

Hillview PTO Executive Board Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2017
9am-10:34am

In Attendance

Chris Sewell, Ashley Wagstaff, Laura Paul, Christie Tonsfeldt, John Donald, Gina Skinner, Matt Ericksen, Julia Molise, Johanna Wolf, Nancy Witeck, Jamey Hawkins, Julie Nelson, Jody Buckley, Willy Haug, Scott Marshall, Caroline Bowers, David Babington. Missing: Suzanne Watson

9:00 – Call to Order & Board Introductions

9:01: **Chris Sewell** calls the meeting to order. All present make introductions and share a fun fact about themselves.

Approval of June Minutes

9:08 –Julia Molise asks for a motion to approve the minutes. **Christie Tonsfeldt** makes a motion to approve the minutes. **Chris Sewell** seconds the motion and the minutes are approved by vote.

Julie Nelson

After School Board Positions

Gives a bit of history on the “after school programs” and “after school sports.” At 9:10, Julie makes a motion to amend the by-laws and standing rules to bifurcate “After School Sports” and “After School Programs.” Julie will present proposed language to the group by our next meeting of October 4, 2017. **Julie** moves, **Christie** seconds and this plan is approved by vote at 9:11 am.

9:11- Principal’s Report

Willy Haug

Thanks everyone for being great parent leaders.
Looking forward to BTSN this Thursday.

Deep Discussion of the History and Future of Hillview “Mini-courses.”

Mini-courses provide an amazing opportunity for educators to teach to their passion. While they “flared big” at the beginning, they have become a polarizing issue amongst the staff and some parents. They can be amazing experiences that are also deep learning opportunities.

They provide unique skills as well as an awareness of local community. Other courses are recreational in nature.

Looking ahead

There will still be an 8th gr Washington DC trip this year during the week of mini-courses. However the hope is also to create a week-long experience for students that is academic and enriching with a component in which students will share what they have done and learned. The

hope is to implement Project Based Learning – Laurel is skilled in this but Hillview is not as much. The staff has taken the Buck Institute Gold Standard training in order to learn more about project-based learning.

The hope is to involve Project Based Learning in the following ways:

Engage students in solving real world problems. Ecology, pressing societal issues, collaboration, deep learning connected to our standards but not necessarily the basic standards. These courses will emphasize higher order thinking skills. Lots of student agency involved. Willy explained that we could even see an arc – 6th graders will choose from a set of available courses. By 8th grades, mini courses become a passion project and for which students submit their own proposal. Kids will know over the course of the week that they will share their project with a broader audience at the end. Friday will be an opportunity for kids to share with the community – display and show work. Might have to be kicked off earlier.

Plan

The plan is not to rush to a product this year. Too much planning needed to do this properly this year but there are opportunities to pilot this. Use our community and leverage connections. This year will be planning stage with full implementation in 2019.

DC Trip

This year the DC Trip will be the week prior to Spring Break. DC Trip could go back to being spring break or February break trip. Some question the value of the DC trip. While it may not be a powerful learning experience, it is a great life experience. But they get to go on a trip. Re-envision the trip to make it a project based learning trip. But there is still a barrier for people to participate in the trip, which will need to be addressed. Cost.

On August 21, the staff met and discussed “Why Project Based Learning?” and what project based learning actually means. On September 11, they engaged in design challenge and explored which each day would look like and what are the components of project-based learning. By the end of the training, the staff was able to envision what the week could look like. In October and March, the staff will participate in two-day trainings. There will be two-day trainings in which the staff will engage in October and March and we should see some pilots in April.

The week of the family always coincides with the mini courses.

Chris Sewell asks whether what happened in Vesuvius Academy last year has anything to do with Hillview trying to further define Project-Based Learning?

We have learned that needs to be standardized, it needs to be academic with assessments to gauge what they have learned.

Connections with Vesuvius Academy:

Vesuvius – connections and differences. Project Based Learning and – and Personalized Learning Academy fall under the concept of “personalization” – with a true PBL approach it can become something that students are driving the curriculum and the teachers are more like the coaches.

Examples are “Summit Basecamp” – “Alt School,” those are platforms that allow students to go at their own pace but the instructor is still aware of their progress.

Johanna wonders, what about the children who don’t have a passion or have not identified a passion. How do we include those kids or describe their guidance to get them to that place?

Willy responds– Sometimes we come to our passions later in life

- i. The more experiences that students have, the more they can connect to what their passions might be.
- ii. Merit to push students outside of their comfort zone and that helps them learn about passion
- iii. Students come to that sooner or later.
- iv. Don’t want students just to be “doing school.”

Bike Safety

Julie Nelson raises the issue of safety of Hillview students on bikes, particularly in light of the recent accidents (3, including one student getting “doored” on the way to school resulting in a broken collar bone.)

She wonders whether there is any way to have a conversation with the students about bike safety at school? There are bike rodeos, reminders etc. including in the newsletters. We need to be aware on Santa Cruz Avenue. Officer Mary Ferguson will be out and present. We need to have a presence and partner with the Menlo Park Police. Willy will also talk to Danielle O’Brien about ways to introduce the topic at school.

9:39 -Treasurer’s Report

Christie Tonsfeldt

Christie introduces herself and explains her role and those of the financial team.

- Gathers information from the financial secretary and treasurer
- Pays bills but does not directly receive them
- Manages the budget
- John Donald goes through the bills and makes sure that we get reimbursement approved and Christie pay the bills.
- Gina Skinner is in charge of bringing all money in. Gina reconciles the paypal account – she just completed this task for August.

Christie reminds us to use the reimbursement form – under PTO Resources on PTO Page, “Useful Forms.” If we send John a PDF then things will be paid more quickly.

Christie walks through the balance sheet (as of 7/31/2017)

First 2 pages

First Column is our budget and the second column is the actuals.

1st ½ page – 205K – membership was \$10, \$11K above what was expected.

The main number is \$205,800.

Page 2, “Academic Enrichment budget” (deemed “Willy’s Budget”)– \$178K but we only spent \$137K

We booked a one time expense with the overage: put in a climbing wall in gym, gave \$4000 to library, got new sports uniforms, and the remaining money went to the broadcast. Only spent \$21,000.

We underspent the budget by \$36K. Some money underspent was allocated to mini courses that didn’t happen.

Jody points out that you don’t “lose” your budget if you don’t spend it.

We discussed the fact that one new teacher spent all of her PTO Allocated money (\$300) and thought she had an extra amount for setting up her classroom. Willy will talk to this teacher off line.

Jamey refers to the overage in the actual of the 8th grade graduation party. Last year, the 8th grade did extra fundraising to meet the expenses of the party. The class will donate the extra money to the MPAEF.

Hillview Enrollment is 961 – we were projected at 990 this year but have a lower enrollment.

Class Breakdown follows: 6th 320; 7th 321; 8th 320.

Budget approved last spring based on 1,001 students, which will come down a bit.

9:56 - Board Updates

Volunteers –

Nancy Witeck – Reports that 83 Signed up to volunteer. That’s 50% of what we had at end of last September. We are not getting many volunteers from the newsletter asks. Tables to be set up at BTSN, one per grade. One suggestion is to use ASB kids to pitch the volunteers. Nancy keeps the running list, so if there are any leads, send them her way!

Communications -

Johanna Woll - Wants to make sure that newsletter editors have clear guidelines. What is Johanna’s role with respect to the joint campaign? Jody Buckley will help.

After School Activities -

Jamey Hawkins - New Program – “Energy, Environment and Chocolate.” Led by Janelle London. This is part of the San Mateo County Clean Energy Program. (Janelle has a robust CV we can see online)

This program discusses energy and environment, coal, oil, natural gas and electricity as a secondary energy source and latest challenges and solutions with an emphasis on sustainability. What does this mean when it comes to chocolate?

Jamey asks that we formally approve the inclusion of this program.

10:05 Jamey makes the motion, Gina seconds. The motion is approved by vote.

We discuss how to encourage participation in these sports and activities. One suggestion is to do a Hawk Talk special on the activities.

There are 6 total activities in addition to the after school sports.

10:09 - JC/Membership Update

Jody Buckley

Jody, Steve Shaw, partner with the envoys, Caroline and Scott. This is the fundraising arm of the PTO making sure that Christie’s budget looks like it needs to look at the end of the campaign.

According to Jody, we are tracking very well to last year. \$133,600 of 188,000 which is 68% of total as of today’s date. This is a 50% participation rate. There is still a \$250/student ask. She is pleased to report that 85% of board members have participated.

We started out the school year with the community report. These were handed out at the luau. At Hillview, we don’t have many high touch opportunities after that. MPAEF/PTO fact sheets will go up in the classrooms at BTSN. In addition, there will be a video featuring students that will be shown—this will also be included in the newsletter.

Elementary schools also showed the video at their back to school nights.

ASB also made signs. There are 17 more days left in the campaign which ends on 9/29.

10:17 Teacher’s Report

David Babington – 8th Grade English Teacher - Teacher Board Rep

David began by sharing messages from teachers

“Thank you for the coffee mugs and the welcome back lunch.”

Anna Kogen –Is doing a project with the Palo Alto Humane Society. Kids will photograph and paint the animals and help with the adoption of pets.

Russ Peterson – Sends huge thanks for the climbing wall. The kids love it!

Parke Treadway will put an article in the Almanac about the climbing wall.

The librarians are thrilled about the new books and are busily processing books to make room on the shelves for new books!

Richard Vaughn would like a music representative or room parent for music and drama. Anyone with the child enrolled in the program would be great!

Lara Olson – Thanks everyone for end of the year gift.

It is suggested that we could include detailed letters from teachers about what they are doing in their classrooms and include it in the newsletters.

Gina Skinner discusses the Google form that went to the room parents last year. The goal was to determine how the parents can be of most use to the teachers.

10:26 - MPAEF Update

Caroline Bowers, Scott Marshall

Caroline and Scott are the Hillview MPAEF envoys.

They report that the foundation is at 20% of goal of 3.7 MM

This year, 10% of that will come from the endowment.

We are at 50% of MPAEF Board Participation – hoping to get 100% of board participation.

Caroline suggests that one way to distinguish the MPAEF and the PTO is that MPAEF pays for “staff” and PTO pays for “stuff.” Jody feels that this distinction is not entirely accurate.

Conversations will continue around this topic.

Caroline and Scott report that this year the MPAEF theme is “Grow your Impact.” The goal is to encourage people to stretch further.

There will be a New Family Social at Hillview on 9/24 in the afternoon.

Other dates of note – Dine out for the schools will happen in tandem with Conference week.

Donor appreciation event, which used to happen in the fall, is TBD – but will likely be in January.

Wine walk on 12/3.

Likely auction date 3/10 – the original date conflicted with the MA Auction.

The MPAEF folks will have a presence at the Back to School Night. This is in keeping with the goal of making the MPAEF have a bit more presence and clarity about what it does and provides to students, teachers, and schools.

Meeting adjourned at 10:34.