

March 2, 2020, PTO Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

PTO and Administrators Meeting

BOE Conference Room, School Administration Bldg. 6:30 pm

Present: Present: Randi Alberino, Marisa O’Leary, Crystal Hernandez, Sarah Peterson, Meghan Sheldon-Brungard, Isabel Pipolo, Mia Shervington, Rodney Arthur, David Mauricio, Mary Foster, Carmen Vargas, Dan Callahan, Randy Lichtenwalner, Kristin Jarvis, Eric Reveda, Branwen MacDonald, Maria Olivier Flores, Ellen Gerace, Melaine Fuentes-Foster, Rebecca Aviles Rodriguez, Jamal Lewis, Margery Rossi, Vernita L. Mosley, Jen Carbaugh

This was a special meeting between the PTO and the Administrators on the subject of Peekskill’s Promise and Tenet 6: Strong Parent, Family and Community Partnerships

Marisa invited Dr. Mauricio to facilitate the meeting

Welcome by Dr. Mauricio:

- Dr. Mauricio discussed current events happening in the Peekskill community and thanked teachers/faculty and parents for keeping normalcy under the current circumstances.
- Congratulations to the PHS Robotics team for their 6th place win, moving up to the next competition and other awards won during the last competition.
- Also, we are very proud that our graduation rates have improved by 10% over last year’s rate
- Since, in Dr. Mauricio’s view, meeting face to face is best for collaboration. In that regard, a worksheet was handed out with the 3 questions that will be the focus of discussion during this meeting:
 - 1. What would an ideal partnership between the PTO parent leaders and school leaders’ look and feel like?
 - What is our current reality? What is impacting this reality?
 - What actions can we take to reset our practices and end the year in a collaborative and impactful manner?

What would an ideal partnership between the PTO parent leaders and school leaders’ look and feel like?

- Collaborative planning together for district-wide goals. Including PTO/teachers and administrators
- School-based professional development for parents at their own schools
- Schedule meetings within buildings to assess teamwork. See what works and doesn’t. Feedback/Reflect/Move forward
- Relationships: being able to have close contact with PTO staff and parents. Accelerated relationships due to only being in schools 2 years at a time due to the Princeton Plan.
- Defining what goals are at the end of the day. What everyone’s role is in the building (PTO/staff/parents etc.) Having a clear vision of goals.
- Make sure PTO is being discussed at school events by building administrators and teachers so a PTO representative doesn’t have to be present at every event.
- Respect for PTO member’s time/commitment to the district, and that parents are volunteering their time.

- Timely responsiveness from administrators and staff.
- More diversity of involved parents.
- Early co-planning at the beginning of yearly events.

What is our current reality? What is impacting this reality?

- A need to prioritize principals' responsibilities and expectations.
- PTO has to spend great effort and time just to get a response from schools as to how they want to spend money we allot to their buildings.
- Principals miss "face to face" collaboration with the PTO
- The intimacy of school-based PTO is lost with "equity for all". Children only spend 2 years per elementary school building. There is a severe lack of PTO "manpower" to keep face to face in buildings.
- There is a lack of trust that administrators value the PTO's time.
- All parties are pressed for time with multiple meetings. Still looking for a solution since decentralizing PTO from individual buildings.
- More planning at the beginning of the year is required.
- Since the change of PTO structure, we are in a much stronger position than in the past where there was a culture of competition between PTOs for fundraisers etc. There was much discord between the different schools/PTOs.

What actions can we take to reset our practices and end the year in a collaborative and impactful manner?

- We need to address the culture. 3 Cs of culture: Communication/Collaboration/Consistency
- More support from principals is needed. i.e. Woodside book fair and the flyer Rebecca made on behalf of the PTO.
- An effort to get the Spanish community involved. We need to find a way so the PTO leadership can grow.
- We need to start at the younger schools and groom the parents to get/stay involved as their children move up.
- PTO engagement and building engagement are 2 different things. Be mindful during building engagement to encourage those parents to be active in the PTO.
- Need Hispanic parents in PTO leadership. They don't understand what the PTO does or what our role is in the school district.
- Make a video: School District 101—Expectations for Parents
- Have a team of a principal and PTO parent per building (an ambassador of sorts) to act as a liaison between the school and Exec Committee.
- Have principals identify parents with leadership qualities that would be willing to give time and commitment to be on/lead committees for PTO.
- The goal is more people on committees.
- Define partnership at each level. Secondary level schools have parent involvement in clubs and athletics. Combine these parents that are already planning events at the HS with the PTO committees.
- Make a Peekskill Pride campaign for all shareholders (parents/teachers/staff) for the upcoming year.
- We need planning as far in advance as possible.
- Have teachers talk up the committees to parents even if teachers cannot attend.
- Define why PTO is important for ALL kids.
- Current principals and future principals should mentor parents up through the grades so the PTO board and committees will have a strong continuous membership.
- SEPTO would like a joint meeting with the PTO
- We need more contributions from the buildings' side, not more responsibility put on the PTO's board members.
- Some principals miss being invited to the Executive Committee meetings as this is where collaboration between the entire PTO and other buildings can occur.

Conclusions:

- Many good suggestions and points were made.
- Each building principal advised the best way to contact them: Carmen- email; Rebecca- email, text, twitter; Crystal- email or text; Randy- email or text* (for quick response); Jamal- email or text* (for quick response); Rodney- email or text* (for quick response); David- text or face to face* (preferred).
- Principals will join again for the May 4th Executive Committee meeting.

Adjournment: 7:55 pm

Next meeting May 4th at 6:30 pm at the Admin Building