

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Hamilton Central School PTO Meeting**  
**September 19, 2018 at 3:00pm., Elementary Library**

1. Call to Order 3:00
2. **Present:** Officers (Jen Jones, Jen Chouinard, Carey Hay, Karli Murray); Coordinators (Kat Catania, Julie Hengst, Melissa Cassulis, Jackie Cleary, Jen Briggs, Sheila Catania, Amy Sommers, Tara Langel); Administration/BOE (Bill Dowsland, Kevin Ellis, Peter Punzo, Chris Rogers, Harry Jarcho); other parents & teachers (Kelly Norris, Sarah Sparber, Jamie Boardway, Jess LaFrance, Alison Koleszar, Tori Kowalski, Emily Oren, Amanda Phillips, Michele Dye, Jess Poyer, Pat Rowland.)
3. Welcome, Officer Introductions
  - a. Share a quick tip among about HCS or how to make life easier!
    - i. JJ - Use this handy app to track athletics at HCS "rSchoolToday activity scheduler"
    - ii. JC - Use an old address book to write down all online passwords incase you forget one.
    - iii. CH - Get to know Ivette Mendez, Mr. Dowsland's assistant. She knows everyone and everything about HCS.
4. Principals Reports
  - a. Kevin Ellis: Thank you for Open House/Bash (Will be seeking feedback on combining the bash/open house same day. In general, we heard a lot of positive comments for this opportunity to come together. You may have heard about the near million dollar SSAG Students for Academic Enrichment Grants. Funding arrived a bit late (about 3 weeks ago.) Grant includes a full time position for project coordinator. Coordinator will reach out to community/teachers to find out what kinds of enrichments programs we'd like for students. 3 separate classes for kids age K-8 will be offered each quarter. There will also be a Summer School (STEAM Summer School/Camp 4 weeks, M-Th, try to run it opposite from REC, most likely run it in August.) Topics of interest: Drone aviation, robotics, mindfulness, leadership, all types of skills to be successful in 21st Century. Hoping a course catalog will be available by Nov. 1. There will be some limitations: class sizes set at 22. Courses will be co-taught by HCS teachers and outside professionals. Teachers will benefit from professional development. Chris Rogers will spend some money on robotics, tech equipment.
  - b. State Testing (3-8) reports have been released to schools only, parents will see them at the end of September (according to the State, could be as late as October.) Increased overall proficiencies by 9% in ELA, expect to be about 20 points above state average. Up 11 percentile points in math. Amazing job by teachers. Hamilton is a "Focus district" but this report reflects "poverty kids knocked it out of the park". Would like to be off the 'focus district' list as that is a huge amount of paperwork/meetings and energy that could otherwise be invested in other efforts.
  - c. Bill Dowsland: Thank you to Melissa Cassulis (Hamilton Coalition) & PTO for the Bash. We estimate 400-500 families/students/parents participated. It was exciting to unveil a new mascot. Thank you to Emily Freeth and HS Student Council for putting that together! Jr/Sr. Ranked #18 in upstate NY, #75 overall in NY, Nationally #716 (in over 25,000 schools), #2 school in Madison County, Teachers ranked #24 in upstate NY. SAT scores: average 1164. 2 recent National merit finalists - incredible academic achievements. All state music festival students selected. Really excited for PTO reinvigoration efforts. We appreciate the support: office treats, cookies, plants, goes a long way!
  - d. Peter Punzo - A challenge to put out to HCS: there's been a change in state testing and I believe the new saying is ESSA "every student shall achieve". Hamilton is still a "focus district"

even though we've made gains, we don't have 95% of students taking exams (grades 3-8) which keeps us on "focus" list. Would like to get off the Focus List. My challenge to HCS is a 95% participation goal. Currently 61%. Used to be 100% before OPT OUT movement a few years ago. 48% participation for 4 years straight, Elementary had 77% last year. Kevin Ellis: Need to put a lot of time/energy into plans to meet demands of Focus Districts. Could be using energy towards other things. Bill Dowsland: Cohorts at HCS are so small, keep in mind, 1-2 students taking/not taking/proficient/not proficient...greatly skew our percentages.

5. President's Report (Jennifer Jones)

- a. Plans for the Fall (Book Fair, PARP, Pumpkin Walk, Yankee Candle, etc.) Look for all of these upcoming requests.
- b. Phone call from Jackie Stark: The don't have enough people from our district for Superintendent Search.  
Planning a meeting for the first week of October. Looking for 12 parents (currently have 5). This is the opportunity for parents!
- c. Thinking ahead: If you are a PTO Coordinator, please document any notes, receipts, photos, tips that will make transitioning your role easier next year. If you'd like a binder, let us know.

6. Treasurer's Report (Jen Chouinard)

1. Highlights of 2017-2018
  - a. Classroom support - elem field trips
  - b. Community building - field days & holiday (wrapping/art project)
  - c. Health & wellness - chem free prom party, snacks for field days (smooth station donated)
  - d. Hospitality - faculty/staff treats, decorations

*Complete 2017-2018 summary available online on PTO website ("Contributions")*

2. Donations/Income

- a. Income
  - i. Awaiting book fair final total: about \$1200 net profit
- b. Volunteering
  - i. Back to School Bash
  - ii. Book Fair ~ all shifts
  - iii. Garden Clean-Up
  - iv. PTO Childcare (1 teacher/students/per 3:00 meeting)
- c. In-Kind Donations:
  - i. PTO Bulletin Board for entryway (HCS) (pending)
  - ii. Mulch for gardens (?)
- d. Cash Donations
  - i. \$150 Middle school student council - extremely generous!
  - ii. \$141 Hamilton Coalition - ice cream sandwich sales at summer concert series
  - iii. \$ 45 PTO misc parent donations from brochure returns and PTO table at open house

### 3. Current Requests

<b>Approved requests since June 7th meeting</b>		<b>Pending requests</b>	
<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Amount Approved:</b>	<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Requested:</b>
<b>Field days</b> - bounce house - health/wellness snacks	\$435	Playground Equipment	\$665
High School graduation decorations	\$120	Care bags - upon research with counselors we thought a care suitcase with specific items more appropriate	Pricing out supplies
PTO Brochures	\$110	Welcome back festivities - Teacher bfast - Welcome back balloons, sign, flowers	
Book Fair book gifted to every teacher who made a wish list	\$152		
Kindergarten- Scholastic magazines <i>Also did this for 3rd grade</i>	\$185		
Pumpkin Walk	\$1050		
Elem book fair prize	\$25		

### 7. Coordinator Reports

- i. Yankee Candle: Karli Murray-- starts October 3rd (currently biggest/easiest Fundraiser, expanded to include MS/HS. Hoping parents will help fundraise for MS/HS) Only selling for a 2 week window. Please make sure students write their name/their teacher names.
- ii. Fundraising: Sarah Sparber stepped down. Thank you for your efforts! Danielle Bikowsky new Coordinator.
- iii. Garden/Playground: Amy Sommers - We held a workday before classes started. Will probably weed every Wednesday mornings after drop-off. Focus on cleaning up pathways so kids can get involved. Next Spring, we'll do the bigger job of moving plants around, identifying what's in there. Would be great to work with teachers on labelling native plants. Made a request for mulch for the pathways/front garden to keep weeds down.
- iv. Health & Wellness: Tara Langel/Stephanie Fadale - Tara and Carey talked about Jess Poyer's specific request for playground cart/kickballs, etc. This seems like a request parents could easily contribute to as a fundraiser rather than the PTO buying it directly. Tara has some follow up questions for Jess.

- v. Box Tops: Jackie Cleary/Jen Briggs -- Sent home collection sheet with reading backpacks over the summer. Only 2 came back. Easy way to make money for the school.
- vi. Hospitality: Melissa Cassulis/Julie Hengst -- Teacher Welcome back - balloons, flowers, breakfast organized for Tuesday after first day of school. Bagels, Donuts, Zucchini bread. Standing by for our next Hospitality assignment.
- vii. Literacy/Book Fair: Sheila Catania (Grossed sales of \$5081, profit \$1270. Thank you to Jess LaFrance for helping so much behind the scenes, and for always working the most shifts. Thanks also to Ms. Bossard and her Ag students for allowing parents to get to Open House. The Janitors very helpful and nice this year. In case you were curious, there were 1200 even pieces of pasta. In 2012, book fair was at \$3300, jumped to \$4300 after decision was made to coordinate with Open House. ) Would like to discuss whether the Bash/Open House/Book Fair all at the same time is too much or not. Will find a way to thank janitors/Ms. Bossard - make cookies! Jenn Jones: A huge thank you to Sheila, and Jess LaFrance, for running this fundraiser so smoothly!
- viii. PARP: Kathleen Catania (People as Reading Partners, Opening Assembly next Thursday at 8:45) Big thanks to Julie Hengst, Sarah Sparber & Tori for volunteering. Public Library Director Travis will stop by the Assembly. Ms. Briggs offered to create reading sheet again. She's also talked to Slices and set up pizza slice prizes for readers who meet goals. Slime Party will be the prize! The theme this year is "Reading Rocks".
- ix. Sustainability: Vacancy. Anybody interested, let us know.
- x. Pumpkin Walk: Tori Kowalski (on behalf of Johanna Fox-Bossard) Thank you to the PTO for the huge donation. Purchased reusable candle lights, pumpkin carving sets, popcorn machine. Popcorn donated by Mosier farms. Popcorn free for all. Can use in the years ahead. Tori has flyers to publicize the Pumpkin Walk. Put it on website (FB). Tori read the letter that will go home to families in early October. Pumpkins will be displayed/organized by grade/classes. There will be gift bags, trick or treating, and all will be encouraged to come in costume. Any food or activity will be \$1/less (face painting w/ art club), money will go back to art club or whatever student clubs are offering activities. Minute to Win It. Celebrate the Fall Season. Path to be walked will be in Soccer Stadium. Ways to help: take flyers to distribute, Parent Volunteers on Tuesday, October 16th "Gutting Day", Wednesday/Thursday October 17/18 Carving Days (Creating a schedule), Friday October 19th (come help display the pumpkins. Carey will create a sign-up together with Tori.

## 8. Unfinished (Old) Business

- i. Approve minutes from June Meeting. Approved.

## 9. New Business

### a. Volunteer Opportunities:

- i. Elementary Steering Committee Member (1st meeting 10/18 at 3:00pm) - Great Committee! Organized Cartwheels program last year (needed strong mentors). This year the focus will be Health and wellness, character education. Last year meetings alternated 3/6:00. Contact Kevin Ellis if interested.
- ii. MS/HS Steering Committee Member. Last year the group focussed on the Regional emphasis on Chronic Absenteeism. Looked at our statistics, re-wrote absentee letters, typically 2nd Tuesday evening of the month. 5:30 in the HS library. Will set up goals/initiatives going forward. Contact Bill Dowsland if interested.

- iii. Superintendent Search Committee (need 8 parents: 1st meeting on 10/3 at 4:00). You may have seen the letter from the BOE in the District Newsletter stating “parents (among other groups) will have an opportunity to volunteer thru different organizations”. Mr. Jarcho confirmed this is the parent opportunity. Contact the PTO or Deb Kirley to express interest.
- iv. Pumpkin Walk Volunteers (October 19, 5-9PM. Rain date: Saturday, October 20)
- v. PARP Volunteers (October)
- vi. PTO Childcare (We are looking for 1 teacher volunteer per meeting): (11/7 at 3:00, 1/9 at 3:00, 3/6 at 3:00, 5/1 at 3:00)
- vii. Can’t thank Laurie Coddington enough for helping today! Thank you to Mr. Dowsland/Mr. Crumb for supporting that and extending HCS insurance to cover those kids as an extracurricular. Thanks to Mercedes Hayes for organizing students and also to Dora, Will, and Cadi for showing up!
- viii. Room Parents: Does your elementary teacher have one? Ask!
- ix. Ongoing weeding help - stop by on Wednesdays

b. Discussion

- i. Possible topics: How can we better reach out to parents? What obstacles do you face that we might be able to address? Should the PTO start a committee to create a central calendar? Are there realistic/creative ideas for better using Study Halls? Are people interested in technology/privacy?
- ii. Centralized calendar? Is it worth forming a committee? Partnering with the School? Who maintains the school calendar?
- iii. Why was parent pick-up moved to Cafeteria? Scheduling conflict with Specials/”shared staff” that have to get from Elementary to Secondary Building. (1st graders at the end of the day.) Will be reevaluated each year. Some parents reported it is too hectic at the front entrance now and it was nice to have separation between older and younger kids. Mrs. Poyer shared a 2nd grade teacher perspective, new location is a lot smoother.) Parents can go out the doors by bus garage, if they want to exit directly into school parking lot.
- iv. PTO Survey - thank you for sending that out! Over 80 parents already completed it! Receiving a lot of feedback. Will be analyzing feedback. We’re here for school/parents/it’s your organization!
- v. Mr. Rogers: Re: the “Calendar issue”. I am working on a solution. It’s complicated but basically HCS uses multiple competing web technologies that don’t work well together. Ivette keeps a detailed calendar (google calendar), the web software called “schoolwires” is supposed to sync with Google. Post the link to google calendar - more transparent. There are Methods to subscribe to it. If there’s an elementary Google calendar kept, then it could be integrated. Daily bulletin of everything would be nice. Check with Lynda O’Keefe.
- vi. What about Community Events? If the community kept a google calendar, events could be easily integrated.
- vii. Join the Secondary Steering Committee! Email Bill Dowsland

10. Adjourn (3:58)