

MINUTES

Horsemen PTA Minutes

Friday, September 17, 2021 | 8:30am | Meeting called to order by Sophia Rana

In Attendance

Board Members in Attendance

- Sophia Rana (President)
- Brenda Rodriguez (Vice President)
- Brianna Staudt (Treasurer)
- Fay Serafica (Secretary)
- Andrea Williamson (Membership Co-Chair, Volunteer Coordinator)
- Elissa Smith (Community Needs Coordinator)
- Emily Metzner (Parent Education/Rivertown Parents Representative)
- Mitch Sylves-Berry (Parent Ed./Rivertown Parents Advisory Council)
- Tina Kolovchevich (Morse Class Parent Coordinator)
- Andrea Harrison (Special Needs Committee, Chair)
- Annie Cauthren (Kindergarten, Grade Rep)
- Nina Pajak (Kindergarten, Grade Rep)
- Blanca Guazhima (1st Grade, Grade Rep)
- Jessica Lake (1st Grade, Grade Rep)
- Christina Papadopoulos (2nd Grade, Grade Rep)
- Dana Tavano (2nd Grade, Grade Rep & Membership Co-Chair)
- Liz Zammit (2nd Grade, Grade Rep)
- Juliana Aloia (5th Grade, Grade Rep)
- Lauren McBride (5th Grade, Grade Rep)
- Sarah McMaster (6th Grade, Grade Rep)
- Tara Scheller (7th Grade, Grade Rep)
- Daphne Uviller (8th Grade, Grade Rep)
- Leah McVey (HS, Grade Rep)
- Mechtild Steinert (7th Grade & HS, Grade Rep)

Others in Attendance

- Pablo & Anna Mayor (Spanish translation)
- Camila (Class Parent)
- Gabriela Bost
- Jordan Margolis

General Hello's and Introductions

- After half the group met on Zoom and the other on Google Chat due to a virtual meeting invite miscommunication by Fay, all attendees were able to hop onto Zoom for the meeting
 - Note for next meeting - Do not send Zoom meeting invites via the Google Calendar because Google Calendar includes a link to start a google meet for the meeting. Only send invites via email if the meeting is on Zoom and clearly note in subject and in body of email where the virtual meeting will take place.
- Sophia welcomed board members and everyone who joined the meeting introduced themselves. Fay and Anna let the group know that Anna and her husband, Pablo, would provide Spanish translation for the meeting.

Clarification on PTA's role in High School

- The PTA is once again building a relationship with SHHS
- Events in the HS have been through volunteers and not through the PTA
- HS parents would spend directly on teacher appreciation instead of through PTA.
- The HS needs to be re-introduced to the PTA and the work the PTA does within the schools
 - Can a newsletter be sent to parents?

Budget

- Briana presented the budget for the new school year.
- The board voted on the budget and it was approved.

Mission Statement

- Sophia asked the board if any changes or updates should be made to the [Mission Statement](#) for 2021-2022.
- Fay brought up that the Horsemen PTA's mission statement seems long and should be more concise
- Sophia reiterated that the first sentence of the mission statement is the main mission statement - *The Horsemen Parent Teacher Association(PTA) is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.*
- Daphne chimed in to say that Fay was maybe implying that an elevator pitch for the PTA is needed and shared an example via zoom chat - *The Horsemen PTA raises money that supplements school programs, and hosts fun, community-building activities.*
 - Bri also added to Daphne's pitch example - *We also advocate for all kids and build family engagement at the schools.*

Membership

- Update from Andrea
- 93 members signed up via Memberhub
- 12 signed up at Spanish event
- Waiting for more memberships to be mailed back
- Teacher & Admin - drive for teachers and staff to join PTA
 - Trophy (that could be reused) for most Teachers & staff joining the PTA?
 - No membership yet in high school for staff & teachers, but might change

Fundraising

- Boosterthon
 - New fundraiser for the Fall
 - Past fundraising - price point was too high
 - Fun Run - sportsmanship - PreK - 5th grade only
 - Raises money through student and parent engagement
 - flat pledge
 - The event is outside and students will remain in their own schools
 - PE in each school will run it
 - PTA Volunteers needed? - 2 in each school? But not sure if allowed yet
 - Event date - 10/7; Rain date - 10/12
 - Staff, teachers, PTA run too?
 - Tshirts will be made for staff that say Boosterthon
- School Toolbox
 - Raised \$1700
 - PreK-8th
 - Easy to run
 - Daphne - making a how to
 - 25% participation per grade, tapers off in 7th grade

Photo Day

- Week of Oct 12 - PreK-5th grade
- No Morse or JP chair
- Elissa chairing at WI
- Inside? Outside? Can there be group photos?
- Middle - High school separate photo day (not run with the PTA)
- Irving Simon Photography
- Question from Anna & Pablo - Can AFHT help with photo day and Spanish community with ordering online?
- Irving Simon does 5th grade year book
- Find a different photo company? Prices have increased
- Can someone look into looking into a new photo company to work with that has better prices?

Update 6th grade VP

- Mr. Whittam - overwhelmed, Daphne will connect

Community Wardrobe

- Daphne & Elissa - sorting today, getting ready for shopping (free) days
- New space - 105 Wildey St.
- Maternity clothes needed most
- Sign up to volunteer, and spreading the word
- In need of more bilingual volunteers for “shopping” days
- Shoppers had expressed need for food pantry info too
- Students have come to volunteer and be able to sign off on community hours
- Can Wittham announce to school?

DEI

- Back to Class in Spanish Event
 - Life Center, Library, AFHT, BOE present at event
 - Live music, empanadas
 - 50 families came through
 - Lots of admin staff & teachers came through
 - Will plan again for next year

Grant For Healthy Minds

- Lead needed for this grant

Votes

- Bus transport for HS students
 - HS students from SH do not have a bus and do not fall within the limits
 - A number of parents in the district feel it’s an unsafe route, no sidewalk and too long a walk
 - A letter from parents was sent to the BOE on 6/25
 - 9/3 - Board responded
 - Kathleen Ryan responded that by law, you have to apply by 3/1 and must be voted for in school budget which is in the spring.
 - Can apply next March 2022, Board would need to do a study to determine that it’s a child safety zone.
 - Admin, BOE considering and discussing it
 - Can HS kids board MS busses? Pandemic, HS students could not get on bus due to social distancing rules

- Can PTA help with solution building?
- Can we put out a poll to find out who this impacts
- BOE forced to fulfill need if enough parents are onboard?
 - Need more info, must be physical signatures on petition
- YES vote, move forward with helping, 2 abstains
- Screen time - MS, accessing personal devices and social media in class
 - What firewalls are up? Certain teachers monitoring this, but needs to be a consistent policy - no permission to use devices during school
 - Committee Technology? - can HeadsUp take part?
 - Advocate for parent concern - YES
 - Need firewall for school district device?
 - Parents need more awareness
 - Advocating for stricter monitoring of school issued devices not personal devices

School Updates

JPS

- Back to School night, being recorded in Spanish to help with promoting PTA with Parents

Morse

- Did not get option to introduce PTA at Back to School night
- Work on membership drive

WI - meeting next week

- Update from 6th grade VP
 - Mr. Whittam - overwhelmed, Daphne will connect

MS - not met with MS principal

HS - not met with new principal yet

Elementary school - costume drive this year?

Some available from St. Barnabas (Mitch)

Rivertown Parents

- Events announcement (Check [Rivertown Parents website](#))
- Rivertown Parents Presentations that are in the works by other districts:
 - The documentary UPSTANDERS, aimed at developing empathy and resilience to reduce cyberbullying.
 - A presentation to help with early identification of reading disabilities.
 - And 'Financial Planning for College in a Time of Uncertainty,' aimed at parents with younger students but open to all.

Back to School Nights

- Translation wasn't available for many of the back to school night events
- PTA can offer help
- Google slides from teachers can be translated as a remedy to issue.
- Request that Google slides translated and then send them out to parents now
- Q&A after all sessions, need live interaction
- Blanca (grade rep for 1st grade) to bring up issue with Mr. Walley
- Consistency needed on how to communicate Back to School nights and other important events

Notes for Next Agenda

- Morse - Free breakfast - Sugary cereals given out - parent concern