

Freedom High School PTO October 23, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Julie Sabatino, President, called the October 23, 2018 meeting of the Freedom High School Parent Teacher Organization (FHS PTO) to order at 7:02 p.m. The meeting was held in the library. Fourteen people were in attendance at the meeting, including 3 staff members (Mr. LaPorta, Ms. Leeson, Mr. Faccinetto), 4 executive board members, and 7 additional attendees.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Faccinetto, BASD School Board President

- President of Pennsylvania School Board Association (PSBA)
- Proud of FHS Band and LHS Band for their performance at October PSBA conference.
- District has a bus driver shortage with administrators driving. Made improvements to bus depot communication.
- District elementary enrollment is increasing.
- District initiatives:
 - Spanish, Reading by Grade 3, Podcast at Bethlehem Schools, Leader in Me
 - \$100,000 in Project Least the Way
 - Todd Repsher, Bethlehem police deputy chief, hired as school safety coordinator to unify BASD
- If Governor Wolf is reelected he may be able to increase the education budget
- Can sign up for BASD Proud Parent group: pro-education bipartisan group of 400 members which provides info
- District needs work including FHS and facilities so may have to borrow money to complete tasks
- Question: Can you explain bus driver versus substitute pay rates? Answer: Bus drivers are paid a step down rate so start at \$17.50 but hard to fill since split shift. Teacher subs are paid \$100 a day (similar to area average), have clearances, online training and pick their assignments but contact admin if there are issues.
- Question: Are we close to reformulating charter schools? Answer: Not close since need bipartisan support. There is talk of vouchers (worse for district) but no movement on cost of service which would save millions.
- Question: Does Bethlehem Catholic pay to rent BASD stadium? Answer: Yes, they rent at full rate.
- Question: Can VoTech be involved in HVAC repairs? Answer: Tricky since internal worker contracts.
- New VoTech food truck for spring which incorporates culinary, automotive, business, and advertising students
- Question: Will we be installing metal detectors? Answer: No, but proactively hired school safety coordinator.
- Message for students to bring bus passes since FHS bus overcrowding due to students riding friend's buses
- Southside Vans and 1st activity bus improve equity, but looking at a second activity run and internet access
- Parents thanked him for spending money wisely
- Very little waste in the budget and staff is passionate
- Email Mr. Faccinetto on BASD website if desired

Principal's Report: Mr. LaPorta

- Spirit week this week is high energy
- VoTech Open House, 10/24 at 6:30pm: all are welcome for displays, samples and fun things for kids of all ages
- National Honor Society Induction, 11/13: keynote speaker and 1969 graduate, Michael Pocalyko
- Fall Theater performing A Christmas Carol 11/29 – 12/2 with Justin Amek our new and talented director
- Choral/Orchestra Concert, 12/7 and Pops Concert, 12/14
- Professional Development, 10/31 with students having a half day of school (FHS dismissed at 11am)
- Ms. Leeson explained Program of Study in approval process with course selection to start after Thanksgiving
- Rolling out FHS Budget: due next month from departments and there are HVAC needs, band/choir room and auditorium tile removal and related costs
- Senior class is off to a great year so far and they have exhibited leadership
- Principal meets with riot squad leaders frequently
- Thank you to PTO for budget money to fulfill department wish lists
- Question: When should parents reach out to guidance counselors about course selection? Answer: January.
- Question: Can students dual enroll at schools other than NCC? Answer: Yes, other local colleges too.
- Question: Why are students doing Keystones if not a graduation requirement until 2022? Answer: This just came out and there are four options for alternative graduation requirements so still looking into this, but Keystones are also a measure of student and school performance.
- Question: Are many students having trouble submitting assignments on Schoology? Answer: Was not aware of this as an issue, but parents or students can ask the teacher to submit a ticket to IT department to fix the issue.

Treasurer's Report: (Kathy Delaney had to leave early but provided the report)

The October Treasurer's Report was presented with a beginning balance of \$5,039.67, income since last meeting was \$35 from two donations, expenses since last meeting were \$290.00 (includes \$288.00 for insurance and \$2.00 for monthly bank service charge) leaving us with \$4,784.67 as the ending balance. Additionally, the June report which was inadvertently not included at the last meeting was presented to show the only activity for the month of June was a \$2.00 monthly bank service charge. A motion to accept the treasurer's reports was made by Carmela Swenor and seconded by Marie Brown.

Recording Secretary: (Cathie Grozier was unable to attend but provided the minutes)

The September 11, 2018 meeting minutes are available online and were emailed to the membership list. A motion to accept the meeting minutes was made by Carmela Swenor and seconded by Wendy Simpson.

Committee Reports:

Membership/Giant A+ Rewards: Linda Long

- 284 PTO members (up from 228 members)
- Giant A+ Rewards YTD is \$586.06 (was \$432)

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC): Marie Brown

- Backpack Pals Coordinator, Nikki Testa, presented with Kathleen Halkins district lead nurse:
 - Program provides food for long weekend to students in need at certain schools in the district
 - Donations are from churches, businesses, and school families
 - See attached list for needed donations and contact information (backpalspa@gmail.com)
 - 60% of BASD students receive free or reduced lunches
 - Program also provides food for their families at times of crisis
 - Supplies stored at Miller Heights Elementary with community service earned for volunteering
- Mark James, Ed Center Supervisor for Instruction, discussed technology:
 - Schoology for grades 6 – 12
 - WeVideo, IXL for grades 6 – 12, chrome books, etc.
- Parents are asked to enter emergency contact information on Registration Gateway on district website
- BASD app is a free app available to find out emergency information on the schools in the district

Old Business:

- Wish List:
 - The PTO provided money to each of the five departments requesting items with a total of \$3,457
 - P.E. Department received \$510 for heavy bag equipment
 - English Department received \$820 for a wireless projector
 - World Language Department received \$1,197 for 3 ipads
 - Mathematics Department received \$680 for TI-84 Smart View Calculator Licenses for staff
 - Science Department received \$250 for headsets with microphones to be used as a learning tool

New Business:

- Donations being collected: coats, bookbags, boy's gym shorts, jelly in plastic containers, breakfast items
- Vice President, Dolly Reji, will contact guidance to coordinate the Holiday Giving for FHS families in need

Open Discussion

- Parent asked for next parent link to include how departments received money and promote Giant Rewards

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 22, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Library with guest, Dr. Roy, BASD Superintendent

Adjournment: Julie Sabatino adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Sabatino