Order

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Meeting called to order by Amanda Palermo.
- Approval of Agenda:
    - Emily Hand motioned to approve the agenda.
    - Seconded by Natalie Jaskowski.
    - Agenda approved unanimously.
- Approval of September 2024 Meeting Minutes:
    - Motion made by Heather Elmer, seconded by Amanda Walton.
    - September 2024 minutes approved with no changes or objections.
    - Link to September minutes included in PTA bulletin.

2. Treasurer's Report (Heather Elmer)

Budget Overview:

- Budgeted Loss Goal: $4,835. Efforts to minimize this loss are ongoing.
- Income:
- Year-to-date income: $26,000.

- Expected total income for the year: $30,300.
- Expenses:
- Year-to-date expenses: $15,000.
- Projected year-end expenses: $35,000 or higher, due to increased field trip costs.
- Field trip costs are projected to exceed the budget by $1,000.
- Projected Year-End Loss: $1,100.
- Current Bank Balance: $29,000.
- Administrative Updates:
- Sales Tax Exemption Renewal, Tax Return, and BCO-23 filings are completed, as well as the Gifts to School form.
- Membership Dues:
- Membership participation is slightly lower than previous years. Discussions about rebranding dues as “Activity Fees” are ongoing.
- Discussion:
- Lucy Curran asked about the loss, prompting a detailed explanation of rising field trip costs and the conservative budget planning process.

3. Secretary’s Report (Presented by Emily Hand)

- No new correspondence or updates to report.

4. President’s Report (Presented by Amanda Palermo)

- PTC Staff Appreciation Brunch:
- A district-wide staff appreciation brunch for administration staff was successfully hosted, everyone that attended expressed their gratitude.
- Baker’s Staff Brunch is scheduled for Monday, with parent volunteers supporting the event.

- PTA Membership and Rebranding:

- Discussions focused on renaming PTA dues (e.g., “Activity Fee”) to make membership more inviting and better communicate the PTA’s contributions to the school, such as funding field trips.

- Proposed adding reminders or flyers to field trip forms to educate parents on the PTA’s role in funding these activities.

5. Vice President’s Report (Presented by Halley Casey)

- Harvest Parties:

- Expressed thanks to homeroom coordinators (HRCs) for organizing successful Harvest Parties and putting together the Boo Bash raffle baskets.

- Winter Parties:

- Scheduled for December 19th at 2:00 PM.

- Teachers will provide parents with more details, including opportunities to volunteer or contribute to classroom holiday gifts.

- Staff Favorite Things Survey:

- A Google Form was created to gather detailed staff preferences for gifts and appreciation efforts.

- Over 20 staff members have already responded, and results will be shared with parents after Thanksgiving.

- Expressed appreciation to Bethany Salmen for sharing the forms with the teachers and collecting those in the past years.

6. 2nd Vice President’s Report (Presented by Dr. McClintock-Comeaux)

- School Rankings and Achievements:

- Baker School ranked in the top 10 of all public schools in Pennsylvania by U.S. News & World Report.

- Highlighted the school's outstanding growth score, which measures individual student progress, as a key factor in teacher evaluations.

- Staff Updates:

- Mrs. O'Leary had a baby, and substitute plans are in place for her class through the holiday season.

- Nurse Holly received an award at a Pittsburgh Penguins game.

- Parent Participation:

- Gratitude expressed for parent support during events like Boo Bash, Harvest Parties, and parent/teacher conferences.

- Encouraged parents to provide feedback and share ideas for improving school activities and culture.

7. Committee Reports/Upcoming Events

- **After School Activities:**

- Kelly Myers reported that 150 students participated in the fall session.

- Robotics for Kindergarten was highly popular, with a waitlist.

- Additional Kindergarten options will be explored for the spring.

- Will require more volunteers due to Kindergartners needing additional help with activities.

- Spring session expected in March-April; planning will begin in February.

- . **Arts in USC Update**

- The Arts in USC program is currently in the planning stages.

- Halley Casey reported that updates are still in progress.

- The committee is working on creative ways to enhance arts education and engagement opportunities for students.
- Collaboration with teachers and community resources is a key focus.
- Specific event or program details are expected to be shared in the coming months.
- **Boo Bash:** (Betsy Wilson/Amanda Walton)
- Event raised over $16,500.
- Amanda Walton shared that Boo Bash was a fun and well-attended fall event for families.
- Activities included updated and new games for kids to enjoy. 17 games are all brand new or rehabbed. This went over $500, but the games brought in $4,400.
- Fundraising
- Generated over $4,400 in revenue through ticket sales, raffles, and sponsorships.
- Future Planning
- Organizers plan to start preparations earlier and explore more fundraising opportunities.
- **Assemblies:**
- Spring Planning - Megan Hinch
- Two assemblies are being planned for the spring.
- Cultural Dance Assembly: Scheduled to coincide with Cultural Affairs, tentatively in late January.
- Civic Light Opera (CLO): Possible assembly in early April, pending scheduling to avoid conflicts with PSSA testing.
- Final details are being finalized by Megan Hinch.

- **Celebration Books** (Diana Slanders)

  • Families can honor special occasions by dedicating books to the school library.

  • This initiative supports literacy and builds the school's library collection.

  • Books can be purchased from an Amazon Wish List linked in the weekly PTA bulletin.

  • Mrs. Connor adds a bookplate to each book recognizing the dedication.

  • Students with dedicated books are given the opportunity during their library class to be able to check the book out first.

  • The program runs throughout the school year and is promoted weekly in the PTA bulletin.

  • **Baker Gives Back:** (Katie Marsh/Kara Krebs)

  • December's Notes for Neighbors project will collect holiday cards and flat crafts for Friendship Village residents from Dec. 9–20.

  • The second session of the club begins in January; signups will open soon for third and fourth graders.

  • **Enchanted Shop:** (Lindsay Minerd/Maya Brook)

  • Scheduled for Dec. 3-4, with items priced between $0.25 and $12.

  • Free items will be available for students that do not have money for this event.

  • Suggestion to improve student experiences by ensuring discreet options for those unable to bring money.

  • **Fall Book Fair:** (Diana Slanders/Erica Moore)

  • Successfully raised funds, on par with previous years.

- Next Book Fair: Late February to align with Read-a-Thon kickoff.
- **Fall Spirit Wear:** (Katy Cain)
- Online store remains open for additional orders.
- Eight orders are awaiting pickup in the Baker office.
- **Staff Appreciation:** (Bethany Salmen)
- Milkshake Day was a success.
- Ordered personalized notepads for all the staff at Baker ordered through the Shop at USC.
- Holiday Cookie Exchange will take place in December, with parents contributing cookies for staff to take home.
- January's tailgate-themed luncheon is planned to celebrate the new year.
- **Read-a-Thon:** (Jess Schroeck)
- Scheduled for February, following the Spring Book Fair.
- Volunteer recruitment underway. Interested individuals can contact the Committee Chair (Jess) for details.
- **Spelling Bee:** (Sarah Cranganu)
- Open to fourth-grade students.
- Scheduled for January 21st in the Baker library, with a backup date of January 22nd.
- Winner will advance to the regional Scripps Spelling Bee competition.
- **Spirit Nights:** (Amanda Palermo)
- Recent: Panera Spirit Night was successful.

- Upcoming: Evereve (December 5): Runs from 10 AM to 8 PM. Shoppers encouraged to visit during school hours or evening.

- Future Spirit Nights under consideration: Over the Bar or Chick-fil-A based on PTA Facebook poll results.

Teacher's Representative (Mrs. Connor)

- Spring author visit planned for March.

- Specific author name will be announced after the New Year.

- The event aims to inspire a love for reading and writing among students.

8. Unfinished Business

- Boo Bash Budget Overage Vote:

- The $555.54 overage for Boo Bash expenses was presented for membership approval per standing rules.

- Motion to approve made by Kelly Meyers, seconded by Bethany Salmen.

- Vote passed unanimously.

9. New Business

- Bingo Night:

- A 50/50 raffle has been proposed for February's Bingo Night to help raise additional funds.

- Approval from the County Treasurer is being pursued to ensure compliance by Amanda Palermo.

10. Announcements

- Executive Board Nominations:

- Vice President and Secretary positions will be open for the 2024-2025 school year.
- Interested parents are encouraged to reach out for more information or to nominate someone.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:25am

Minutes Prepared By: Emily Hand

Virtual Attendees:

Emily Hand

Kelly Meyers

Amanda Palermo

Halley Casey

Bethany Salmen

Lucy Curran

Patrick McClintock-Comeaux

Amanda Walton

Alexandra Zanic

Jenna Shuknecht

Daisy Miksch

Kara Krebs

Kate Kleinbaum

Monica Brown

Natalie Jaskowski

Richard (no last name)

Tia Kalas