

Freedom High School PTO
January 22, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Julie Sabatino, President, called the January 22, 2019 meeting of the Freedom High School Parent Teacher Organization (FHS PTO) to order at 7:05 p.m. The meeting was held in the library. 16 people were in attendance at the meeting, including 5 staff/district members (Principal: Mr. LaPorta; Assistant Principal: Mr. DiBillio, Curriculum and Instruction Assistant Principal/Master Scheduler: Ms. Leeson; BASD Superintendent: Dr. Roy, and BASD Coordinator of School Safety and Management: Mr. Repsher), 4 executive board members, and 7 additional attendees. Ms. Leeson began by introducing the guest speakers.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Roy and Mr. Repsher

- Dr. Roy introduced Mr. Repsher who started November 5th to oversee safety and security for the district. Mr. Repsher comes from law enforcement where he served as Deputy Chief of Police for Bethlehem City. He reports directly to Dr. Roy and so there is a lot of cross-work with student services as well as brick and mortar security.
- Mr. Repsher noted how forward thinking FHS current safety team has been. He is currently in the process of visiting each school in the district and is having them complete a form to identify strengths and weaknesses. He is focusing on rethinking how we proactively go about awareness of safety and security issues and learning from past applications.
- Act 44 created an anonymous tip reporting system: *Safe 2 Say Something* to be implemented the week of January 28th. The training targets middle school and high school students. The brochure will be on the web page next week and a parent link will be coming. On the 29th there will be four grade level meetings to kick off the program. The program addresses the problem of bullying and other school culture issues that play a significant role. The students will be trained to recognize signs and symbols, take everything seriously, and that it is okay to report. You can download the app and align it with the school and district, anonymous tips are sent to Harrisburg where the incident is triaged, depending on the level of the tip it is sent out to the triage team, the township law enforcement, the teams work together as they currently do to investigate, act and report. The process that occurs after the tip is not new, the system of submitting tips and then the collection of information is what is new. The program will be sustained through school programs and clubs; and possible refresher programs to keep awareness going. The program has benefits in terms of safety and reducing incidences of self-harm, but also will result in less suspensions and other disciplinary incidents.
- A parent expressed concern about the anonymity of the system technology. Mr Repsher assured her that the system is secure. With the exception of an immediate risk to self or others, a reporter's anonymity can't be broken without them self-reporting or without law enforcement going through the proper channels including search warrants.
- There was also a discussion of getting the word out to the public who do not have children regularly in the building, including coaches. This is happening.
- Go Guardian was mentioned, and Dr. Roy explained that it is a software tool that monitors all users on the district's servers. It allows them to intervene when students are googling issues that suggest that they are having trouble and/or thoughts of self-harm. It also allows them to filter what students are seeing in general as well as within a specific class.
- Ms. Leeson opened up the floor for other questions. A parent asked a question about the translation of the pillars of the curriculum of freshman and sophomore seminar classes so that students find it more relevant. Although another parent mentioned that her student is finding it very helpful. The scheduling (every other day) does create a bit of a disconnect. Ms. Leeson noted that the schedule is purposeful because it provides purposefully guidance during the first semester especially around final exams.
- There was a discussion of using professional development to help teachers meet the needs of diverse learners including the use of schoology, formative assessment, and focusing more on a learner-centered approach. Technology is also being explored as a tool for being more learner-centered.
- A parent mentioned how helpful the online curriculum is but mentioned how the seminars and Project Lead the Way were less intuitive.
- Math sequence was changed back to Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2.
- Although you do not have to pass the keystones to graduate, there are now multiple pathways to show proficiency that meet the graduation requirements
- In response to a parent's question about communication to parents, Ms. Leeson noted that the Freedom Forum youtube channel, and that the incoming parent meetings provide another line of communication.

Principal's Report: Mr. LaPorta

- March 4th and 5th Mr. LaPorta will be going to EHMS for principal circles focusing on transition, and then on March 11th at Broughal.
- Class meetings for the 29th will be 30 minutes during which time Mr. Repsher will do a presentation on Safe 2 Say, the school nurse is going to speak on the dangers of vaping, and then Mr. LaPorta and Officer González are going to talk about the dissemination of pictures—the choice to receive and share is a life altering decision.

Treasurer's Report: Kathy Delaney

The beginning balance was 4,784.67, and after 3,463.00 in expenses we ended the reporting period with \$1,321, 67. A motion to accept treasurer's report was made by Carmela Swenor and seconded by Wendy Simpson.

Recording Secretary:

The October 23, 2018 meeting minutes are available online and were emailed to the membership list. A motion to accept the meeting minutes was made by Kathy Delaney and seconded by Wendy Simpson.

Committee Reports:

Membership/Giant A+ Rewards: Linda Long

- Currently 280 PTO members.
- Giant rewards cards up to 473! Totals up to \$2,295.84.

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC): Marie Brown and Melissa Sonnenblick

- Marie mentioned the Kindness is Magic, Inc. which looks at paying down kid's lunch account debt (kindnessismagicinc.com). Students can get involved and potentially get community hours. They are talking about letting parents make donations to other students account when putting money into their student's accounts.
- New BASD brochure was revealed.
- Exploring other measures of district performance beyond test scores.
- We are still \$22 million annually behind with fair funding. Senator Lisa Boscola put through a bill to achieve a balanced level in 4 years.

Old Business:

- A thank you was received from Guidance for this year's giving tree. 18 students and their families received gifts and food.

New Business:

- Friday February 22nd for treats for staff. Will be sending out a request for help.
- Nominating committee interest was requested.

Open Discussion:

- Band bingo this Friday, January 25th at 6:30
- Softball bingo this Sunday, January 27th.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 7th at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment: Julie adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathie Grozier