

Freedom PTO Meeting – October 12, 2021 via Zoom

Wendy Simpson, PTO President:

- Meeting called to order at 7:35pm
- Welcomes everyone to tonight's meeting and makes note that questions may be asked in the chat box during the meeting, in addition to verbally.
- Announces special guests, Dr. Roy, Superintendent and Julie Bailey from The Foundation.

Principal Report: Ms. Sage

- Upcoming events at Freedom High School:
 - * Career and College Night on October 13th. Approximately 14 colleges and universities will be here.
 - *National Technical Honors Society induction ceremony on October 14th
 - *BAVTS Open House October 20th.
 - *Freedom/Liberty football game on October 30th; Spirit week and Bonfire happening.
 - *November 2nd – Election Day – School is closed.
- More bathrooms have been opened after being closed due to vandalism.
- There has been an increase in fights breaking out recently. The staff has reacted swiftly to these incidences. The staff at Freedom has been working closely with Dr. Roy, Vivian Robledo and the Bethlehem Twp. Police. Our priority is the safety of the students, and our message has been that this type of behavior will not be tolerated. Staff has been standing at their doors and ushering the students along during block changes.
- (Ms. Leeson, Asst. Principal—Adds that the students have had no traditional schooling for 18 months and returning to normal is difficult for them. The team is working well together making sure every student is safe)**
- Assistant Principals and the SRO have been spending their days addressing issues that exist with students and being in contact with families.
- Freedom has seen a lot of community support from churches and community leaders reaching out offering their help. We are working on a social-emotional plan moving forward.
- Ms. Sage assures that they are on top of it.
- Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson gifted the football team some items, such as headphones, clothing, slides, etc. His company has started to work in partnership with some schools and offers mentoring. Their film company will be at the Freedom/Liberty game.

Special Guest: Dr. Roy, BASD Superintendent

-Starts by saying that the next time someone speaks with Dwayne Johnson's team, encourage them to choose a girls' team to support and mentor as well.

-The last few days has seen a decrease in the amount of Covid cases in the district. Cases seem to be leveling off in the county. Hopefully there will be a vaccine available soon for elementary age students, which will reduce quarantine time. BASD clinic will happen once approved.

-The district had anticipated challenges with social-emotional needs, but it has exceeded our expectations. Schools tend to reflect what is happening in society. It will settle and we will see a re-normalizing in schools.

-Principals have been challenged to rebuild the culture. They have high expectations for good behavior while at the same time they are trying to restore what has been lost. They will hold wrong-doers responsible if need be. They are also trying to highlight the positives and build relationships.

Question: Is there any way to hold the student who records altercations accountable?

Answer (Ms. Sage): We can look into that. We speak to the students about understanding what they are doing and the impact it has. There will be a consequence for these students who tend to "hype up" the situation by recording.

Question: What types of consequences have been used?

Answer (Ms. Sage): Expulsions/moving schools occurs with more egregious offenses; fighting has resulted in suspensions; bystanders may get detention; some may warrant a citation from the SRO, for things such as disorderly conduct.

-Dr. Roy states that "fix the problem" is the goal.

-Dr. Roy is happy that we are in school 5 days a week. This makes a setting more conducive to learning.

-He is pleased with our community. Many districts around us have divisions and angry dialogue. This has not been the case here. People have been respectful, and it is a tribute to our community and our school board, who has been very supportive. We have not "come apart at the seams and I am very proud of that."

Special Guest: Julie Bailey, BASD, The Foundation

-gave updates on where The Foundation is currently. At the height of the pandemic, funds remained almost the same.

-the goal for this 2021-22 school year is to raise \$385, 000.

-stressed the importance of listening to parents and staff.

-tag lines, such as 1) Enhance Learning, 2) Promote family and community partnership, 3) Academic Success.

Question: The pandemic exposed how education is taught. How do you see it changing?

Answer (Dr. Roy): Our model would be in-person learning; Positive relationships matter. We had some issues with grading and Ms. Leeson is leading a study of that. We are looking at grading for compliance vs. knowledge and acquisitions skills.

Ms. Leeson: The pandemic was a natural experiment. It forced us to say, “Why do we do what we do?” We also looked at the critical nature of relationships and teachers homed in on instructional strategies. Surveys went out to help us evaluate how students are earning their grades.

Question: Can you offer a health and wellness fair?

Answer: We’ve talked a lot about that. Before Covid there was a health and wellness committee, but it has been on hold.

Question: Do the PSSA’s and other standardized tests not hold as much weight now?

Answer: Internal assessments are going to be done where we can track, rather than relying on the standardized tests. Ms. Leeson adds that the Keystones are a graduation requirement and is eager to have legislators postpone for graduation, but we must move along.

Question: Have community service hour requirements changed for graduation?

Answer: There hasn’t been any discussion about that. However, we are looking into modernizing collecting information to streamline the information with hours.

Question: Is it possible for Community Service Hours to be listed on Schoology?

Answer: Yes, we are working on that.

Old Business/ New Business

Wendy thanks Dr. Roy, Ms. Sage, and Julie Bailey for their time with us tonight. Remaining agenda will wait until our next meeting, November 16, 2021.

Wendy reminds everyone about the Little Caesars Fundraiser - Pizza Kits delivered to your home. Fundraiser ends October 15, 2021. Link can be found on the Freedom PTO page.

Meeting Adjourned