

Hinsdale Middle School PTO General Meeting Minutes –February 9, 2011

Co-President Lynne Bloomfield called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

Secretaries' Report: The minutes from the January 2011 General Meeting were approved.

Committee Reports: SELAS Chair Christine Allen reported about the new “Above the Line” banner in the commons, signed by the whole school. There was a mix it up at lunch day, a video about being a friend, and Officer Coughlin talked about cyberbullying during SELAS week. Hinsdale Central High School will be inviting eighth graders for a program. The movie “Race to Nowhere” about pressure to perform in school is being shown at HCHS on February 10. There will be small group discussions about the film on February 17 at CHMS.

Book Fair Committee Co-Chair Maureen Kunze reported there were 25 volunteers scheduled to work at the Book Fair this week. Fifth graders were invited in order to purchase summer reading. The District 181 “One Book, One Read” books will be available to purchase.

World War II Day Co-Chair Liz Monson Friday, March 11 will be World War II Day for eighth grade. The PTO pays for refreshments for the veterans and speakers that attend and present. There will be a Franklin Delano Roosevelt impersonator. New this year will be a concentration camp survivor from the Holocaust Museum of Chicago. Many volunteers are signed up but there is room for more.

Co-President Julie Liesse reported that School Supplies Chair Kristin Dunn and Lost and Found Chair Cindy Scalzo are again planning to “recycle” abandoned school supplies for fee waiver students. Given the amount of supplies thrown away, the teachers are being asked to carefully consider their recommendations of what to include in the kits.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Annette Phillips presented the current budget and reported that there have been a few requests by staff for reimbursement for Revolutionary War Day, social worker books, and wire for Applied Technology.

Principal's Report: Principal Ruben Peña reported on Title 1 funded programs in school, including two reading support instructional aides. These services are offered in schools with sufficient free or reduced-fee lunch eligible students. In our school students with lower than standard ISAT and MAP scores and those within 10 points of the lowest standard are offered extra language arts tutoring in lieu of a foreign language section. The results of this program have been very successful so far.

ISAT testing will be pushed back to March 7 to March 10 due to the Department of Education changing the testing window as a result of snow days.

Assistant Principal Martha Henrikson reported that students will be nominated by others for “Above the Line” behavior and will have their names posted above a line drawn in the commons for all to see.

Mr. Peña reported that new state mandated requirements for handling student health issues such as life threatening allergies and diabetes may require appropriately trained staff such as health aides or nurses to attend field trips such as the Disney trip. 200 students are going to Disneyworld with the arts programs the third week of February, along with 11 or 12 staff.

Special Discussion with Board of Education Members: D181 Board President Linda Rio Reichmann and Yvonne Mayer: Budget: The D181 Board of Education has begun budgeting for next fiscal year’s staffing. The Board cut \$2.8 million from the 2010 budget with an expected deficit of \$221,000 remaining, largely due to computer lease issues. There is a projected deficit for 2011 of \$665,000 at present. Growing expenditures are growing faster than revenue, which mostly comes from property taxes. The greatest expenditures are for teacher salaries and benefits. Twice a year before taxes are collected the district must borrow from fund balances, which are savings kept in reserve. By 2014 – 2015 the fund balance will be exhausted based on current projections, and the Board would have to borrow money in the period before taxes are collected. Borrowing affects the District’s credit rating and the Board has a goal of avoiding having to borrow money. Currently there is a projected deficit of \$1.5 million for fiscal year 2012. The Administration has been tasked by the Board to propose cuts of \$1million.

The D181 contract with its teacher’s union is up for renegotiation this year. The current contract expires June 30. The Board may or may not wait until the new Board members are seated after April’s election. This is a contested election with 6 candidates for 4 seats to be filled. **The Board wants to hear from community members about their priorities for the District.** Come to meetings or write to the Board at BOE@d181.org. Community engagement meetings will be held again in coming months. The next BOE meeting is at 7 pm at Elm School on February 28, 2011.

Some members asked questions about teacher step raises and teacher assessment. While the District has no control over the state pension program for teachers that the District is required to participate with, everything else is on the table for renegotiation.

Staffing Report: Assistant Superintendent Mary Ticknor initiated a staff allocation process for next year. The average projected class size at HMS next year is between 26 and 27 students in core classes based pm 30 FTE’s (full time educators teaching 6 class sections per day). This does not include encore or special education. Currently HMS has 11 classes with 30 or more students, and CHMS has 13. Mr. Peña is working to schedule students based on decreased class size limits for some smaller-than-standard size classrooms at HMS. Of course costs are associated with staff allocation. Limiting class size across-the-board to 29 versus 30 students per core class, for example, costs .5 FTE more, or about \$40,000. Staffing recommendations will be made by the end of March, when by contract the District must notify staff if their contract may not be renewed for next year.

Facilities: Usable space will be discussed at the February 28 BOE meeting. At HMS initial assessment showed 5 classrooms to be too small for a standard 30 students. Current student count reports do not take into account projections of 30 new students at HMS next year. Student attendance is projected at 806 next year, increasing to a projected 830 for 2013--2014.

Transportation: The BOE may reconsider changing the minimum distance from school for busing eligibility to 1.5 miles from 1 mile. That issue will be discussed at the March 14 BOE business meeting. The change could save the cost of funding one bus route. This change, if implemented, would not affect hazardous routes. The contract with First Student, our busing contractor, is also up for renegotiation. Report any concerns to Assistant Superintendent for Business, Dr. Troy Whalen.

Presidents' Report: Jan Burr has been approved by the Executive Board to join Co-Vice President Sue Shupe as Co-Vice President of HMS PTO. She will be nominated for Co-President along with Sue in April. A big thank you goes to Jan for stepping up! Nominating Committee is still being formed.

Vice Presidents' Report: Sue reported that parent mixers for the three grade levels will again be held at Zak's Place in upcoming weeks. Watch the PTO eBlast for updates.

Upcoming Events: Our March 9 General PTO Meeting will include a forum with candidates for the D181 Board of Education election, including HMS parent Glenn Yaeger, to be held April 5, 2011. Please join us on March 9.

Submitted by Co-Recording Secretary Nancy Hamp, February 23, 2011