

Howe PTA Meeting Agenda

March 10, 2021 7pm (held virtually)

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m.

Dr. Murray made a motion to approve the minutes from the February meeting. Heather Hathy 2nd the motion and all approved.

PTA Officers Reports

- **Treasurer's Report (Steve DiTommaso)**

- Total Balances as of 2/28/21 are \$11,039 in FNB, and \$48 in Paypal that will be moved over. Checks totaling \$967 were written and have not cleared yet; \$470 was reimbursed for Read-a-Thon expenses. \$250 was imburSED in 7 checks for parent volunteer spending for Valentine's Day supplies. This leaves a net cash position of \$10,144 as of the end of February.
- Unpredictability remains in spending for the rest of the year due to not being sure if planned activities will happen or not. In general, the exceeded revenue for the Read-a-Thon far outpaced the increased expenses.
- There was a new funding request to increase expenses for the Read-A-Thon. Expenses budgeted for \$800 will be increased by \$463 to \$1,263 total. The net cash receipts will be well in excess of what was budgeted. **Steve DiTommaso made motion to approve the \$463 increase, Dr. Murray seconded. All approved.**

- **Vice President's Report (Dr. Murray)**

- Preparations are being made for the return to full-time school. A question was raised on how encore classes will work for Cyber Learning Academy (CLA) now that students are in full-time. The CLA encore classes will remain the same; full-time classes were scheduled around the existing CLA encore schedule.
- Update on status of teacher vaccinations. AIU has a clinic this Thursday through Monday. Teachers could go online and sign up. By the end of next week, the majority of teachers who want to be will be vaccinated or will be within the next 2-3 weeks. All life-skill class workers, and those 65 or older or with underlying conditions that chose to have already received their vaccines.
- A cross-functional Howe recovery team was assembled to develop the plan to return to in-person instruction. A lot of the logistical details have been figured out, and there is confidence in the plan.
- New divider boards have been ordered that are clear on all 3 sides to replace the ones that were solid on the sides. The more solid ones will be used in the lunchrooms.
- At the elementary level, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is a standardized test given to students in grades 3, 4, and 5 each year. It provides a glimpse of student achievement in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. In the fourth grade, students are also assessed in Science. Last year the US Department of Education waived the requirement for states to administer their standardized tests. They have not waived this requirement for the 2020-21 school year, so we will be

administering the PSSA this spring. The PA Dept. of Ed worked with the federal department to obtain certain concessions: Flexibility on when we administer the test. Usually the testing window is set by the state and occurs in April. **This year we will move the testing window to mid May.** Test scores will not be tied to teacher and principal annual evaluations this school year. We will not be held to the 95% participation rate, although we will make every good faith effort to have all eligible students participate. Students in Cyber Learning Academy will have the opportunity to take the tests in person. I will be sending out more detailed information about the PSSA in late April. We always approach these tests as an opportunity to see what our students have learned. Knowing what a challenging school year this has been for everyone, we will strive to make the testing experience as stress free as possible. Stay tuned for more information as we approach the testing window.

- Water fountains are closed off, so kids cannot get drinks from water fountains. There are water-filling stations and all students are asked to bring re-fillable water bottles in school.
 - Recess will be held outside, but when weather prevents this, each student will be asked to bring individual activities for themselves to facilitate indoor recess.
 - Thank you to Leah Haywiser for the Read-a-Thon success. The participation level was great.
 - Discussed the purchase of spare water bottles so that students can be given one if they forget their water bottle. Michelle Rowland made a motion to approve \$50 (for reusable water bottles) and \$100 (for outdoor activities). Steve DiTommoso seconded. All approved.
- President's Report (Michele Rowland)
 - Here are updates from the PTA Council meeting last week:
 - Mt. Lebanon Education Association recap (Silver Linings program);
 - Dr. Steinhauer mentioned that PPE is being offered to all staff.
 - Free lunches will continue until the end of year. Cyber students may have to pick up lunches at a different location starting next week. Communication will come from food service this week.
 - Parent University is still coming in April - 15 classes are being planned.
 - There was Election of new officers.
 - The high school will be planning a Prom.
 - PTA will be putting a Google Form Survey out to get feedback to seek involvement in the PTA for committee chairs, and executive board membership in future years.
 - Thank you to Dr. Murray and all of the administration for getting the schools ready for return to full-time instruction while maintaining the CLA.
 - There are still committee vacancies for activities that we hope will return in Fall: The Reflections, Spirit Center, Sunny Funny Fair, Matt's Maker Space, and Community Service Rep.
 - Correspondence Secretary's Report (Emily Smoller)
 - A thank you card was read from Dr. Murray for the card & gift card sent on the death of her brother.
 - A thank you card was received from 5th grade students and teachers for the book purchases.

Chair Reports/Recent Activities

- The deadline to order the yearbook is April 9th. Check FaceBook Pages for opportunities to load pictures to yearbook.
- Read a Thon Results - Leah Hayweiser. \$5,676 was raised - about \$1,100 more than last year, with fewer donors. While there was a decrease in donation participation, donors were more generous. 263 medals will be awarded. While this is a decrease from last year (324) - more kids read to the super reader level. 43% of the medal winners are super-readers, vs. 30% last year. Even though there was a decrease in participation, given the pandemic, we are really happy with the results. A lot of non-Howe (cyber students) participated. Prizes are being organized and will be handed out next week. Asking cyber students to wear their medals next Friday. We created a gift certificate and awarded 6 participants (1 per grade level) a \$10 gift certificate to Scholastic book dollars. We liked this timing of the read-a-thon.
- Howe's Got Talent Virtual Event (report submitted from Emily and Mike Weber) - 39 acts have been received. They are working on compiling the final video which will be released on March 19th.
- 5th Grade Colonial Days - Jessica Kibilius and Kristen Meier have volunteered to co-chair. They have looked at Colonial Williamsburg (virtual video experience like last year) and still give kids an opportunity to do hands-on activities and wear their period costumes that can also include 5th grade CLA students. They will be planning it for May. Joyce Divine has a binder of hard-copy info in it; she's happy to help as a volunteer.
- Science Fair
- Calendar

Unfinished Business - Election of 2021-22 PTA Officers

- There were no nominations from the floor.
- Election of 2021-22 PTA Executive Board Officers:
 - President: Michele Rowland
 - 1st VP - Heather Hathy
 - 2nd VP - Amy Grella
 - Treasurer - Steve DiTommaso
 - Recording Secretary - Amy Danley
 - Corresponding Secretary - Emily Smoller
 - Historian - Leah Hayweiser
 - Everyone approved.

Unfinished Business

New Business

Announcements

No April Meeting - but at least an executive board meeting will be scheduled
Early Dismissal (noon) March 31st. Spring break from April 1-5. Classes resume April 6.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.