

HMS PTO General Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2009

Attendance: Cathy Foderaro, Suzanne Heneghan, Maria Kallis, Liz Monson, Stephanie Domiano, Nancy Hamp, Monique Horowicz, Inga Haveric, David Beener, Mary Cass, Sarah Magnesen, Julie Liesse, Christine Allen, Zani Cerny, Tammy Mason, Susan Joyce, Karen Knecht, Lynne Bloomfield, Debbie Furlan, Annette Phillips, Roseann Coyner, Kathy Gartlan, Laura Gutman, Pam Keseric, Becky Arbor, Sara Joyce, Nickie Byrnes, Mary Alex, Sue Butler, Sharon Weil, Holly Hetke, Jan Meyer, Lili Holland, Fran Gartner, Linda Rio Reichmann, Annette Burlet, Nancy Schaller, Nancy Pollak, Cindy Scalzo, Ruben Pena, Martha Henrikson

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Stephanie Domiano, Co-President, at 9:35 a.m.

The HMS PTO Executive Board was introduced to the membership by Stephanie.

Recording Secretary's Report: The corrected HMS PTO General Meeting Minutes from May 13, 2009 were distributed by Nancy Hamp, Co-Recording Secretary. Cathy Foderaro moved the minutes be approved; Maria Kallis seconded. The minutes from May 13, 2009 were unanimously approved.

Presidents' Report: Stephanie Domiano welcomed all to the meeting and invited that she and Elaine Keller, Co-Presidents, can be contacted at president@hmspto.org. Stephanie thanked Principal Ruben Pena and Vice Principal Martha Henrikson for their dedicated work toward opening school on time. She also thanked the Buildings and Grounds Department, the secretaries, staff and teachers at HMS, and especially the custodial staff district-wide for their efforts.

Additional thanks were given to the following PTO committees: School Supplies, Directory, Website, Wellness (vending), Volunteers and the Executive Board for work done during the summer and in recent days to help get the year started.

Some current issues brought up at the combined monthly CCSD 181 PTO/PTA Presidents' Meeting on September 1, 2009 included:

Dr. Robert Sabatino will continue as Interim Superintendent until July 2010. A national consulting firm has been hired by the District to assist in the recruitment of the new superintendent. Go to the District's website, www.d181.org, to view information about the superintendent search and to take an online survey regarding your view of superintendent position priorities. There will be two Open Forums on September 14, 2009, at 2 p.m. and at 7 p.m., at Katherine Legge Memorial Lodge on County Line Rd. to give community members the opportunity to share views about the superintendent search. It is targeted to begin interviews for the position in November with final selection to occur by January 2010.

CCSD 181 is beginning discussions of what we value most as a school district in response to budget constraints facing the District. Board Member Linda Rio Reichmann commented the district faces a \$3.2 million deficit this year, though half of that figure is related to capital improvements. Check the District website for times and locations of CCSD 181 School Board meetings in order to participate.

The PTO/PTA Presidents also ask that committees choose event dates carefully this year to avoid conflicts with religious holidays. Stephanie will look into putting a link to a calendar of holidays to take note of on the HMS PTO website, www.hmspto.org.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Liz Monson circulated the HMS PTO 2009 – 2010 Budget that was approved last May. She also circulated the last monthly Budget to Actual from last year, dated June 30, 2009. Liz pointed out we still have several thousand dollars in the Wish List budget as Mr. Pena was unable to order requested items during the HMS construction period over the summer, having no place to deliver, store, or install new supplies and equipment. Mr. Pena plans to move ahead with those orders as soon as possible. Liz showed an example of the correct Check/Expense Reimbursement Request Form to be filled out for *all* reimbursement requests from individuals or committees. They may be left in her PTO Treasurer's mailbox at school, e-mailed, sent in the mail, or handed to her, but must be used. She invited the membership to call her about urgent matters if necessary, and she would try to accommodate.

Committee Reports:

Magazine Sales – Ginny Lorenc reported that the magazine sale, the major fundraiser of the year, will begin September 10, 2009. New this year will be a party to include inflatable equipment for students turning in 5 or more magazine orders during the first week of the sale. Community members may benefit HMS PTO without taking a magazine subscription for themselves by donating magazines to a VA Hospital in Chicago that HMS PTO is supporting in this way.

SELAS – Christine Allen reported that Social Emotional Learning for Academic Success is the name of the program in CCSD 181 schools mandated by the Illinois Children's Mental Health Act. The Lion's Quest curriculum is used and adapted for lessons taught during advisory periods at HMS. HMS 6th graded teachers, in consultation with Dr. Janet Stutz, Assistant Superintendent for Learning from CCSD 181 Administration, have contributed lessons they had adapted for use in their classes to a group of volunteer teachers from grades 4 through 8 district-wide. These lesson plans were used as a model to produce binders of lesson plans for teachers. SELAS lessons include topics such as building positive relationships and decision-making skills. Contact Christine through the HMS PTO website with any questions. She suggested asking students to discuss these lessons at home to help reinforce the topics covered.

Hinsdale Central High School Liaison – Maria Kallis reported that Homecoming is scheduled for the weekend of October 10. HCHS is cracking down on tardiness and on policies forbidding the use of electronics such as cell phones and ipods by students from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additionally, security will be tightened by requiring visitors to school to show ID, such as a driver's license, upon entering the building. Registered sexual offenders found on a database will be denied entry to HCHS.

Wellness Committee – Kathy Gartlan reported that healthful snacks have been stocked in the vending machine in the commons. The committee has some professional advisors, such as physical therapists, working with them. The Wellness Committee is not involved with the school lunch service provided by Quest. Members pointed out that Quest solicits comments and is responsive to customer questions and suggestions, and implemented a salad cart at student request at CHMS last year. Estimates are that about 50% of HMS students buy lunch.

Presidents' Report, continued: On the subject of communication, Stephanie pointed out that besides the school administration sending out emails, the PTO sends out its own HMS PTO E-Mail Blast regularly, with news about what's going on at school, with PTO, and in the community. Submit articles or announcements to editor@hmspto.org. Additionally, Gail Vescovi, secretary to the principal, continues to update and improve the school's own official website: www.d181.org/hms. The daily school announcements can be located at this site under the News tab.

Linda Rio Reichmann, Vice-President of the Board of Education, reported that on September 14 at the CCSD 181 Committee of the Whole Board of Education Meeting there will be opportunity for public comment on priorities and the budget discussion. The meeting will be at Monroe School at 7 p.m. At the October 13, 7 p.m. Committee of the Whole meeting at Oak School specific dollar figures for the prioritized programs and services will be discussed. There will be a Business Meeting of the Board of Education at HMS on September 29 at 7 p.m. to approve the preliminary budget.

Old Business: None

New Business: A new member pointed out 6th grade parents have been asking when they might hear from committee chairpersons regarding volunteer positions they may have signed up for. Stephanie pointed out that some of the committees haven't met yet this year, and that new volunteers will be contacted as needed. She invited committee chairs to call their volunteers.

Some new families have felt they have been left out of the loop. Stephanie and Principal Ruben Pena apologized for this. Seventh grade representative Lili Holland pointed out that the sixth grade level representatives are available, but teachers usually request their

help when they are needed. Sixth grade rep Zani Cerny suggested getting sixth grade parents together. Lili volunteered to coordinate a meeting of all the grade level reps to facilitate meeting the needs of new families.

Principal's Report/Speaker: Principal Ruben Pena empathized with the chaos associated with the refurbishing of the building and the lengths staff had to go to in order to open school on time. He pointed out PTO had made the suggestion for the open house on the evening of the first day of school to allow supplies to be brought in and for students to practice their combinations. He "heard" it was well attended as he was confronted with a long line of students needing help with schedules, locks, etc that evening! Mr. Pena again apologized for the inability to have the usual back-to-school days this year and welcomed new families. He pointed out there will be fewer opportunities to volunteer in class in middle school than in elementary school.

On a positive note he hoped all could feel the new airflow and HVAC system at work cooling the building. He pointed out that all the windows and doors are being replaced. Many holes in the ceiling were discovered during installation, and have been fixed. The new bus loop is working out tremendously. New lights will be installed. Neighbors of the building have been very tolerant, and some have donated landscaping for the bus loop area. There is more temporary parking out front for visitors. The portable classrooms installation was not easy, but was completed and LCD screens are being hung in them.

One challenge has been the newly installed update to the Power School student management program, which has had several major kinks and crashes, causing scheduling problems. The district's technology department is investigating. Mr. Pena said he hoped to see the parent portal, which allows parents to access student grades, up and running by Thursday's Curriculum Night. The teachers will tell parents what website to go to in order to access assignments and grades. He hopes to have links to them on the school website soon, www.d181.org/hms. In response to a question he said staff are expected to update grades on the system every two weeks. Parents who notice problems with this should e-mail or speak to the teacher involved first, then consult him if a problem persists. He prefers weekly updating.

Edward Doebert, a long-time and well-respected science teacher at HMS died June 26, 2009, and will be missed. Six new teachers have been hired teaching in several subjects such as language arts, foreign language, math, science, band, English as a second language, and academic strategies. Each brings unique experience, commitment and passion for teaching students to the staff.

Mr. Pena reported an increased awareness of avoiding volatile chemicals in the building and the need to have a peanut-free table in the lunch area. Wipes will be available to clean surfaces of nut oils in classrooms. The new administrative offices and secure south

entrance, along with a redesigned student services area and school store will be completed in November.

HMS proudly has been nominated for designation as a 2009 No Child Left Behind--Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education, along with CMHS and Madison School. To qualify, in part, a school must show high student standardized test scores over years, or show a marked recent improvement in student scores. Mr. Pena thanked Administration personnel and HMS teacher Donna Vorreyer for her part in developing the application packet. He and Ms. Vorreyer will take a trip to Washington D.C. to accept the award later in the year.

Members asked for information on school clubs. Students hear announcements about them in the mornings. Parents may read the announcements daily on the school website under the news tab. Clubs advertise with fliers, the PTO puts information in the e-mail Blast and on its website. A question was posed about student government. In recent years there hasn't been a staff member to advise the student government, but there may be this year. For now the students may join the active Peer Leadership Club.

Mr. Pena invited all parents to attend curriculum night on September 10. Parents should go to their students' advisory classes to get their children's schedules and schedule for curriculum night. The school has no extra textbooks for parents to purchase, but many will be available online from publishing companies, or from new or used bookstores. Sally Cuchna in the main office can provide ISBN numbers for ordering textbooks.

If students leave a needed item at home, parents are invited to drop off the items in the grade level drawers in the common area. Parents must log in the student's name on the clipboard on the cabinets, and a staff person will read the student's name during lunch period, alerting the student to check in the cabinet for a dropped-off item such as a lunch or homework. The late buses leave school between 3:30 and 3:40 p.m. Monday through Thursday on two routes. Mr. Pena has been in contact with First Student Bus about morning bus routes 7 and 8 being late. We have 30 more new students than expected this year, with a total enrollment of 753. Flexibility has been the watchword among staff.

Quiet lunch periods are available in classrooms during the lunch hour for students to do homework, as is homework help after school in the MRC. The HMS Angel Fund helps financially needy families afford to send 8th grade students on the Washington, D. C. trip, and is in need of donations. Several thousand dollars is needed. Checks can be made out to HMS Angel Fund and may be turned in to the main office, which is at the back left of the mezzanine level temporarily. That is also where Mr. Pena's office is located.

Adjournment: Stephanie identified the next PTO meeting is October 14 and will include a presentation by MRC staff about resources. She adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Nancy Hamp and Mary Cass, Co-Recording Secretaries