Thursday, November 6, 2025

HKIMS PTO Meeting Minutes

Attendance

In-Person:

Nicole Harlow, PTO President	Julie Peryga, PTO Vice President	Kristi LiDonni, PTO Treasurer
Kelly Drajewicz	Eric Larson, IS Principal	Heather Persson, MS Principal
Steve Fitzgerald, MS Asst. Principal	Robin Duffield, MS Teacher Liaison	Lara Wowk, IS Band & Chorus Teacher
Mariah Miesel - PTO Secretary		

Remote:

Joseph Markim

Meeting Start: 6:00pm

Previous Business

- Review of October 9, 2025 minutes.
- MS Principal noted error in Minutes, Correction was made under her report. “8th Grade chorus permission slips going out soon for NYC”. The original had NHL instead of NYC as a typing error.
- Motion to approve minutes, with note of error to be corrected, made by Kelly, seconded by Kristi; no objections

President’s Report & Vice President’s Report

- Fall Fun Fest
    - Nicole thanked all for their help with making the Fall Fun Fest a success. She noted that she heard the new indoor activities were a success. The Photo frame craft would be coming home with children in the coming week. Nicole noted that the fall fest would not be possible without the leadership of Paige Callahan and Jessie Ford. She then noted this will be their last year leading this event as their children are phasing out of HKIMS and that the PTO will be looking for two new volunteers to take over this event.
    - Nicole said Paige has sent her all the details of the event and documents for the new committee heads when chosen.
    - Paige had some notes from this event. Her biggest note was to have more directions to be given to volunteers, perhaps doing a virtual call the night before would work. Also perhaps asking for a lead volunteer to stay outside and direct volunteers.
- Cougar Color Challenge
    - Nicole said Thank you to all for a wonderful Color Run. The event raised $26,100 and exceeded our projected goal. This amount may be more after she checks on any sponsorship matches to come in.
    - Nicole and Kelly noted that having the prize aspect this year really seemed to help boost the competition and helped the event exceed budget. As kids saw others winning the prizes, it boosted them to remember to ask their parents to register them so they could win prizes.
    - Nicole and HKIMS Principles all noted how great the event was and commented on how much fun the kids had. They also noted that this year was more organized, thanking each

other for that.

- Nicole noted the Bubble Run, which was new this year, did have a few students on it, but if they do it again next year, they need to order more bubble machines as the bubbles did not quite float as much as they would have liked. But all agreed it was a nice addition and seemed more zen for those kids who preferred that type of atmosphere.
- MS Principle, Heather, had a concern that if this event happens again next year, volunteers need to be more supervised and follow the rules. Some volunteers were dumping color powder on kids' heads. PTO agreed that they heard some parent volunteers were not following the rules, even though specific instructions given not to do that sort of dumping of color. Kelly noted that she did need to speak to some volunteers and the PTO in attendance were trying to resolve the powder dumping.
- Nicole noted that even though this year exceeded budget and was more organized, the color powder is a challenge to control. If PTO and HKIMS decide not to do it next year, we will need a comparable event in fun and excitement, but not as messy. PTO to review other options and bring those to the HKIMS team.
- Nicole noted, due to the success and enjoyment the students have, if we choose to keep it for next year, the PTO will need this event to have some committee chairs to assist in the organizing and volunteer leadership/training.
- Kelly noted that she had a bunch of bags, used to hold the shirts given out, to give back to Julie.
- Nicole asked HKIMS Principles to please have the two winning homerooms reach out to her by the end of this week with dates/times to coordinate the photo booth..

MS Principal's Report (Heather Persson)

- Heather thanked the PTO for a successful Color Run.
- Heather thanked the PTO for the snacks during conferences. Robin noted that she and all the staff were so excited for the cold drinks and snacks. The variety was great and the cold drinks and frapes were a huge hit.
- The 7th grade trip to Camp Ingersoll was a success and the students had a great time.
- The Coast Guard trip has been postponed.
- Steve talked about the event MS just held with the Lions club. It was a peace poster contest. MS had 5 submissions, which were lined up in the hallway. Six judges from the Lions Club came. The theme of the contest was Unity through Peace. The students had great ideas. They spent two weeks working on their pieces which included a lot of symbolism and artistic interpretations on the theme. The 3 winners will be announced Monday Nov 10th. The winners receive a cash prize from the Lions Club and as this is an international contest, the winners will go on to the next round..
- Steve thanked the PTO for supporting the Veterans Day breakfast coming up Monday Nov 10th. There is a lot of attendance planned to be there. The Veterans will speak at the MS classes after breakfast. Steve has secured a Brass Quintet to perform at the event. #Nationalguardperks.
- Heather noted next Friday, Nov 14th, they will be having an Internet Safety Assembly. Former Police officer, Scott Driscoll, will be speaking to HKIMS students about being safe online. His Bio is available on his website, https://internetsafetyconcepts.com/about-scott/, if parents want to review. He has a lot of great information. Robin noted he was great LY. He also partners with the HKYFS Organization, their community connections email had some other videos and links about Scott on it as well.
- Heather talked about the Interim Superintendent's recent newsletter, featuring the Social Emotional Learning and the Brain book he referenced. There will be huddles with teachers to talk about the approaches in this book and to form what they are calling, "Dream Teams" of Staff/Administrative Staff to choose the lessons they will focus on in the coming month. A parent letter will be coming soon. Nov. 25th is the projected kickoff.
- The 7th & 8th Grade Band/Chorus concert is Dec. 17th.
- HKYFS will be doing a youth voice survey to get data among students. Heather will be sharing more info in her cougar community connections email. The survey will be Dec 19th for 7th & 8th Grade students.

- Heather noted the winner of the pizza lunch with the Principle, had to exchange with another student. Davinci's Pizza will provide the pizzas. The lunch will be held on Friday Nov. 14th in her office. They will play a game as well during lunch.

IS Principal's Report (Eric Larson)

- Eric noted that the IS students just had the Fire Dept present a Fire Safety Assembly. He learned that you need to replace your smoke detector every 10 years. The students learned a lot and asked some great questions. Thank you to all involved in that assembly.
- Eric thanked the PTO for a fun Fall Fest. Students had a wonderful time.
- Eric noted he sent out a reminder email and will do another one Friday, asking for volunteers for the Veterans Day Breakfast. Since posting the email this morning, almost all volunteer spots are now filled. We hope to have them all filled by the end of the week. Eric asked the PTO to also send out a reminder to not send in food or items with students on the bus, but to drop off by Friday any items. Pictures of veterans are starting to go up in the hallway. The IS students are practicing and are excited for the breakfast.
- Eric noted that the IS Drama Musical is in two weeks. Friday Nov 21st and Sat Nov 22nd at 7pm. The kids are so excited and working hard. Please come out to support the IS Drama Club.
- Eric noted a climate survey for 4th/5th graders will be going out in the next few weeks for parents to fill out. Students can fill them out also. There are new state guidelines that will be used for this survey..

PTO President/Vice President's Report

- Nicole noted that on the PTO facebook there was a post about bullying in the HKMS and it had sparked concerns with new HKIS parents. Both Heather and Eric asked that if any parents are reaching out to PTO or the page, please direct them to contact them and report anything directly to them.
- Heather reiterated the importance of reporting the issue(s) right away. If things are not reported timely it may not get investigated timely. Robin noted most of the time bullying happens out of sight of teachers, in halls/bathrooms/outside away from teachers. The school does not want students to suffer in silence. If students are talking to other students or to parents, please report the information to the principal or administrative offices. The school has staff to support students and teachers. They have a tiered system of how to investigate and handle these scenarios. Steve noted that students around this age test their boundaries with each other and adults. Hormones are changing. Things can happen, but if reported they take each case seriously and are there to help. He noted however, for social media, we also want to highlight the wonderful and good things the students are doing and not overlook those great moments either. Social media has a big impact, and not all the great things are noted there. He wanted to remind us all and parents the need to all work in collaboration and not against each other. He reminded that with the climate survey coming out in the next few weeks, this will be a great tool to hear and see the data on what is working, what needs some tweaking and what is not working. Lara noted as a teacher, she feels she is well trained and has the resources and guidance from administration to help.
- Nicole thanked the team for addressing and commenting on the concerns. She will note any future comments to the Principles to follow up on in future.
- Kelly noted her student in 5th grade she felt did not have a full understanding of who was a 5th grader versus a 4th grader. She suggested perhaps looking at more ways in the summer for kids to get to know each other, as she feels there is a BES vs KES stigma, and during this transition time where they both come together in 4th grade, perhaps getting to know each other more than the one summer day with magnets would be good to integrate the two schools better. Eric noted to talk to him more about it and if PTO has any ideas to enhance this he was open to it.
- Nicole and Julie discussed the slime party. The Gym is waiting on the fire marshall to approve capacity. The team decided to slime after each wrong question to each principal. Robin suggested using the scoreboard to keep score of who the winner is at the end. The students who were selected to do the sliming, will have seats up front reserved. Steve agreed to MC the event and ask the questions. The tentative date is 11/26 at 915/930am. Kelly will get tarps and check on kiddie pools for the principles to be in during the sliming to help contain the slime for cleanup. PTO will look for volunteers to video and photograph the event.

Treasurer's Report

- Started with $40,476.18, deposited $26,100.00 and expensed $4,977.94. Budget total $61,598.24
- Nicole asked Kristi if she has access to the PTO Venmo account. Kristi said she did not. Nicole and Julie were going to try to find a way to reset or get a code on their phones to get Kristi access as some donations were being made to Venmo.

Committees

Veteran's Day

- Nicole thanked Shana Ripp for taking the lead. The PTO was trying to help make this event larger as there is a budget.
- Nicole thanked Kelly for the flag cups in the fence.
- Volunteers will come by Sunday to put small flags in the ground leading up to the school. Eric noted the Monday mowing will not interfere with the flags.
- Eric then asked to not hand out any leftover food from the breakfast to the MS kids and to put it in the staff lounge instead.

Bus Driver Appreciation

- Kristi bought gift cards with the $1100 budget. She will hand them out the week of 11/17 to bus drivers at the garage. She will bring a plate of cookies as well.
- Kristi will request a check from Jenn at Burr for their portion.

Staff Appreciation

- Nicole and Julie are looking for volunteers to head this committee.

Book Fair

- Nicole and Stephanie spoke to Scholastic Rep last week. They discussed the last book fair in the spring and will be replicating that for this year as it was a successful bookfair. The book fair will be the first week in Dec and goes until the craft fair that Saturday. The bookfair will stay open during the craft fair. Sign up will go out 2-3 weeks prior for volunteers to set up Mon 12/1 and then help during the event 12/2-12/6.

Cultural Arts/Assemblies

- Julie requested some dates for Jazz to Hip Hop, Tentative date selected Feb 10th in AM.
- David Flood will be booked for early March in AM, 9:25-10:25 suggested.

Yearbook

- Nicole needs to get some themes out in the next month to have the 5th graders vote on.
- Nicole asked if there was an email for parents or PTO to use to send in photographs from events for Middle School. A parent found an email that noted yearbook RSD17 and she will send it to the principals and IT to check for verification it is a legitimate email to use.
- Robin noted she does have a QR Code she can give out to PTO to send photographs to her but the QR code is not public.
- Robin noted 11/21 is the final day to personalize yearbooks or order any Ads. This feature is only for MS. The IS sale price has ended.

Cup Committee

- Kelly asked that if there are any events or holidays coming up they would like a design for to let her

know. She does need a few weeks turnaround time. Eric noted the Claw musical and Kelly will look into doing something for that. Robin noted perhaps for NYE have the cups in the shape of fireworks. She also noted in Winter the cups may not stay as well with bad weather.

Welcome Wagon

- Kelly noted she dropped off three bags for the new students. She asked if there were any new students for this month and there were none.
- Robin asked if there was any way to do something for students who are leaving as well. PTO and staff discussed some ideas for small buttons or HK swag to go with a departing student and perhaps a yearbook if they are leaving before they come out. PTO to look into other ideas as well.

PTO Leadership/Spirit Wear

- Nothing to discuss.

New Business

- Glow Party

- Nicole noted PTO needs a committee for the IS Glow party. She asked Eric to send out an email asking for volunteers to help organize the event.
- The Student council will provide snacks for the IS Glow party. Nicole will reach out to Mrs. Amaio as its for them to help raise funds.
- Robin noted the best snacks are small water bottles, capri sun, chips, popcorn, rice krispie treats, oreos, anything in individual cups/cases to sell. She says making everything a $1 and alerting students and parents with a flyer/email before the event, to have small bills on hand, as no change will be given, really helps.
- Robin noted Nicole should talk to the cafeteria about using their portable coolers.

Meeting adjourned 7:27 pm by Nicole