

## November 9, 2020, PTO Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

### Virtual Meeting

**Present:** Randi Alberino, Isabel Pipolo, Sarah Peterson, Halle Chizmadia, Kristin Jarvis, Crystal Hernandez, Eric Reveda, Courtney Simon, David Mauricio, Mia Shervington, Heather Amabile, Nell Marantz, Jen Carbaugh, Randy Lichtenwalner, Meghan Sheldon-Brungard, Carmen Vargas, Rebecca Aviles-Rodriguez, Jamal Lewis, Margery Rossi, Merideth Harte, Rodney Arthur, Vernita L. Mosely, Sandra Walton

#### Welcome/Introductions:

- In Marisa's absence, Isabel thanked everyone for attending the Zoom meeting.
- Minutes from September 14<sup>th</sup> were accepted.

#### President's Report:

- Thank you to people who volunteered to represent the PTO at the ribbon cutting and the Art Department distribution.
- Mask fundraisers were discussed. Peekskill Pride masks are \$15 including shipping and Art to Remember masks are \$20 including shipping. There was a discussion about what logo would go on the Pride masks. **Isabel will check on possible logos.** Also discussed was that we should consider doing using both companies as Art to Remember would appeal to families with younger children because of the option to order items other than masks. The fact that Art to Remember would require class lists was mentioned as well.
- The direct appeal went out on Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>. \$550 has been received so far. The appeal will be sent out again.
- Welcome to Halle Chizmadia, who will be the new PTO Treasurer, and also to Nell Marantz and Merideth Harte, who will join the Communications Committee.

#### Treasurer's Report:

- The budget is smaller than usual this year, approximately \$7700. So far, \$1600 has been spent on operating costs.
- A reminder was given that we have continuous passive fundraisers with Stop and Shop and Amazon. We discussed more promotion on social media and ways to get our messages to reach more people. Dr. Mauricio said he will include it in his brief which goes out twice a month to help.
- The topic of Box Tops was raised, but we decided it was not worth the effort required for so little payout.

#### Brainstorming With Principals:

- **Oaksid:** Mrs. Hernandez thanked Jen for helping with Aimsweb. She helped to see the parent side of things. Crystal suggested a Parent Coalition for fully virtual students at each building.
- **Uriah Hill:** Ms. Vargas thanked Sarah for all of the work she does. Sarah created a Google form teachers could send out to recruit parents for the Class Parent program.
- **Woodside:** Ms. Aviles-Rodriguez said she was looking for ways for kids to connect. She suggested she could host a virtual science experiment night.
- **Hillcrest:** Mr. Lichtenwalner said he would like to arrange a virtual author visit. He suggested "parents helping parents", which coincides with what the PTO's discussion regarding parents supporting each other at their own schools. He also suggested parents recording a short video to share with students to provide "free" enrichment from parents.
- **PKMS:** Mr. Lewis advised he will think about how we can help and get back to us.

- **PHS:** Mr. Arthur brought up the social and emotional support for staff. He will bring it up in his leadership meeting and will get back to us. He also suggested having a “buddy system” between PHS students and Elementary students as well as PHS students prerecording a read-aloud for the Elementary students.
- Isabel suggested having other students prerecording a read-aloud for younger students as well, not just High School students.

### **Superintendent’s Update:**

- The ribbon-cutting ceremony for Torpy Field will be held in December. The Parent Center ceremony will be next week.
- The Virtual Saturday Academy staff did a great job. There will be a change of format for November. There will be specific time slots per age group so everyone can access age-appropriate content and not have to sit through the entire presentation unless they want to.
- Dr. Mauricio suggested that we utilize the Virtual Saturday Academy staff for enrichment. He also suggested that we use the “P” logo for our mask fundraiser as some people may find the devil horns and tail from the Peekskill Pride t-shirts offensive.
- Dr. Mauricio offered the use of Torpy Field for a socially distant movie night fundraiser. The district can purchase an inflatable movie screen and set up specific areas for families to sit.
- Covid cases are going up in the community. There are new cases in the district. Central office leaders are working hard to keep momentum. We won’t be defined by Covid.
- More families are moving to full virtual learning.
- Chromebooks are still not 1 to 1 due to a backorder. Thank you for the mi-fi units.
- Health and safety are at the top of the list of priorities.
- Diversity recruitment continues.
- Hillcrest is being added to the MBK initiative, so now it will include PHS, PKMS, and Hillcrest.
- Dr. Daniels will be moving to the central office and will be adding culturally responsive education including women’s education.
- The district is trying to create college-going students starting in Pre-K.
- A 3 year, \$ .5 million grant will be utilized for enrichment at Oakside and Hillcrest, the Empire program at PKMS and there will soon be night school classes at the High School.

**BOE Update:** not present

### **PEF Update:**

- The fundraising period has come to an end. The total amount raised was \$43,207!
- PEF is regrouping now and trying to figure out what to do moving forward.
- Meghan also suggested that we use the coalition for future advocacy efforts.

### **Committee/Activity Updates:**

- **Advocacy:** We are looking at a 20% cut in funding across the board. Eric drafted a letter and will give it to the Communications Committee to bring out to the community. Brainstorming discussion was had. How can we have advocacy efforts from within the schools from students and teachers? Instead of just letter writing, use a combo of letters and video “filibusters” like the Flipgrid video that was made for 2020

Graduates. We discussed ways to facilitate this so it reaches all students. i.e. PKMS Social Studies teachers, Elementary classrooms, specific classes at the High School, and teacher-facilitated “sentence starters” at the Pre-school where teachers can transcribe the child’s sentence onto their drawings. A suggestion was made to have a PTO liaison for each building. The Advocacy Committee will work on a singular message for the district efforts.

- **Communications:** The committee will restart the Instagram account in the future. Laura has been posting inspirational memes in between business-related posts on FB. Mia suggested that parents go onto real estate websites to put positive reviews about the schools. There is still a negative perception and people are unaware of the great work happening in our district. We discussed ways to show our district in a positive light. Isabel posted some of the websites in the chat. <https://www.niche.com/k12/d/peekskill-city-school-district-ny/> and <https://www.greatschools.org/new-york/peekskill/peekskill-city-school-district/> were posted.
- **Enrichment:** Mia is looking for virtual activities. She has been researching Outschool. They can do classes with groups of 25 kids maximum. Some other suggestions were a Superhero workout, Elementary children's virtual playdate, and Crayola playsets. Mr. Arthur suggested looking within the district for enrichment instructors. We have a lot of talented people in Peekskill. Mia expressed she is open to any suggestions as she is currently the only member on her committee.
- **Class Parents/Class Ambassadors:** In addition to Sarah creating the Google form teachers from U.H. used to recruit parents, she also created a form to collect contact information of families that would be shared with the class parent. 23 parents have been recruited as Class Parents at U.H. so far. Similar forms will be sent out at Woodside and Oakside. A suggestion was made to include a question on the form to see if parents would like to volunteer to host Google Meets.

#### **New Business:**

- A question was asked about the pool at PKMS, and whether it was open. Dr. Mauricio advised it is currently only open for swim practice but he is having conversations with the Rec Dept. to see if they can work something out for their programs. There are currently no plans to open it up beyond that scope.
- Dr. Mauricio was asked to please not take snow days away from kids and teachers this winter, even in full virtual learning. He advised he has no plans to do so.

#### **Old Business:**

- none

#### **Adjournment:** 8: 30 pm

- The next meeting will be held on Dec7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm