

# **VAN HISE ELEMENTARY PTO**

March 10, 2026, Minutes

## **In Attendance:**

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

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

**In Person:** Approximately 15 parents and community members were present, including various teachers; additionally, approximately 5 children were on site

**Online:** Approximately 6 people were present, including music teacher Brendan Loula

## **Call to Order:**

A meeting of the VHE PTO was called to order at 6:34 PM by President Chrissy Greer.

## **Approval of Minutes:**

The Jan. 13, 2026 PTO meeting minutes were approved at the PTO board meeting March 3, 2026.

## **Reports:**

### **THANK YOU'S**

President Chrissy Greer opened with thank yous to:

- Classroom coordinators and volunteers who organized and staffed the Mini Maker Faire at parent-teacher conferences
- Volunteers who provided food support for teachers during the two days of conferences
- Carnival planner, events coordinator, all carnival leads, and day-of volunteers for another very successful carnival

### **SPRING GRANTS**

Several grant requests were presented for the spring cycle. It was noted that all orders must be placed before spring break due to district purchasing cutoffs. Requests were as follows:

- Kinder Team – \$750 for construction paper (equivalent to their Parents Night Out fundraiser income)
- Erin Miller Bishop, REACH Teacher – \$200 for engineering design project supplies (construction paper, card stock, glue, tape, tarps, pipe cleaners, brad fasteners) for a mini-cities project across all grades
- Erin Miller Bishop, REACH Teacher – \$263 for Terrace Town city planning project supplies, including a chomp saw for cutting cardboard
- Specialist Team – \$129.76 for supplies for a book-making station, shaker instruments, and bubble activities

- Ms. Follette, Librarian – \$347.96 for storage bins
- Ms. Zimmerman, PE Teacher – \$915 to replace roller blades and roller skates (some up to 30 years old)
- Mr. Loula, Music Teacher – \$476 for additional ukuleles, rhythm sticks, boom whackers, and ukulele straps
- Principal Stein – PA system (see discussion\* below)

*\* Discussion*

Significant discussion occurred around the PA system request. Two use cases were identified: a portable system for daily teacher use, and a higher-quality amplification system for performances such as Hedgestock, talent shows, and promotion ceremonies. Mr. Loula (music teacher) and others noted that a battery-powered system would be insufficient for performances. It was agreed that a final equipment decision should be made collaboratively among Becca (principal), Sarah (PE), Mark (strings), and Brendan (music), with a preference for a system that works both indoors and outdoors.

A question was raised about whether PE grant requests should account for Kids Heart Challenge fundraising proceeds.

**Motion:** Kirsten moved to approve all spring grants with the PA system capped at \$1,418 to stay within the total \$4,500 spring grant budget, and with the prioritized use case of outdoor/performance use, pending equipment requirements alignment among stakeholders (Becca, Sarah, Mark and Brendan). Adam seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## **AFTER SCHOOL UPDATE**

The spring after school session opened recently. There were technical glitches with the Popsicle registration platform; the board will explore alternative registration systems. Families with registration issues were directed to [afterschoolclasses@vanhisepto.org](mailto:afterschoolclasses@vanhisepto.org).

As the board has been working with the district to identify ways to sustainably manage After School Classes in the future, they received “two hard nos” from the district:

1. Teacher contract time: The request to shift teacher contract time back 17 minutes (ending at 3:20 instead of 3:37) was denied with no flexibility.
2. School-sponsored designation: After school programming cannot be classified as school-sponsored, even with a suggested donation model, as MMSD policy requires school-sponsored events to be supervised by MMSD employees as part of their official duties.

Financially, January–March rental and insurance costs totaled approximately \$4,300 against expected income of approximately \$4,500, meaning roughly half of what previously went toward PTO grants is now consumed by operational costs. The insurance is structured per-session and limits the program to volunteer-only staffing.

The board shared a formal statement: the PTO cannot guarantee that after school classes will continue next year. Families are encouraged to plan childcare accordingly, as WYC registration

for fall is opening soon. Possible future alternatives discussed included outreach to Kids Junction and the YMCA regarding potential bus routes to Van Hise. Volunteer substitute needs remain urgent for the remainder of this spring session.

- The PTO will communicate this statement to families ASAP before WYC registration opens.

## **VOLUNTEER NEEDS**

The final PTO meeting of the year will be held on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at which new board members will be elected. The following positions are open:

- Secretary
- Co-Communications Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Fundraising Coordinator
- Carnival Leads: Prizes, Raffle, Games, and Food

Interested parties should reach out to [prez@vanhisepto.org](mailto:prez@vanhisepto.org). Questions about specific roles can be directed to the current role-holder via the president account.

## **SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION INFORMATION (ADDED TO AGENDA)**

Two school board seats are up for election, with challengers running against both incumbents. Short candidate videos were shared by Thoreau PTO and are available upon request from [prez@vanhisepto.org](mailto:prez@vanhisepto.org).

### **School Updates:**

#### **THANK YOU – CARNIVAL**

Principal Stein thanked the PTO and volunteers for a smoothly-run carnival and noted she would follow up on feedback related to custodial/building services support at the next meeting.

#### **STAFF SUPPORT AND MENTORING OVERVIEW**

Principal Stein presented an overview of differentiated staff support structures at Van Hise, including new teacher orientation, assigned building mentors, coaching cycles, Educator Effectiveness evaluations, and district-assigned mentors for first-year teachers. She noted that new or mid-year staff are prioritized in coaching cycles, and that currently 11 classroom environments per week receive additional certified adult support. Discussion touched on mid-year onboarding challenges, particularly around system access (email, documents), which Principal Stein said had already been raised with the district.

## **CULTURE, CLIMATE, AND SBLT**

Principal Stein shared that the district's Student Services team (specifically Emily Peterson) works with Van Hise monthly on culture, climate, restorative justice, and professional development. Discussion occurred about whether a PTO board member could attend portions of SBLT meetings as a community liaison. The principal noted this has been an ongoing conversation; the current direction is to develop a TBD equitable process for community representation, as much of SBLT time focuses on confidential student data.

### **Discussion:**

## **ICE / IMMIGRATION**

A parent raised concerns about ICE enforcement near schools. They were referred to Voces de la Frontera and Centro Hispano.

### **Next Steps/Follow Up:**

- Grant recipients to be notified ASAP; all orders placed before spring break
- PA system: Becca, Sarah, Mark, and Brendan to align on final equipment within the \$1,418 cap
- Families encouraged to plan fall childcare given uncertainty about after school programming
- Board position interest: contact the PTO president account ([prez@vanhisepto.org](mailto:prez@vanhisepto.org))
- School board candidate videos: available upon request from PTO president account
- Next (and final) full PTO meeting: Tuesday, May 12, 2026 – board elections will be held

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by PTO Board