

5/14/24 PTO Meeting Notes

Introductions: Attendance 26 in person, 14 online

Budget Updates (Ian):

- Current status: Income for the year \$90,000= 60,000 from after school program, Direct appeal \$11,000, Carnival \$7000, other \$4000
- Expenses \$75,000= After school expenses \$35,000, Grants \$10,000, Stipend \$8,500, events/t-shirts/yearbooks \$15,000.
- Surplus of \$15,000 currently but expected expenses for the end of the year: \$4000 for rainbow t-shirts, \$4000 field trip grants for 5th grade Principals/Patrol, \$1000 for Black Girl Magic, \$6000 salary for remaining Afterschool salaries together will balance that out.
- Success of Afterschool classes has allowed us to fund new projects this year like book stipends for teachers, t-shirts and yearbooks for all students.
- The general appeal did not perform as well this year. Might be because of overlapping with Kids Heart Challenge fund drive and also less emphasis from PTO due to surplus going into the fall. Ms Sorensen only makes \$500-1000 from Kids Heart Challenge, so PTO could give her a stipend to substitute for those funds and go a different direction for heart health education programming for the school.
- Budget over prior three years had a net \$16,000 surplus. Savings account includes money for playground equipment that is still available.
- Will vote on next year's budget in Sept meeting.
- Larisa suggested the idea of having a donate button at events to encourage donations to support special events.
- **What about adding more shade to the playground?** Yes, money is available for an outdoor addition or playground equipment. Note that there is a multistep process that requires district input and safety guidelines usually with a committee of parents with staff input.
- **Are we still moving the gaga pit?** They need a mat first which costs about \$1800-2000 and then they can move it.

PTO Updates (Chrissy and Mimi):

- Summer Staff/PTO Pilot Program: Chrissy and Mimi shared a proposal to create a staff stipend to support hiring a few teachers/staff over the summer to complete limited hours of work for the PTO (e.g., Amie collecting teacher contact info, reserving meeting space to improve transition and communication in the fall).
 - Reasons for proposal:
 - Staff could support PTO at an organizational level to make it easier for staff/teachers to access programs and coordinate with PTO (grant proposals, booking for class events)
 - PTO board would like to encourage increased communication/ collaboration between staff and PTO.
 - To stay connected to the school and strengthen the VHE community over the summer.

- How do we make sure that families get what they need over the summer?
 - Parent question: **Is there a district contract for that?** No, district limits when they can work based on their contract. This would be modeled on afterschool contracts or summer work performed by social worker during Covid to support families.
 - **Will there be contracts?** Yes, there would be contracts with the expected # of hours.
 - Parent suggested providing a framework so that work projects and expectations are clearly outlined with deadlines with a process to replace the staff member if it's not a good fit.
 - Ian suggested based on our budget that we could approve \$2800 which would fund 80 hours at the afterschool class hourly rate of \$35 (with board ability to increase based on available budget).
 - Andrea suggested that all work tasks/roles should be vetted to be possible within the limitations of summertime before hiring staff (e.g., limited availability of other staff, timing of district provided information, schedules, and calendars) and prioritize current identified needs.
 - Motion was made to approve up to \$2800 for this summer (per Ian's suggestion with Andrea's considerations). Seconded. Vote passed unanimously.
- Kinder Playdates
 - Parent-led dates are Saturday, June 15 from 10-11.30am and Tuesday, August 13 from 4.30-6pm at the VHE playground.
 - Last Friday was a Playgroup Meet and Greet with Teachers and a 30 minute informational session for parents with Principal Stein.
 - Feedback from parents regarding the Incoming Kinder Event:
 - One parent with an incoming Kinder shared that she did not get notification for the event and this was the first she heard it was happening/was not communicated as well as it should have been.
 - Nice to meet the teachers and see the school.
 - Playdate felt a little chaotic and maybe harder for some than others because it was afterschool with other kids playing the playground.
- Volunteer Opportunities (<https://www.vanhisepto.org/volunteering>)
 - Lunch and cafeteria
 - Garden planting day: May 19, 10-1pm. [Garden Survey](#)
 - Sports Day: ½ day on Friday May 31 1:15-3:15pm Volunteer/item sign up
 - Hedgestock: [Event page and volunteer sign up](#)
 - Students showcase their music. 2:30-3:15 (**Can we record and share it with the community for parents who can't attend?** Maybe just sound. Bring your chair or blanket.
 - 4:30-6:30pm Art gallery, Talent Show, Ice cream, 4 Restaurant night, book making, science activities/bubbles.

Safety issues raised by parents:

- Letter shared by a parent/staff member regarding their concerns about 1) safety and security, 2) behavioral impact on academic environment, 3) inappropriate language and exposure, 4) resource allocation and staff strain, and 5) emotional and psychological wellbeing of students and staff at Hamilton Middle School and Van Hise Elementary School.
- A statement shared from a parent who is concerned about seeing a middle school child with an airsoft gun on school property during middle school dismissal time. His son was at the gaga pit the day before and he saw similar kids with the same airsoft gun. During the first sighting a staff member told the kids they could not be on the school property with the airgun and they left the property. The parent told Ms Stein about what he saw and his concerns about students with a gun on the school property when elementary students are present for afterschool. Ms Stein stated that she would look into it and check the cameras. The parent did not hear back from Ms Stein, so he emailed her again and she replied that because it happened after school that it was not the school's responsibility. He stated at the meeting that he was concerned that Ms Stein did not share the information from the incident with anyone else in the VHE community including teachers, staff, and families. Two other parents at the PTO meeting reported that they also saw the same kids with the airgun (one Monday and one on Tuesday). One stated that the sound of the gun was scary and the other stated that they took a picture of the airgun.
- Parents raised concerns regarding Van Hise Elementary school culture and climate, sharing anonymous testimonials from several teachers, fellow parents, and some personal experiences.
 - Please contact vanhiseparents@gmail.com for more information.
 - Parents discussed the information in the testimonials and what steps to take in light of the perceived threat of retaliation for sharing them.
 - Parents wondered if other teachers and parents have related concerns and how to support them.
 - Two other schools in MMSD are currently engaging with the district around issues with building leadership based on at least 6 specific complaints.
 - Parents discussed if attending the upcoming school board meeting is warranted.
 - An informal group of parents will meet to bring concerns to Ms Stein as a next step.

Parent Suggestions for Feedback and Improvements:

- Parents appreciate when Ms Stein attends the PTO meetings and would welcome more opportunities to engage on school issues with her.
- Parents expressed a desire for the MMSD principal hiring process to be more inclusive of the community to ensure a good fit, with prescribed steps and transparency and multiple opportunities for feedback and partnership with families and VHE teachers and staff.

- Parents requested increased accountability, transparency, and engagement from the school district overall.