

UHSSE PTO Minutes: September 20, 2016

Moderator: Jessica May PTO President

Attendance: Jessica May, President, Danielle Hollister, Treasurer, Dana Shagan, Secretary, Sean Tomany, Assistant Principal, Lisa Mouthaan and Tracy Vontell (representing the AGP committee), and 24 parents

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm.

Officers for this year were introduced.

Chris Kean, the elected PTO Vice President, was fondly remembered after her untimely death.

Minutes from the May 18, 2016 PTO meetings were read by Dana Shagan and approved by Jessica May, seconded by Danielle Hollister.

PTO President's update presented by Jessica May:

- Parents were encouraged to sign up to help with teacher appreciation day, the graduation reception, and fundraising activities during the year.
- UHSSE Open House on Thursday 9-22-16 from 6-8pm was announced.
- Robotics parent meeting with faculty mentor Susan Pedrick on Friday 9-23-16 was announced. The meeting will take place in room 223 and a \$40 fee is assessed for membership on the team.
- Guidance coffee for parents meetings were announced: Friday 9-23-16 from 9:30-10:15 for 9th and 10th grade parents, Friday 9-30-16 from 9:30-10:15 for 11th and 12th grade parents.
- Financial aid information session by guidance was announced for 10-25-16 from 6-7pm.
- Parents were oriented to UHSSE website resources including the Powerschool link, the guidance page, the PTO and After Grad Party pages, and the facebook page for PTO.

UHSSE Administration Report presented by Mr. Tomany:

- Parents were encouraged to attend the upcoming open house to meet teachers and learn about curricula for classes.
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation site visit was discussed. This is the school's first application for accreditation. The visit will take place October 23-26, 2016. A panel of parents will be asked to speak with the site visitors on the afternoon of October 23, details to follow. Students, faculty, administration and University of Hartford representatives will also be interviewed during the visit.

Treasurer's Report presented by Danielle Hollister:

- Current PTO funds are \$2,190.00
- Last year the PTO funded an appreciation breakfast in the spring, a graduate reception, \$300 to guidance for assisting students with college application fees, a book award, and assistance to the After Grad committee for their student graduation party.

- Fundraisers include Yankee Candle sales, of which we receive 40% of the proceeds, SCRIP gift card sales to a variety of retailers, and \$10 membership dues to the PTO. The current Yankee Candle fundraiser sales packets were sent home with students, and are due back by October 12. Online Yankee Candle orders continue through the end of the calendar year.
- Phyllis Prokop volunteered to oversee the SCRIP fundraising for this year.

School Governance Council Report presented by SGC president Lisa Dunnery:

- Attendance as of October 1 defines our school budget for the year, as money follows each student from their home district.
- UHSSE budget cuts were made due to state and city budget cuts. These included some staff reductions but athletics were preserved.
- NEASC accreditation process and site visit plans were shared.
- Chris Kean's contributions as a member of the SGC were acknowledged and she was remembered by the council.

Questions and Answers:

- Q: How long will the site visitors be on site? A: 4 days from October 23-26.
- Q: Why do some students have a 10:30am lunch followed by Physical Education? A: The complexity of scheduling 435 students with space for only 135 along with managing the University of Hartford class schedules forces such a schedule. Mr. Tomany noted that many teachers are flexible about students eating in class under these circumstances. He also said he would speak with Mr. Shea about the issue.
- Q: How do you access Powerschool? Access codes are mailed home. Parent access is separate from student access. Call the office or speak to Ms. Baseler for assistance.
- Q: Why are non-academic behaviors factored into grades by some teachers, such as having parents sign a class syllabus or class rules? A: This is part of the school's effort to help students develop a sense of personal and civic responsibility, and is a small part of the overall grade.

After Grad Party Committee Report presented by Tracy Vontell:

- After Grad Party was explained to parents. Participation and fundraising were encouraged.
- The AGP will have a table at the open house.
- A bus trip to Mohegan Sun for adults is the first fundraiser, taking place in November.
- Meetings are held the first Tues. of each month at 6:30 in the commons. Next meeting is Oct. 4.

Upcoming PTO events and issues discussed:

- November PTO meeting guidance counselors will join us.
- Dean Alan Hadad from the University of Hartford will come to a future meeting TBD to discuss UHSSE students taking UHart courses.
- Issue of filling the vacant PTO Vice President position was discussed.

- November parent-teacher conferences are on the schedule, but teachers are accessible through the school website for email or you can call the office to contact a teacher for issues before then.
- The next PTO meeting is scheduled for October 18, 2016 at 6pm.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.