

VAN HISE ELEMENTARY PTO

November 11, 2025 Minutes

In Attendance:

PTO Board Members: Kirsten Ankenbrand (Secretary), Maggie Brickerman (Class Rep Coordinator), Joseph Clark (After School Classes), Renee Deschard (At Large - Fundraising), Adam Gratch (At Large - Events), Chrissy Greer (President), Kim Hinkley (Communications), Mimi Johnson (Communications), Colleen Ott (Class Rep Coordinator), Grace Sisson (Co-Treasurer), George Sisson (Co-Treasurer)

School Administration: Becca Stein (VHE Principal), Dr. Deborah Hoffman (MMSD Associate Superintendent of Elementary Schools)

In Person: Approximately 35-40 parents and community members were present, including various teachers; additionally 3 babysitters and approximately 15-20 children were on site

Online: Approximately 10 people were present

Call to Order

A meeting of the VHE PTO was called to order at 6:31 PM by President Chrissy Greer.

Approval of Minutes

No minutes were presented for approval.

Reports

FALL GRANTS

Four grant requests totaling \$1,424.45 were presented:

- Fourth Grade Dictionaries: \$276.02
- Second Grade Stools: \$316.47
- Library Organization Bins: \$231.96
- Music Instruments (ukuleles and boom whackers): \$600.00

Adam Gratch made a motion to approve all four grants. Maggie Brickerman seconded. The grants were approved unanimously.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS

- Carnival Shadow/Future Lead - A volunteer has recently expressed interest in shadowing Adam Gratch
- Carnival Committee Leads - Sign-ups available for games, food, and raffle/auction solicitation
- Carnival tentatively scheduled for first weekend of March 2026

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Principal Becca Stein presented an update on Van Hise's three-year School Improvement Plan (currently in year two):

District Strategic Planning Updates:

- New mission, vision, and guiding commitments adopted
- Focus on equity, belonging, meaningful learning, and collective impact

Three-Year Goals:

- Literacy: Increase proficiency by 10 percentage points. Current data shows 74% proficient/advanced (grades 3-5), down slightly from 75% previous year
- Math: Increase proficiency by 10 percentage points. Current data shows 74% proficient/advanced, down from 78% previous year
- Engagement: Achieve 90%+ attendance rate. Current rate is 95.8%

Key Action Steps:

- Implementation of EL Benchmark literacy curriculum (4th year)
- C3 collaborative planning teams for differentiation and equity
- Multi-tiered system of supports with data analysis three times annually
- Building community through Developmental Designs

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Morning Drop-off: Approximately 4% improvement in attendance since new procedure implemented (cannot be directly attributed; just an observation Principal Stein made). Students arriving in classrooms ready to learn more quickly.

Academic Concerns: Parents raised questions about slight decline in test scores and comparison to other schools with different instructional approaches. Principal Stein explained the shift away from homogeneous ability grouping to more equitable differentiation through C3 collaborative planning teams, with focus on individual student growth goals. Dr. Hoffman acknowledged that community education about these changes has been insufficient.

Teacher Retention: Multiple parents expressed concern about teacher turnover, particularly

loss of quality teachers and teachers of color. Requested this topic be addressed at a future meeting with available data from exit interviews.

After School Program: Extensive discussion about recent policy interpretation affecting the after school enrichment program. Key points:

Issue: In October 2025, district facilities/permits department determined the program does not qualify as "school sponsored" because it is a fundraiser, resulting in requirements for rental fees (est. \$6,000+/year), separate liability insurance, assuming liability for lost or damaged MMSD chromebooks and supervision challenges during the 17-minute gap between school dismissal (3:20 PM) and end of teacher contract day (3:37 PM).

Current Status: For fall 2025, rental fees of ~\$2300 are being waived and supervision gap is being overlooked; classes are running as usual while PTO and district work toward a longer-term solution.

Concerns Raised:

- Inconsistent policy application across MMSD schools
- Impact on program sustainability and PTO budget
- Need for clear policy language and decision-making authority
- Equity concerns about charging some organizations rental fees while waiving for others

Potential Solutions Discussed:

- Operating program at break-even to eliminate fundraising component
- Clarifying "school sponsored" criteria
- Finding sustainable model within district policies

Community Response: Parents emphasized need for collaborative, solutions-oriented approach to preserve this valued program that provides enrichment and supports families.

Next Steps/Follow Up

- Form After School Program committee to work with district on policy solutions
- Teacher retention discussion at future PTO meeting
- Principal Stein to share equity work research/resources from district
- Carnival committee recruitment ongoing
- Next full PTO meeting: January 13, 2026

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted by PTO Board
Approved by PTO Board 11/18/25