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**HINSDALE CENTRAL PTO MEETING – Monday, October 20, 2008**

**Meeting called to order at 8:56 A.M.**

Welcome by Mary Buddig, Co-President. Pam Bylsma, Assistant Principal, brought in the trophy that was presented to Hinsdale Central High School at a ceremony in Washington D.C. HC was presented with the National School of Character Award.

**Secretary-** The September, 2008 minutes were approved as written. Motion to approve by Carol Wroble, seconded by Laurita Panagoulas. (As a reminder, the prior month's minutes will be posted on the PTO website the Thursday before each PTO meeting. PTO members are asked to read the minutes, and either e-mail comments or changes to the secretary.)

**President – Darla Highley and Mary Buddig:**

Mary discussed the "Straight Talk" event that HC would be hosting on Wed. October 29, from 7:00 -9:00 pm. Patti Bellock and, Kirk Dillard will introduce the event and Hinsdale Police Chief Brad Bloom will also be there. 8<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents, the community and teachers and staff are all encouraged to attend. The purposes are

1. to initiate open and honest dialogue in order to get a handle on teen drinking;
2. discuss the involvement parents would like the school to have when dealing with students who are caught drinking either in or outside the school premise; and
3. to discuss how the Athletic and Activities Code should address this issue. Parents and students will break into smaller, separate groups that have facilitators to lead and focus the conversations. Mr. Pobst is making a big push through different clubs and sports to encourage student attendance.

Mary noted that she and Darla will be meeting with Mary Parsons tomorrow to discuss how to make the transition for families who move into Central mid-year an easier one. Ideas include

- having a sheet with contact names and number for different things that they may need help with: can leave this sheet the Guidance office

- provide them a PTO Directory if there are extras
- make sure the PTO has their contact info and e-mail addresses so we can forward information to them. The idea is to set up an Ambassador Program for Parents.

**Vice President** – Joanne Cascio acknowledged that Mr. Damian Marano (HC parent) donated 600 apples to the Teacher Appreciation Committee. Apples were presented to the teachers and staff as they entered the building on the last late start day. The teachers and staff were very touched by the gesture.

**Treasurer** – Nancy Schuessler highlighted elements of the budget:

**Income:** Directory and Dues revenue increased as a result of increased sales as did Advertising Sales for the Directory; Holiday Breakfast is \$925 in the black as a result of donations received.

**Expenses:** to date, all 27 Book Grants that were awarded in May 2008 have been funded; the summer mailing expense was \$695, down from \$4,000 in 2007. This cost savings was achieved by PTO sending their materials with Central's materials; PTO Directory postage cost is higher this year over last year for three reasons:

- 1) Directory was thicker and heavier
- 2) more were purchased, and
- 3) the decision was made to use a different postal rate that would shorten the mail time.

**Book Grant** – No Report.

**Character Counts** – The National School of Character Award was acknowledged again... congratulations for all the great work!

**Communications/E-mail** – Meg Cooper will send out a short electronic newsletter each month, within a week after PTO meetings. Send any news to Meg at [enews@hinsdalecentralpto.org](mailto:enews@hinsdalecentralpto.org) and copy PTO Presidents.

**Directory** – Directories revenues netted about \$35,000, about \$10,000 more than last year. Increase in dues and the number sold partially attributed to this increase. Most people have received their Directories, although, some are still waiting for them (there can be a two week window for postal delivery as result of the bulk mailing process). The process of streamlining orders online and using Paypal was successful.

**Directory Advertising** – Ad sales to date are \$13,250 as compared to \$4,800 last year, although we are still trying to collect about \$2,000. The changes made (color ad pages, listing of advertisers in front of book and spotlighting the ads in the PTO web site) were great selling points during solicitation.

**Families Helping Families** – Joni Holinger explained that this one- year old committee assists the school’s Social Work Department. This year the Committee has given the Social Work Department \$400 worth (purchased at a discounted cost of \$386) of \$25 gift cards to help families in need buy grocery, gas, and other emergency supplies. FHF will raise money in various ways, including soliciting and having collection drops for loose change in the cafeteria. Joni explained that Pam Kalafut, Director of Student Activities, has helped get student volunteers from the school’s clubs to help with collection.

**Freshman Parent Circle** - Freshman Parent Gatherings were last Friday night October 17<sup>th</sup> (these are gatherings for parents, organized by their freshman child’s alpha guidance department groups). These parties were again very successful and Mr. Pobst and Mrs. Huebner attended each gathering, as did each respective guidance counselor. A change this year was the combining of some of the guidance groups at one home. We discussed asking the host parents to send reviews of the event to Darla. Also discussed the conflict with the Freshman play which was held on the same Friday night: available dates are limited for the Freshman Gatherings.

**Holiday Breakfast** - No Report.

**Make A Difference** – Marcy Innocenti explained that the committee recognizes teachers and staff who make a difference at HC. The committee’s first meeting will be tomorrow (Oct 21<sup>st</sup>). The nominations for the first quarter ( forms are available on PTO website, or hard copies are available in the Dean’s, Guidance or English departments) will be reviewed and voted on by the Committee. Awards are handed out quarterly, and each recipient receives a \$50 Lettuce Entertain You gift card and a Make a Difference certificate.

**PEP – Parents Empowering Parents** – Annette McClain is working with Nick Wahl to set up programs. D-86 BOE pays for the speakers. Topics will be posted on website when lined up.

**Programming** – “Conversations with Mr. Pobst”, topic today: Clubs and Organizations, getting your student involved. Pam Kalafut, Director of Student Activities.

**Publicity** – No Report. But if anyone has anything to promote, let Ann Pitcher know.

## **Reading Rocks – No Report**

**Safety & Bylaws** - Janet Sabine Parry explained that the committee is continuing to look into some of the following issues: dress code and consequences; parking and security; ongoing safety concerns relating to drop-off/pick-up procedures. Janet also explained that security is more manageable and the flow of traffic is smoother as a result of having only three outside doors to the school open during drop-off. Discussion about the renewed need to re-examine drop-off procedures in the circle: parents are still dropping off in two rows rather than pulling to the right side.

The food service and other delivery trucks are also an issue as they frequently park (before 8 am) in the drop-off path and disturb the flow of traffic. Not only is this a danger to both drivers and students crossing, it snarls drop-off traffic.

Janet also mentioned that the Village of Hinsdale is looking into precluding right turns onto 55<sup>th</sup> for ½ hour periods during drop-off and pick up times. There was discussion on the need to forewarn parents when village road construction and repair will block or materially alter the routes to the school.

Janet further discussed the breezeway security issue and the fact that students get frustrated that they have to walk around instead of being able to cut through the breezeway (even if there is a security person there). The consensus is there is a need for more security personnel.

A sub-committee is being established to look into the senior parking issues.

Concerns or recommendations - send them to Janet.

**School Board Liaison** - Sue Pircon discussed the following D-86 Board decisions/topics:

-Energy Plan is being developed by Dianne Barrett and the Policy committee. Recommendations are being reviewed and will be presented at the next meeting.

-BOE recommended change in healthcare facilitator to Blue Cross/Blue Shield: viewed as a positive.

-Dr. Claudia Geocaris working with union to formulate a better evaluation system for teachers than the current state mandated ABC ranking system.

- Discussed the fact that coaches/club sponsors have the same stipend, without regard to the time they invest in an activity over the course of a year. At the BOE meeting tonight a comparison of stipends from other schools will be reviewed.

-Will revisit the \$4 million bond issue for synthetic turf fields and other facility improvements with Willaim Blair & Co. Will evaluate if D-86 can get more funds: they can issue up to \$25 million in bonds without a referendum

-Working to hire a new architect which will put together a Master Plan for both campuses which could include auditorium, pool and parking structure.

-Discussed the new sound system in the auditorium.

-BOE accepted \$5,000 donation from the Romano family to fund the autism acting camp held at the high school last summer. A production by the children who attended the camp will be held this Sunday at Central at 3:00 pm.

**Social** – It was noted that the name of this committee will change from “Social” to “Hospitality” to better represent what they do. The Committee is being expanded as explained earlier in the minutes. The Committee was thanked for the food and refreshments for the meeting.

**Volunteers** – Kay Gallo reported that she had many volunteers for Homecoming/ Coat check and for PLAN testing. Kay is looking for someone who is interested in taking over for Homecoming/Coat Check volunteers for next year. Please contact Kay if you are interested.

**Website** - No Report

**Class Representatives** – No Reports

**Middle School Representatives** – No Reports. HMS, CHMS and Westview reps said that they would send out e-mail blasts to 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents to inform them about the “Straight Talk” meeting and about other future events that might apply to them.

**New Business** –

**Special Education** Department changes are underway. Sally Parsons and Karen Altergott presented a request to formulate a new PTO committee that will encourage the sharing of ideas and experiences among parents of special education children. The idea is to facilitate discussion among “experienced” parents of Special Education students to help first time parents navigate the nuances in applying to colleges including the IEPs in place while in the high school, course selection, understand what services are available to children with various disabilities, and what is unique about each student's needs. Sally spoke of her experience with her son's dyslexia, and how this new PTO committee and the Guidance Department will try to put forth a collaborative effort to join together to get positive results for all involved. Information will be shared in meetings and through information on a page on the PTO web site.

There are over 300 IEP's at Central. Motion to form a new PTO committee as presented made by Maria Pierce, second by Terry Edwards. Motion approved. Sally and Karen will come up with a name for the committee.

- **Teacher Appreciation Committee** needs money to pay for the pumpkin pies that they will present to all the teachers right before Thanksgiving break. Quest (Central's food service provider is discounting the pies for the committee) and to cover the cost of the coffee they will have for the teachers on the day of Parent/Teacher conferences. They are asking for \$1,900. Motion to fund this amount for the Teacher Appreciation Committee made by Laurita Panagoulas, second by Terry Edwards.

- Darla outlined the **Interview Clinic/Work Shop** that will be held on Sunday Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> at Central from 12:00 – 3:00 pm. This clinic is for seniors and juniors and their parents. After the initial overview presentation, 55 seniors (first priority) and juniors will be able to go through a 7 minute mock interview (which will be taped) with people who do alumni interviews, or who are well versed in interviewing. Then they will be debriefed by others who will go through the positive and negatives of different aspects of that interview. It is meant to be a positive learning experience to help the student get comfortable with interviewing. They will be sent home with their tapes, checklists and a packet of information. Darla is looking for about 8 more volunteers for that day to help with the flow of people from one exercise to another. If interested, e-mail Darla.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.**

Respectfully,

Maria Pierce, Secretary