

Holmes Jr. High PTA General Meeting Minutes February 27, 2020

In attendance: Joy Klineberg, Abby Koenig, Mike Dufresne, Ellen Shields, Michelle Agnew, Heema Govindjee-Merchant, Jenny Sheng, Maggie Levin, Gretchen Shroeder, Noel Bruening, Deepali Bhargava, Deepa Kulkarni, Liz Hall, Julia van der Zeeuw, Reema Asolkar

1. Call to Order (Michelle Agnew)

2. Approval of January Minutes (Abby Koenig)

- Minutes were approved.

3. Volunteer Hours and Historian Report

- Parents recorded their last month's volunteer hours on the sign-in sheet.

4. ASB Student Leadership Report (Mike Dufresne)

- Holmes Got Talent is coming up in April.
- A Fun Run is planned for May 1 from 1:30 – 3:30.
 - Five to ten parent volunteers are needed.
 - Small water bottles, fruit and snack donations are also needed.
 - Please contact Mr. Nush (dnush@djustd.net) if you're able to help.

5. Treasurer Report (Deepali Bhargava)

- The PTA has reached its fundraising goals. Thank you, parents, for your generosity!
- No checks were written since the last PTA meeting.

6. Audit Report (Gretchen Shroeder)

- The audit report was straightforward without any discrepancies.
- Gretchen read the following statement: "I have examined the financial records of Holmes Junior High PTA and find them correct."

7. Unfundraiser Report (Heema Govindjee-Merchant)

- The total for Unfundraiser donations thus far is \$10, 846.
- A total of 104 families donated; 72 donations were online, and 32 we via mail.
- Online donations, which have a small fee associated with them, worked well without any glitches.
- The cost of mailing Unfundraiser letters to all Holmes families was \$714. Postage accounted for the bulk of the cost (stamps were \$500).
 - Given the high cost of postage, it may be worth considering using only digital communication for the Unfundraiser in the future.

- As a counterargument, parents raised the point that letters often catch families' attention more effectively than emails, which can easily be deleted or overlooked.

8. English Presentation (Alison Broaddus)

- Thank you to the PTA for its donation to the English department and for the amazing meals the PTA provides!
- The English teaching team includes:
 - Frank Thomsen (English 7, English 8, 7th/8th Support)
 - Jeanne Reeve (English 8, Humanities, 8th/9th Support)
 - Eric Moody (English 8 AIM, STEEL and US History)
 - Stephen Giorgi (English 7, Theater/Communication)
 - Jeffrey Bryant (English 7 AIM, Classics)
 - Alison Broaddus (English 7, English 9 co-taught with Ms. Snyder, Special Education)
- Mr. Bryant is directing the student play, a modern rendition of *Much Ado About Nothing*.
 - Opening night is March 6 at 7 pm with a preview on March 5 at 6 pm.
 - Additional performances are March 12 -14 at 7 pm.
- Ms. Broaddus and Ms. Snyder are piloting co-teaching English and have both found the experience exciting and challenging.
- Parents expressed concern about the amount of at-home writing that is assigned in Holmes' English classes, given how many students arrive at college unable to write well.
 - Ms. Broaddus explained that there has been an intentional shift within the English department to have students do in-class writing in order to eliminate parental help.
 - Ms. Broaddus will share parents' concern about the lack of at-home writing with the department.

9. Counselor Report (Ellen Shields)

- Course planning for next year is in full swing.
- DHS and Da Vinci staff gave presentations to all 9th graders in their World Geography/History classes.
 - Many 9th graders are worried/stressed about course planning for next year.
 - DHS staff does a good job talking about the need for balance in schedules; DHS counselor Cathy Pereira emphasized the importance of a schedule not too overloaded with AP/honors classes in order to avoid burnout.
- Ms. Sarette gave presentations about course planning to all 8th graders in their US History classes.
 - 8th graders were introduced to the four year plan, whose goal is to ensure that students meet the necessary requirements for graduation and CSUS/UC admission.
 - Counselors reinforce with students that four year plans are not set in stone and can be easily amended.
- DHS students and teachers will be giving a presentation on CTE pathways in 9th grade PE tomorrow.

- 7th graders will hear presentations about course planning in their core starting on March 5.
- Counselors will be attending elementary schools soon to talk to incoming 7th graders.
- Mistreatment presentations to 7th graders are almost finished.
- 7th graders will also be receiving three lessons from Second Step, a social-emotional learning program. Teachers have asked for units on empathy, antibullying and problem-solving.
- Ms. Carlson, a counseling intern at Holmes last fall, is currently working 10 hours a week at Holmes.
 - She has been working with students getting D's and F's.
 - She has also started an after-school tutoring program which pairs 9th grade WEB leaders with struggling 7th graders. She is hoping to expand the program.
- Kaleb Boas, the Holmes drug counselor, has been busy working every other week for a couple of hours. This is the third year Holmes has had a drug counselor.

10. Administrative Report (Mike Dufresne)

- Ms. Kennedy and Mr. Dufresne have started writing a monthly message to Holmes families. Ms. Kennedy's message focuses on nuts and bolts issues while Mr. Dufresne focuses on school climate.
- Vaping has increased significantly since the beginning of the year.
 - Staff is seeing more use among girls.
 - Students are using a new product called a puff bar, which is a discreet disposable cartridge with a high nicotine content that students throw out after use.
 - Staff is monitoring bathrooms; Ms. Kennedy is using a clipboard to track who is in the bathroom when.
 - There have been two all school evacuations because of marijuana use in the bathrooms.
- Holmes will be hosting Career Day for all junior high students on March 30. Career Day is organized by the Chamber of Commerce.
- Despite clear signage prohibiting it, there continues to be a problem with parents' using the driveway to enter the Holmes parking lot.
 - Staff used to monitor the parking lot entrance but unfortunately are no longer able to do so due to argumentative behavior from parents.
 - Mr. Dufresne raised the possibility of asking parents to help man the crosswalk.
- A 12 member team from Holmes is currently participating in PBIS training. PBIS, or Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, is a multi-tiered framework for adopting and organizing behavioral supports for all students.
 - PBIS is currently used at Birch Lane and North Davis. Willett will be implementing PBIS soon, and eventually all Davis elementary schools will be using PBIS.
 - As the first junior high to be using PBIS, Holmes received a grant to cover costs.
 - As part of PBIS, Holmes will be switching from Continental Currency (cards that were given out to students for positive behavior and were then entered in a drawing for a prize) to PRIDE cards. Students who get "caught using Patriot PRIDE" will receive a card; students with three cards can redeem the cards for an item from the student store.

- CAASPP testing for 7th and 8th graders will take place from April 27 – May 8. 9th graders do not participate in CAASPP testing; they will be going on the 9th grade hike during that week.
- On March 4, in either Health or World Geo, all 9th graders will hear a presentation from an RN from Maine (name forthcoming) about the impact of addictive behaviors.
 - The speaker comes very highly recommended and sheds light in particular on the impact of addiction on teens' bodies.
 - She is sponsored by Anheuser-Busch.
- Holmes received two new Chromebook carts last year for CAASPP testing, so two of their older carts have come off-line since they're out of date for CAASPP testing.
 - Students without computer access at home can now check out the older Chromebooks.
 - To help with equity issues, Comcast is offering discounted Wifi services and computers to families in need.
- Recently, Mr. Dufresne has been trying to reemphasize school rules, as he did at the beginning of the semester.
 - Airpods in particular have become a problem recently.
 - They're expensive and easily lost. Staff wishes students would not bring airpods to school.
- Mr. Dufresne has also been reinforcing to students the importance of locking bikes, as recently there has been a coordinated effort among students to steal bikes.

11. Nominating and Bylaws Committees (Deepa Kulkarni)

- The slate for the 2020-2021 Executive Board will be voted on at the next PTA meeting on March 26. A quorum (13 people) is needed to approve the slate.
- The VP for Fundraising position is still open.
- Bylaws have been updated and are ready to be voted on.

12. Hospitality Update (Michelle Agnew)

- Teacher Appreciation Week is May 4 – 8. Liz Hall will be coordinating Teacher Appreciation Week and needs parent help.
- Mary Jean will be coordinating a thank you luncheon to staff on the last day of school, June 11.

13. New Business – *Screenagers NEXT CHAPTER* (Michelle Agnew)

- Holmes and Emerson are hosting a screening of *Screenagers NEXT CHAPTER*, on March 16 at 7 pm at Brunelle.
- A link to reserve free tickets was sent two days ago via the PTA newsletter.
- Kids are welcome to attend with parents.
- Any unreserved tickets will be released to the general public on March 9.

14. Adjourn

