

HMS PTO General Meeting Minutes – November 10, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Co-President Julie Liesse at 10:09 a.m.

Secretaries' Report: The October minutes were reviewed. Vice President Sue Shupe moved they be approved. She was seconded and minutes were approved.

Committee Reports: The Lost and Found is very full. Items will be displayed on tables during the parent conferences Nov. 22/23. After conferences, everything will be either thrown out or given to charity. Cindy Scalzo told the membership if they have a particular organization that they'd like the clothing to go to, she will be happy to give it to them.

The Community Service committee is sponsoring a holiday meal basket drive again with donations collected through advisories. The Sopel family is generously donating 100 gift cards for turkey or ham for the baskets. Collection will begin in advisories the week after Thanksgiving. The contributions, along with toys from Hinsdale Central High School, will be given to Hinsdale Community Services—Family Services for distribution to needy families.

Panel discussion about Bullying and Cyberbullying: HMS principal Ruben Peña, HMS social workers Maria Jandak and Amy Uscila, and Hinsdale Police Officer Mike Coughlin led a discussion of various bullying issues. Several supporting hand-outs are available from the social workers.

The types of bullying seen by these adults varies from the more physical form seen mostly in elementary school, to verbal and relational (exclusion, meanness, etc.) in middle school. There are also gender differences in bullying. They feel that there was more cyberbullying last year at HMS than seen this year.

Advisory teachers are responsible for conveying techniques to dealing with bullies and what is acceptable behavior. Bystanders are encouraged to stand up and stop bullying when they see it, either by telling the offender to "Stop" or reporting to an adult. It is important for them to understand that they are not tattling if it is helping to keep themselves and others safe.

Once a bullying situation is identified there are several ways to modify the interaction. Punishment from the principal's office is one way. The social workers try to facilitate a safe interaction with and between the parties, and parent to parent communication sometimes works to resolve the situation. Parents are encouraged to maintain open communications with their children and look for reactions to the words they are using. Using "bully" and "victim" often causes kids to retreat from the conversation.

Cyberbullying is when the harassment occurs via cell phone (voice messages, texting) and computer (email, facebook). Children should be reminded that anything they do online can come back to haunt them—would they want it to be displayed on a poster in court? Victims of cyberbullies should reply to the sender to "stop", and if it continues report it to an adult. They should not delete the messages until an adult can verify. Sexting is a tricky situation, because it can be considered child porn. Ruben is not allowed to view these images, and kids shouldn't keep them on the phone. Mike suggested that the child tell the sender to stop, delete the photo, and only involve him if it continues. Parents were also reminded that even if their children do not have a facebook page, fake ones containing bad comments can be posted by others.

Presidents' Report: The pay to play situation for basketball has been resolved by setting up carpools to transport students to and from away games. Volleyball and track will continue to have buses because there are more kids to split the cost of transportation.

The Equestrian Club will start their meetings this month, with Mrs. Kalsbeek as the advisor.

Vice President Sue Shupe reported that while off to an initial slow start, about 30 parents ended up attending the 6th Grade Parent Mixer at Zak's Place. The 8th Grade Mixer had fewer attendees, and 7th Grade is coming up this week 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday. She is using evite to remind parents via email.

The instruments purchased by the PTO for the band were utilized during the band concert held on Tuesday Nov. 9

New Business: The eighth graders, along with staff including Ruben, will be leaving for Washington, D.C. Thursday Nov. 11.

Ruben stated that report cards are due to go home with the students on Friday Nov. 12. Parent-teacher conferences will be held on a scheduled basis on Mon. evening, November 22 and on a drop-in basis, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tues., November 23. Several parents were not happy with this schedule because the more convenient evening hours were only for appointments.

Yvonne Mayer, HMS parent and d181 board member, asked about the theft of PTO cash reported in the local papers. Julie, along with Shack chair Kim Peña, explained that over the course of a couple of weeks more than \$300 went missing from the Shack cash box. Those thefts, coupled with the previously reported \$150 in stipend cash being lost from teachers' mailboxes, resulted in a report filed with the Hinsdale Police Department. The culprit(s) have not been found. A new cash handling policy has been implemented. All PTO money, including Shack store cash or other money received by other PTO committees, will be locked up daily in the school safe. The PTO cash box for the Shack will be received from Sally Cuchna in the Main Office, or from Gail Vescovi or Ruben in her absence. After use and collection of any money, the cash box will be turned back in those same people for securing in the school safe. Co-Presidents Julie Liesse, Lynn Bloomfield, or Treasurer Annette Phillips will pick up deposits from the main office staff as needed for deposit into the HMS PTO bank account.

Submitted by Co-Recording Secretary Cindy Scalzo