

March 28, 2018
Hamilton Central School PTO Meeting Minutes

HCS Cafeteria, 6:30 p.m. start
Minutes recorded by Carey Hay

Attendees:

PTO Officers: Co-President Jennifer Jones, Co-President Kathleen Catania, VP for Elementary Karli Murray, VP for MS/HS Kathleen Stahl, Treasurer Carey Hay.

Additional Members: Maureen Wallace, Jen Briggs, Tori Kowalski, Bridget Smith, Erin Childers-Loranty, Sarah Sparber, Aaron Robertson, Rick Hanson, Alice Virden-Speer, Jen Chouinard, Melissa Cassulis, Tish Solomon, Jen & Lucy Meyers, Michele Myrto, Cory Duclos, Taylor Jackson, Jen Murphy, Kelly Norris

Agenda: (K. Catania)

WELCOME: *We are reinvigorating the PTO this year! Thanks for coming!*

BACKGROUND: *A group of us worked together on a Strategic Planning Task-Force on Community-Communication and recognized a need for a more active and broader reaching PTO. We stepped into vacant roles and have been busy establishing systems. We've created by-laws, set up a bank account, created basic forms, met with school personnel including the Principals and attended Faculty meetings, and are working with a group of Colgate students to set up a useful website.*

Officers for the 2018-2019 academic year are listed above. We still need a Secretary.

Bridget Smith, Representative for the Hamilton Teachers Association (HTA) presented a generous \$300 donation from the HTA to express support for a great start of the revitalized PTO.

NEW DIRECTIONS

- So much we can do together - Expand visibility in MS & HS
- Open to all teachers, staff & parents at HCS (We hope you "join" via our form online so we can contact you more easily!) No mandatory annual dues. Donations welcome.
- Great time to get involved - we are setting up systems, and guidelines
- Any amount of VOLUNTEER time helpful!

PTO GOALS

- Funding practical classroom needs and enrichment initiatives
 - Literacy Night, Field trips, hygiene bags, Christmas Art project
- Being a resource for information, and
- Enhancing communication and engagement opportunities.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

- *Build up Committees:*
Current Chairs

- **Angela Britton: Holiday Chair**
- **Kathleen Catania: PARP Chair**
- **Jackie Cleary and Liz Bodian: BoxTops Chair**
- **Sabrina Craven: Faculty/Staff Luncheon Chair**
- **Sheila Catania: Book Fair Chair**

New - Seeking Coordinators and Volunteers for:

- Fundraising
- Communication
- Volunteer Coordinator -- Power Hour (?)
- Resources Identification
- 2018-2019 (Johanna Bossard/Fall Pumpkin Walk)
- Your idea here...

FUNDRAISING

- We currently have a *limited budget* with two fundraisers from Fall 2017 (Elementary Scholastic Book Fair and Yankee Candle). 2017-2018 Operating budget is under \$3,500.
- We are looking to expand fundraising/events/communication.

FYI for TEACHERS:

- NEW - Teacher Fund request and reimbursement forms online
- Also request scholarship funds for students in need/ discretionary funding available
- Please allow one month to process requests

FACEBOOK: Hamilton Central School PTO

SIGN UP: <https://hamiltonpto.weebly.com>

Member Brainstorm - what would YOU like to see from the PTO:

- B. Smith: suggested PTO coordinates with other teams so as not to duplicate (or derail) fundraising efforts already underway by teams, bands, student council. Suggestion to have a calendar outlining regular fundraisers throughout the year.

- C. Duclos: consider pursuing a 'locals discount card' to involve area businesses/1 year expiration

- A. Speer: consider fundraisers that don't sell 'stuff' but offer services like shovelling/raking/etc. Focus on volunteerism. Get on Community Chest list in the future. Set budget so parents know how much money PTO is trying to raise and can donate accordingly. Explore consignment shop policy (\$\$ to PTO).

- Do more with Box Tops program. (promote, involve students, hold contests)

- Do we want to open an account at Caz Cans? HCS already has them?
- J. Meyers: Literacy Night was a huge draw. Great to have a program not targeted at a particular demographic. How to help your kids WITH your kids. Parents and families coming out together to learn, dance. Community problem solving. Great model. Are there other topics to explore using same model? (K. Catania - Math Night model.)
- Teacher Night - tell parents what would help kids most?
- J. Jones: PTO plans to stagger meeting times to see when we can reach most people.
- R. Hansen: Staggering meetings good idea.. Try 3:00 when there are many parents/grandparents at HCS. Provide childcare.
- K. Catania: Want to coordinate childcare with National Junior Honor Society Hours requirement.
- J. Meyers: Pay what you can childcare might make a difference.
- T. Kowalski: Drop-off in activity spaces like the Art Room, gym.
- A Robertson: Too much focus on fundraising will turn people away. Invite people to come talk about a Topic. Ask people what issues do you want to discuss?
- J. Briggs: Look into other PTOS/learn from existing models. Lots being done for community building/school building.
- J. Murphy: Ask students/clubs what they need. Contact Sean Nevison for a Pay-As-You-Go movie fundraiser event.
- C. Hay: looking for a Liaison to connect with Student Councils (as well as HTA.)
- Use inclusive language. Parents don't have to be Experts to be involved.
- J. Jones: We are not experts.
- T. Kowalski: If an issue exists, PTO not necessarily trying to 'solve problem' but facilitate discussion, identify resources. Host information nights.
- A. Speer: Host a night on 'state testing'? Create a forum for admin who know more to speak.
- B. Smith: Kevin Ellis does this. At Open House.
- Host an alternate Open House night. A lot of things are crammed into Open House nights.

- PTO wants to highlight what is happening already and how can we support that. For example, create a master list of clubs and organizations and arrange by grade
- T. Solomon: What happened to the garden committee? Get kids involved in garden/greenhouse. (C. Hay: historically there was a tool shed with kid shovels, gloves, and at some point Hamilton Gardners Association took over garden maintenance. PTO committee to form to take ownership here. T. Kowalski: that would be so great right outside my window!!)
- M. Cassulis: Have a wellness fair/night to connect families with services they may not know exist. Healthy Hamilton Coalition has many resources to share, particularly related to drug, alcohol, suicide prevention.
- S. Sparber: How long has it been since the PTO active? (K. Stahl: active about 15 years ago with many involved committees/chairs. K. Murray: PreK parents learned one morning at pick-up about 5 years ago that the PTO funding would be inaccessible if people didn't assume roles. She and a few others stepped into vacant roles and tried to recruit volunteers, hold public meetings and discussion. Very limited attendance led to fewer meetings and more online decision making. Happy to see such a turn out at this meeting and that new officers are active.)
- S. Sparber: Thank you for doing that! Why do you think people aren't stepping up? When does fundraising start in each class?
- K Stahl: HS. MS has no class fundraising. PTO historically given to Elementary but have also supported afterprom SADD events.
- A. Speer: be up front in a detailed letter next Fall about who is the PTO, what are fundraising goals? Raise awareness so everybody knows opportunities exist.
- PTO focus on community building, communication and resource identification. Working with a team of Colgate Students to develop a useful website to have essential information and a calendar of current events. Considering different models (using FB, etc.) Seeking support for communication committee.
- T. Kowalski: Consider exploring parenting topics for every age (Literacy Fair for Elementary, what would work for HS/MS? Study Skills? Provide childcare. Use art room or other school resources to provide activities.” (K. Catania: coordinate with NJHS students.)
- T. Kowalski: planning prom Students Against Destructive Decision mandatory after party. Having fun without drugs and alcohol. Requesting PTO support again. Would like to promote to parents.
- Health and Wellness coordinator could identify and direct parents to a variety of activities
- J. Murphy: Should some time at each PTO meeting be set aside to promote upcoming events?

- M. Cassulis: Planning a healthy/drug free dance for the HS students the week after prom. Also involved in planning a Community Read at the HPLibrary “How Full is Your Bucket?” a book used at HCS recently.

- A. Speer/J. Chouinard: what’s the best way to provide information to busy parents? Facebook? Website? Paper hand-outs? Forum announcement to all? How are people getting the information we need them to get?

- M. Cassulis: Healthy Hamilton Coalition conducting a study to determine how parents and students get their information and may develop an APP

NEXT STEPS (K. Catania)

- 2 meetings before Summer Break (will try to hold a different times to accommodate different schedules)
- PTO will be in touch to start committees

ADJOURN approx. 7:40 PM

