

Freedom High School PTO May 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Julie Sabatino, President, called the May 15, 2018 meeting of the Freedom High School Parent Teacher Organization (FHS PTO) to order at 7:03 p.m. The meeting was held in the library. Nine people were in attendance at the meeting, including 3 staff/district members, 4 executive board members, and 2 additional attendees.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Faccinetto, Superintendent

- Mr. LaPorta began by introducing Mr. Faccinetto, School Board President, PA State School Board Association.
- Budget is pretty much settled at this point (barring any curve balls). The approved budget has 2.5% increase and preserves all of the programs with no real cuts. There are some new teaching positions, elementary Spanish, library restructuring, digital literacy, expanding the reading program to grades 4 and 5, Project Lead The Way at the high school, new band uniform for Northeast, school buses, sandblasting the stadium, EH and Freedom lot paving, and the equity push continues district wide.
- There is not a lot of new money from Harrisburg about \$700,000 predicted. 140% of regulation come from the state but only 23% of the money. There is a push to put all of the money through the education funding formula (which is only for new money). Bethlehem is underfunded according to the formula by 22 million dollars (7 or 8 of the districts in the LV are underfunded) so there is a renewed push to speed that up.
- Law suit about charter school tuition subsidy is calculation that penalizes us for spending conservatively which resulted in the proposed 2% increase being moved to 2.5%.
- The BASD Parents Advocacy group was discussed to help support in these issues. Parents have more sway over elected officials than school board members.
- It's been a pretty quiet year otherwise. Facility wise we are in good shape. Our 10 ½ million deficit which has been trimmed to 3 ½.
- In terms of security, we need to be proactive not reactive. Things like metal detectors create a false sense of security. Some administrators sent to ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training. Not going heavy on new security, resource officers, or metal detectors. Focusing more on mental health professional while still keeping taxes in check.
- A parent asked about the mental health professional and Mr. Faccinetto discussed the positions that were added or added back, and the districts focus on students who have experienced trauma.
- A parent asked about SV2 (educational savings accounts). Mr. Faccinetto talked about how schools who are identified as failing must provide students with "educational opportunities scholarships." It is basically a voucher system. It seemed to be gaining momentum but it doesn't have the votes to pass, and Mr. Faccinetto believes the governor would veto. But if they make changes that make it more palatable, it doesn't need that many votes to pass. Nothing will probably happen this year, but with a new administration who knows. It's not popular with most parents especially due to issues surrounding accountability.
- Another piece of legislation in play is the Reverse Assessment Appeal bill which eliminates a municipality's ability to address property that is under assessed, and have it reassessed to increase their taxes. Looking only at commercial properties, we have added 2 million every year for the last 5 years by doing this, and this bill would have a significant impact on the district financially.
- A parent asked about EHMS ventilation, and Mr. Faccinetto said it will be completed this summer. And then in summer 2019 they will be moving on to replace ventilation systems in elementary schools
- Final budget approval is the 18th of June.
- Mr. Faccinetto discussed the positive press that the school district has been receiving, and Mr. LaPorta mentioned that he received a call from a Chicago educator who heard one of our teachers speak about our approach to restorative practices and our Home Visit initiative who wanted to know more about it. He also elaborated on the priority the school district places on the process of transitions—not just from middle schools to the high school, but from our elementary schools to the middle schools. Mr. LaPorta also shared a story of how a student who was expelled during his 9th and 10th grade year was brought back and eventually reinstated. He is graduating, going to Liberty's prom, and heading off to become a United States Marine.

Principal's Report: Mr. LaPorta

- There is a lot going on and crammed into the next two weeks including AP testing, district championships, talent show, prom, fundraisers, FBOA Band and Orchestra Banquet, School Board Meeting with student recognition as well as Mrs. Wesco, senior spirit week, final senior exams, All Sports Banquet, senior class breakfast, graduation rehearsal, underclass final exams AND COMMENCEMENT.

- Mr. LaPorta then covered some highlights in terms of Freedom's Arts programs, student achievements, the 50th Anniversary celebration, and fundraising efforts to support Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican students who came into our district, and support for students from Parkland, Florida.
- Discussed having the BASD Parents Advocacy organization highlighted at Open Houses around the district.
- The master schedule goes through a "roll-over" for the next school year in June, and then during the first or second week of July it will be turned over to guidance counselors for students schedules to be entered.

Treasurer's Report: Kathy Thomas

No income but the expenses since last meeting totaled \$326.64 leaving us with \$1,439.51. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Wendy Simpson and seconded by Melissa Sonnenblick.

Recording Secretary:

The March 6, 2018 meeting minutes are available online and were emailed to the membership list. A motion to accept the meeting minutes was made by Linda Long and seconded Julie Sabatino. All were in favor, and the minutes were approved.

Committee Reports:

Membership/Giant A+ Rewards/Shoprite: Linda Long

- 250 PTO members, no new members.
- 389 Giant card members. YTD \$3,737.77. Shoprite \$60.60 which is the second of two checks which will go to Ms. Calvo. Balance since then is \$7.50, and next year's checks will go to the PTO.

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC): Mellissa Sonnenblick

- Meeting on the 26th of April. Discussed safety protocols and that the school district has an all hazards plan, police have access to the floor plans, administrators going to a training in June, purchased an app for employees to help with communication during emergencies, there is going to be a district app for parents (that may replace robo calls), going to an online registration option, all of the school resource officers did safety audits.
- K-12 music curriculum is being revised and looking at K-8 art curriculum.
- No more summer work.
- Some discussion of freshman seminar and how they are not always living up to the plan, but it is a work in progress.
- Discussed looking at adding a PTO position to have a representative from the BASD Proud Parent group.

New Business:

- Nomination for next year are:
 - President: Julie Sabatino
 - Vice President: Dolly Reji
 - Treasurer: Kathy Thomas
 - Secretary: Cathie Grozier
 - Membership: Linda Long
- Accepting nominations from the floor, none were forth coming.
- All were in favor of rolling the board and PAC over.

Open Discussion:

- Discussed plans for increasing Giant and Shoprite membership.
- Discussed the options for getting emails directly from the schools providing parents with an opt-out option. Wendy Simpson was going to look into how EHMS manages this process.

Next Meeting: Have a wonderful summer!!

Adjournment: Julie adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathie Grozier