

PTO MEETING MINUTES

January 15, 2020 9:30am

In attendance: Mike Hower, Dan DiDesiderio, Erin Butkovic, Kelly DiNatale, Candace Uricchio, Liz Rambeau, Diane Markovitz, Elizabeth Klamut, Elizabeth Carter, Kelly Caracciolo, Cherie River, Alicia Pelfrey

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME- Kelly DiNatale

*Welcome and introductions at 9:40am

TREASURER'S REPORT- Liz Rambeau

*Report attached. Current balance is \$20,118.21.

*Wellness Day expenses from 1/10/20 have not been paid yet (roughly \$265). That is more than half of our Wellness Day budget yet we have already purchased some items that will be used for the second day in the Spring.

*Old check was cashed recently for a FCGT winner from years ago. That was a replacement check as the student lost their first one. The former student has been contacted and states she will reimburse the PTO for her mistake.

*Lengthy discussion regarding how to use our current surplus of money and what to do to keep funding the PTO in future years. The majority of the current surplus we have dates back to deposits from gala fundraisers years ago. If we want to continue to fund grants as we are this year our typical yearly income will not be enough. Parents had ideas for projects to fund and Dr. Hower will investigate things that may be appropriate for us to support financially as well. Parent questioned how much money a PTO is legally allowed to roll over year after year. Liz will investigate. The QRT grade specific speaker series may be expanded. Liz suggested forming a finance committee within the PTO to discuss these items further and report back to the whole group. Kelly will draft a letter to send to parents/guardians who opted to receive PTO news to encourage PTO donations.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT- Mike Hower

*Early graduation ceremony is tomorrow with 21 seniors graduating a semester early.

*Celebration today for 2 veteran teachers who are retiring, Henry Gonzalez and Mark Early. Dr. Hower acknowledges and appreciates all of their efforts throughout the years at FCAHS. They will be greatly missed. They have mid year replacements. Staff in the building has gone down over the years yet it is appropriate to the level of decline in enrollment.

*Thanks to the PTO for their contributions and efforts on Wellness Day.

*Countywide wrestling tournament this weekend at FCAHS

*Building changes

-The Instructional Support Center is changing its name/focus. It is now the Student Support Center and open to everyone. It will have an emotional support teacher to help students in crisis and/or with emotional needs. It will remain a testing center as well.

-The Mindfulness room in development is being located in proximity to the guidance department. This allows it to be staffed more often and is a more accessible location for students. It will be called the Zen Den. Parent questioned the current role of the guidance

counselors as her impression is that they used to be solely for academic/post secondary planning but now have a significant role in general counseling/emotional support of students. Dr. Hower reinforced that the shift is not that dramatic and that we have a good counselor to student ratio (approximately 235 to 1 when guidelines are roughly 300 to 1)

- *Discussion of students' anxiety overall and ways the staff supports them. With regards to academics, teachers are always available during QRT and the math help center along with manuscript tutoring have extended their hours this year with times both before and after school.

- *Finals are this week and Keystones were last week. Parent questioned the lack of advance notice/need for the school day to be on a Keystone schedule. Dr. Hower explained why the schedule is necessary to allow for ample test time and that the students are informed well in advance through a variety of ways as to the change in schedule those days. Parent questioned why we take Keystones as they are no longer state required. Although not a state requirement, students need to show proficiency in these subjects as a graduation requirement so the Keystones are an effective way to do so.

- *Start School Later updates. See Start School Later notes.

ACTIVITIES UPDATE- Erin Butkovic

- *Telethon was a success with over \$46,000 raised, \$11,000 of that from the high school alone. This year's beneficiary is the Sharpsburg Library.

- *Blood Drive is 2/12/20 throughout the school day. Volunteers needed. Email Kelly if interested. dinatalek@gmail.com

- *Open House is 2/12/20. Multiple informative pre-sessions begin at 6:00 with Open House starting at 7:00.

ADMINISTRATION- Dan DiDesiderio

- *Change in proficiency standards for Keystones coming in 2021.

- *Historically underperforming groups of students are designated by the government. FC has a higher percentage of students in these groups compared to comparable school districts. The FC students who fall into these groups rank #1 in Algebra and Biology Keystones and 5th in Literature Keystones compared to those subgroups throughout Allegheny County.

- *School Board has contracted a consulting company for the search for a new superintendent. All information is on the district website.

- *Parent questioned the district's use of focus groups as her perception is that these groups are from a handpicked group of individuals. She would like to see opportunities to be part of a focus group posted on the district website to enlist the opinions from more community members.

FCGT- Candace Uricchio

- *Student Roll Out is Tuesday 1/21/20. Show is Thursday 4/23/20 at 7PM.

- *Website is up and running <http://www.fcgtalent.net/>

- *Solicitation letters went out last week. Still looking for a title sponsor.

- *Judges not finalized but many prospects.

- * Volunteers needed!

* Contact Candace for any additional information. fcgtalent@gmail.com

DISTRICT FORUM- Kelly DiNatale

*Public meeting was held 11/19 at 9am in the high school LGI. Program featured meet and greet with new and returning school board members and was well received.

Next public meeting 3/24/20 at 7pm. Topic not yet determined.

*High School District Forum rep needed. Contact Kelly if interested.

dinatalek@gmail.com

START SCHOOL LATER- Liz Rambeau

*Next committee meeting 1/29/20 with discussion of new Transfinder report.

*Liz states she and other parents further investigated last Transfinder report to come up with a two tier system where all district students would start between 8-9am

*Parent voiced concerns over later start times and students not returning home from after school activities until later. It was reiterated that there will be challenges with a switch to later starts but the health benefits for all students should be the priority.

GRANTS-Kelly DiNatale

*The grants committee and those in attendance today are supportive of a grant for a reusable arch to use used for school spirit type activities throughout the year. We are awaiting cost from proposing teacher.

Meeting adjourned at 11:23am.

Next meeting February 19, 2020 at 1pm.