

MINUTES

Horsemen PTA Minutes

April 15, 2020 | 7:30pm | Meeting called to order by Christina Grillo

In Attendance

Christina Grillo (President); Andrea Williamson (Secretary); Brianna Staudt (VP K & 1st Grade); Christina Papadopolous (K VP); Elissa Smith (Morse VP); Dana Tavano (VP Volunteer Coordination); Juliana Aloia (Grade 3 VP); Angel Rafter (Membership VP); Andrea Harrison (SNC)

Updates and Hellos

The meeting started with a general update from the group regarding distance learning. The consensus feeling like we are starting to stabilize with distance learning. Students have been able to attend some Google Hangout meetings with teachers and classes, which has made the kids happy.

Feedback from Class Parent Coordinators

Class Parent Coordinators from JP, Morse, and WI were asked to have Class Parents ask teachers how the PTA could help during this time. None of the coordinators were able to join the meeting, but provided input back to Christina. The feedback was fairly aligned, with teachers asking parents to be patient. In particular at the Middle School, teachers asked parents to ensure students are checking into Google Classrooms daily. One suggestion from WI was to establish a Parent Technology Group to assist parents with the technical aspects of distance learning. This aligns with the suggestion that Brianna had made to Mr. Walley last month. At JP, starting Monday, changes to distance learning will start to include Google Hangout meetings, and to begin the turn-in of work. Distance Learning is more challenging for this youngest group of students who are less able to navigate technology without parental assistance. As a result, JP is moving to a “one stop shop” approach. Maureen asking parents to be patient, and maintain perspective. Christina suggested we can help with messaging to parents if needed.

School VP Updates

Morse: The Trip Around the Community was planned for May 1st. The VP's are discussing the possibility of trying to do a remote trip. The plan would be to reach out to the various businesses that participate, to prepare a video that could be shared with students. Brianna mentioned a best practice from Morse and JP, which is for the schools to review any new programs or technologies or other changes with a small group of parents in advance to gather input.

SHMS: Mr. Whitham thanked the PTA for support. He encouraged students to check in to Google Classroom daily. The SHMS Spring Musical and the DC Trip has been canceled. (For now, the SHHS Musical is still planned.)

WI: The WI VP's met with Mr. Holland on Friday, who was interested to maintain an open line of communication during this time. Mr. Holland also asked for patience from parents while the teachers and

administrators figure out how to provide distance learning, though didn't note the same level of parental feedback compared to Morse and JP.

Superintendent Update from Foundation Board Meeting

Andrea shared her take-away's from listening to Chris Borsari's feedback at last night's Foundation Board Meeting. Chris had shared one of his concern areas was in regards to the social emotional wellness of students, given the Covid pandemic, social distancing, and economic stresses in many families. He is looking for ways to help students. He is also thinking of how to honor graduating students, who are likely to miss many key milestones from their final year. He shared the dramatic changes that teachers have had to navigate, changing the what and the how of their jobs almost overnight. He is hopeful that we are close to reaching a stabilization as administrators, teachers, students and parents become accustomed to distance learning. He mentioned the district has been tracking "absent students" - those not seeing Remind messages or checking in to google classroom or otherwise connecting. The list has been shrinking and is now quite small. The district has been focused on ensuring all students have internet access and at least one device, though they are now checking to see where more devices may be needed as in many cases there are multiple users of single devices. Chris was very appreciative of the Foundation Grant, of which the PTA contributed \$500, towards supporting digital accessibility for all students.

Brainstorming Session - How to enable Student Engagement and Interaction?

Christina P had mentioned her children are spending time playing Bingo on Zoom which they are enjoying, which could be one idea. Another option that was discussed is an online drop-in play-date by school, but would need structure and organization as the kids get wild quickly. Christina asked if we thought we should try something. The Thank You Card for teachers didn't catch on, likely because parents are so overwhelmed with all of the things that need to get done. The group thought we could try hosting a Zoom Bingo party on a Friday afternoon. Christina P, Christina G, Elissa and Andrea W to re-group Monday to plan.

Teacher Appreciation Videos

Instead of lunches, looking to prepare videos instead to share with teachers. There are plans for VP's by school to get out to parents, asking them to share photos of their children with Thank You signs that can be compiled into a video. This will kick off next week.

Board Positions for 2020 / 2021

We need a 5 member committee to manage the process. The committee needs to communicate the slate of nominees at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting at which the vote will take place. Christina and Maribel would like to return to their positions next year; Allie will not be able to return so it would be great if we could find a new Vice President, or even two Vice Presidents. Christina suggested a meeting during the first week of May, in three weeks, to vote on next years' board positions.

Housekeeping

VP's for each school should look at summer registration packet materials, including volunteer sign-up forms, membership forms, and class parent requests. File formats should be converted to Google Docs formatting.

The board re-visited Spirit Wear distribution, and discussed emailing all participants, offering to deliver if people are comfortable. Dana, Christina P and Christina G offered to conduct deliveries. Dana to follow up with Allie following the meeting.

Next Meeting

Christina to propose a date in roughly three weeks.