

December 7, 2020, PTO Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting

Present: Randi Alberino, Marisa O’Leary, Isabel Pipolo, Branwen MacDonald, Halle Chizmadia, Kristin Jarvis, Eric Rekedo, David Mauricio, Mia Shervington, Heather Amabile, Nell Marantz, Jen Carbaugh, Meghan Sheldon-Brungard, Margery Rossi, Vernita L. Mosely, Sarah Peterson

Welcome/Introductions:

- Marisa thanked everyone for attending the Zoom meeting.
- Minutes from November 9th meeting were accepted.
- Marisa asked to keep conversations in the chat to a minimum.

President’s Report:

- There is an article coming out in Westchester Magazine that will highlight why families are choosing to keep their children in district despite poor test scores/school ranking. Marisa and Mia both spoke to the reporter as parent representatives. The article will come out in the spring. Dr. Mauricio advised that he spoke to the Editor about that issue and would like to see a fairer way to show districts in the future.

Treasurer’s Report:

- Another \$200 was received in the direct appeal which brings the 5 week total to approximately \$800.
- Halle spoke to Katie Lester regarding the Performing Arts fundraiser. We will help facilitate that fundraiser as well as the sports fundraisers.
- Marisa expressed concern regarding facilitating too many district fundraisers as that affects the PTO tax bracket and makes things more complicated for the Treasurer. It can also be confusing when the PTO name is attached to a fundraiser that is not specifically a PTO fundraiser.
- Our copy machine lease is up. **Halle will check with the company to see if they can work out a lower lease rate since the machine is not going to be used at all this year.**

Identification of activities/projects for the year:

- Many ideas were suggested at the last meeting. We need to pick a few that we can concentrate on and do well.
- **Jen and Heather will figure out how to help Hillcrest with Randy’s idea.** This would take Jen and Heather out of the volunteer pool for other projects.
- Marisa suggested the idea for enrichment by talented parent videos be incorporated into Saturday Academy. **Mia will discuss with Carmen and Maria regarding logistics.**
- A suggestion was made to poll parents to see what they are willing to take part in. Three options are: A building based parent peer support discussion group; short parent enrichment videos (ie Peekskill’s Got Talent for Sat. Academy); Reading videos for younger kids, by parents or older students. **Heather will create a poll for social media once we decide on options.** After email and poll results are in, we will develop a timeline for implementation.
- There are logistical issues with “buddying” older students with younger students. Parent permission would be required. This is a school-based project, not a PTO project. Dr. Mauricio advised that Mr. Arthur will take that on.

Fundraisers:

- Catalog fundraiser: A vote was passed to do the “Flower Power” fundraiser. This is where people can buy flowers, plants, and vegetables online to plant at their homes. A suggestion was made to open it up to the community as a “Beautify Peekskill” project to get more purchases. **Marisa will reach out to the Garden Club as well.**
- Online book fair: **Isabel has a meeting with Main Street Books this week. She will advise if a late February date is available.**
- School Pictures: **Jen will reach out to Class Act** to see what they can suggest during the pandemic.
- Community coupon book: This would be targeted to people who are coming to Peekskill from out of town. A coupon book with discounts for local businesses could be sold at the Chamber of Commerce or the businesses themselves. **Sarah and Halle will research this further.**
- Art to Remember: Committee voted no on this fundraiser. **Marisa will advise Lori** and keep the relationship so we can do this in the future.
- Mia discussed a fundraiser that the Harlem Wizards is doing. They are doing fitness challenges where each student will have a personal webpage that is shared to get donations. **Mia will check to see if she can get more info.** Marisa advised that maybe we could do this in the fall.
- Vernita suggested getting famous people to do direct appeals. This would most likely only work if someone personally knew said, famous person. **Vernita will look into outside help for donations.**

Superintendent’s Update:

- Dr. Mauricio discussed the tragic loss of a recent PHS graduate. He has been working with the Superintendents of other school districts and police to find ways to reach out to parents and high school students and young adults. They want parents to make sure they are aware of who their kids are with. He will be meeting with certain students at the high school to connect and get ideas on how to connect with new people that have previously been hard to reach.
- Schools will be in full remote teaching mode until January 4th and possibly Jan 19th, depending on the data.
- There is a plan in place for testing due to Peekskill’s yellow zone designation. There will be mock testing done this week in preparation for the impending orange zone designation.
- There were 155 thousand meals served so far with the addition of 7-day meal pack distributions.
- Thank you to Halle for representing the PTO at the Parent Center ribbon-cutting ceremony.
- The district is trying to be creative with Saturday Academy. They are using the model of age-appropriate segments at specific times. They are open to suggestions for age-appropriate content.
- Torpy Field ribbon cutting has been postponed as it is still a construction site. Hopefully, students will be able to be on the field in March.
- The plans for the STEAM labs at both the high school and Hillcrest are in place. There has been teacher and admin input. The architect will update the BOE in January. The labs will hopefully be finished by the fall.
- Dr. Mauricio asked for suggestions to get media out into the community regarding the recent violence and all of the work being done regarding preventing future incidents and taking the temperature down of the anxiety being felt in our city. Some suggestions were: A PSA including who to contact; identifying red flags; note that other districts are having issues, not just Peekskill.
- The city will be hosting a public forum via Zoom, on December 16th at 6 pm regarding this issue. Mayor Rainey, Tuesday McDonald, and Dr. Mauricio will be speaking. Dr. Mauricio will share the link info once he receives it.

BOE Update:

- Advocacy and the budget will be on the agenda soon. The Board will be looking at data.
- They are setting up meetings with local legislators.
- Taking stock and framing things around advocacy.

PEF Update:

- PEF is in a holding pattern and taking time until after the New Year.

Committee Reports:

- **Advocacy:** AQE is offering 2 free 2-hour training workshops regarding advocacy; Education Policy, and Political Landscape. A \$250 donation is requested for the training. A vote was held and passed to add \$125 to the advocacy budget.
- **Communications:** The committee needs to clarify flyer deadlines regarding cuts to state aid. Dr. Mauricio will have Laura reach out to the committee. They need district approval on verbiage before it can be published.

New Business:

- A vote was held as to whether or not to invite Principals to the January meeting. The result was yes; to specifically discuss Black History Month.

Old Business:

- none

Adjournment: 8: 30 pm

- The next meeting will be held on Jan4th at 6:30 pm