

Freedom High School PTO Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2021 – 7:30 pm via Zoom

Wendy Simpson, PTO President

-Meeting called to order at 7:34pm and welcome to everyone.

Secretary's Report

Approval of the September and October PTO Meeting Minutes. Motion to approve given by Jason Testa, 2nd by Kathleen Sweeney.

Treasurer's Report

No activity for the month

Balance \$5,962.77

Approval of Treasurer's Report. Motion to approve Kathleen Sweeney, 2nd by Carmela Swenor.

Principal's Report – Ms. Sage

-On October 13, 2021, we had an in-person college and career night. Approximately 15 colleges, universities, and service academies were present. We had a couple hundred people in attendance.

-Senior Alex Heidemann won the District XI Cross Country event and went on to the State competition and took 10th place. Congratulations to him.

-Avaline Fihlman came in 3rd place in Districts and ran in the State competition. Congratulations!

-November 2nd was a teacher Inservice day spent looking at grading practices with Dr. Thomas Guskey.

-November 3rd was our National Honor Society Induction ceremony. 120 new members were inducted, and our guest speaker was former FHS Principal Fran Bentkowski.

-Nov. 5th Dr. Roy came to Freedom and did a walk-thru of our school and popped into some classes. He also attended our faculty meeting last week and gave a 'state of the union,' so to speak.

-Nov. 13th, we hosted a community event at the Hispanic Heritage Center. This was open to anyone who wanted to talk to administration. Guillermo Lopez was in attendance and discussed conflict resolution. This meeting stemmed from the conflicts that arose at the beginning of the school year. Many community members reached out and wanted to help.

-FHS Football team will be advancing to the District Finals vs. Emmaus at Whitehall this Friday, November 19. Tickets will only be sold online.

-Winter sports begin this week

-FHS Theater Company presents Miracle on 34th Street this weekend. Tickets are being sold online (50% capacity only due to our Tier 3 Mitigation Plan)

-Nov. 22 & 23 are now Act 80 days and there is no school for the students. The day will be used for professional development, building initiatives, collaboration, and wellness. This does not impact the students in regard to make-up days.

School Board President – Mike Faccinnetto

-Great to have the students back 5 days a week. Things are still far from normal, as we are seeing the effects of the pandemic.

-There has been a ruling today that Pennsylvania’s mask mandate will be void beginning December 4. However, the BASD does not have any plans to take away masks until at least mid-January, as we see how the effects of the holidays play out.

-Vaccine clinics are happening in the district and now our 5-11 age group are eligible for the vaccine.

-Years ago, a few other districts sued the state on lack of funding. It has now gone to trial and the outcome is looking positive. For Bethlehem, we are under-funded about \$2,500 per student per year.

-The Board has adopted its *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy* and an audit will be performed. Dr. Roy and Dr. Silva have worked hard and are working on how best to implement. Some areas that will be looked at are the reasons students many not be participating in activities (lack of transportation, fees, etc.), unintentional exclusion of some students from activities, and racism. Our district has gotten many questions about whether we teach Critical Race Theory. There are no courses on CRC in the BASD. We teach an accurate portrayal of history.

-Election Day had a few board member positions on the ballot. Mr. Faccinnetto was reelected, as was Shannon Patrick, Board VP. Angela Sinkler has stepped down after 8 years of service and was replaced by Silagh White.

* A parent in the district offered her help to sponsor a student(s) who may need assistance and wanted to make sure the school was aware of her contact information. Mr. Faccinnetto thanked her for her generous offer and says that this is the type of thing that makes him proud to be part of the BASD.

*Another parent thanks Mr. Faccinnetto and the school board for their steadfastness throughout the past year. Mr. Faccinnetto thanks the parent and reports that they (the Board) try to be as transparent as possible so everyone can stay informed.

Q: When does the new school board get sworn it?

A (M.F.): On December 6, 2021, at the Board Meeting.

Q: Will the results of the Division, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) audit be made public?

A (M.F.): The results will be presented at a future board meeting when completed and hopefully a form will be made available as well, probable around May or June.

-3-

Q: Will the DEI be reframing the social studies curriculum?

A (M.F.): I think we began looking at the curriculum back in the 2017/2018 school year and yes, it will be included in the audit.

Q: As a new parent in the district, what is the best source to find information to stay up to speed and stay connected?

A: -Emails are sent to all FHS families regarding PTO information. Also, the weekly newsletter from BASD ENews.

-BASDProud Parents group was established a few years ago which helped parents stay up to date on legislative items and gave more of a “big picture” look at things that were going on in the community and district. It slowed over the past year, but we are trying to get it re-invigorated.

-The Foundation and BASDnation.org is an alumni and community network

-The FHS website can be found at basdwpweb.beth.k12.pa.us

-The Freedom Forum is uploaded weekly and gives a student perspective on current happenings at FHS and can be found on the school website.

New Business: Wendy Simpson

PAC

The meeting from October was a short one since it was the same night of the annual bonfire at FHS. Discussions included the topic of masking; the hope of seeing an increase in vaccination rates due to winter (indoor) sports starting; Dr. Silva spoke about U.S. History curriculum and being honest about what we are teaching. The Foundation gave 17 grants across the district and some recipients included FHS faculty. Governor Wolf Elementary school will be receiving a new HVAC next year and may have to move to remote learning in the last week or so of school to begin the work on that.

-The PTO was asked to participate during Bonfire night as they are trying to make it more of a community event. We took part in a Trunk or Treat event that night. Many families and community members came out to support.

-*AthLife* is a program that is relatively new to Freedom H.S. It involves helping student athletes with their academic as well as athletic life. Support would be given thru tutoring, food donations, etc. PTO has been asked to help with this and we are currently assessing our role.

-Grants for Teachers will be coming up soon. As we currently have no source of income, we will need to scale back a bit.

Old Business:

-Little Caesars Pizza fundraiser went well. We are going to start up a new one later this week.

*Wendy closes the meeting with well wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Holidays. Next meeting will be January 18, 2022, at 7:30 via Zoom. Topics for the evening will be Clubs & Activities at FHS.