

Freedom High School PTO Meeting January 18, 2022, 7:30pm via Zoom

Introduction/Welcome: Wendy Simpson, PTO President

-Welcomes everyone and thanks them for coming.

Secretary's Report: Kathleen Sweeney

-Minutes available on PTO Webpage

-Makes motion to approve the minutes from the November meeting. Approval from Nikki Testa, 2nd Carmela Swenor.

Treasurer's Report: Jason Testa

-Current balance is \$5,435 in checking and \$527 in PayPal accounts

-Updated budget is forthcoming.

-\$500 will be going to the FHS pantry.

-Motion to approve Treasurer's report - approved by Carmela Swenor, 2nd by Nikki Testa

(Wendy reminds the attendees about the Grant program that the PTO has taken part of in past years that involve funds going to teachers who request certain things for their classroom/department. This is on hold as of now until we can figure out our budget after losing our means of funding with the loss of the Giant Rewards program.)

Motion to approve the \$500 for the pantry by Carmela Swenor, 2nd by Nikki Testa.

Mr. Hercik-School Counselor- thanks the PTO for their donation and describes how beneficial the pantry is to our families.

Principals Report: Laurie Sage

-Thanks the PTO for the donation to the pantry. It has been so helpful to so many, especially this year due to many families being affected by recent house fires and the economy.

-Winter sports are well underway

-Budget updates: We received approvals for a lighting upgrade in our auditorium and in East Hills' auditorium as well. We were also approved for a new roof here at Freedom. These upgrades will happen this summer.

-Keystone Testing wrapped up last week and finals will be this week. Tomorrow is the last day of instruction for the semester. Make up exams will be on Monday, January 24th. The second semester begins Tuesday, January 25th. Schedules will be out tomorrow (1/19) and can be found online.

-Scholarship opportunities are available through Moravian and East Stroudsburg. Interested students can check with their guidance counselors to make sure they have everything they need.

-Spring sports will be coming up soon. Students should get a physical if they want to do a sport. Any questions can be directed to Nate Stannard, Athletic Director at nstannard@basdschools.org.

Guest Speaker, Jeff McCann from AthLife

-Thanks everyone for having him tonight. A 1988 graduate of Freedom High School and is happy to be here.

-AthLife is a nonprofit organization that helps schools create athletic/student development programs.

-A video can be found at athlifefoundation.org/donate with an overview of the program. AthLife helps schools develop their own program by being a resource in training educators and coaches that will assist and prepare student athletes for their future.

-Freedom is in the first year of the program but hoping to make this long term.

(Wendy states that she has been asked if the PTO can assist the program in any way. A possible way to help would be donations for healthy snacks to be provided to students in the program.)

-A question was raised as to whether this program was only for athletes. The answer is yes, but Mr. McCann welcomes the idea for other leaders to take on the role of coach/mentor in the future.

Question: What do the coaches do?

Answer: Some would hold study halls, orchestrate life & leadership workshops, community service hours, career development, and academic monitoring. It takes time to establish but the program can act as a bridge for academic and athletic life.

Ms. Sage attests that at Freedom they now have 4 academic coaches. They have a core group of students and work with them about life skills such as punctuality, time management, social media concerns, and act as a bridge between teachers and coaches.

Question: How do students get referred to the program?

Answer: Analysis was done and the team with the greatest overall needs was chosen. We are building a way to get it off the ground for other sports teams.

Question: Is there any parental involvement?

Answer: Jeff recommends identifying the people who are running it, such as Nate Stannard and the staff who are likely to coordinate a working relationship with parents.

Wendy Simpson:

-Thank you to Jeff for speaking with us tonight. She is excited that PTO may be able to provide assistance.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Hercik, Counselor:

-We have been working with rising 9th graders to get them ready for next year. We talk to them about course selection and stress the importance of getting involved.

-We want them to find a home in clubs and organizations that gets them excited and where they can find their "niche".

-They even have the opportunity to start their own club, take on leadership roles, and be a mentor to younger grades as they become upperclassman.

Q: Is there an updated list of clubs/organizations on the website.

A: Ms. Sage says there is an updated list on the website. She encourages students to reach out via email to the moderator of the clubs they're interested and introduce themselves and find out when meetings are happening.

An automatic 15 hours of community service are given for participating in a club/organization on a one-time basis. (60 hours total are needed for graduation)

-8th graders will be getting a tour of the school.

Q: How can a student start a club?

A: Need a volunteer advisor and membership of at least 3+ people to get started, then run the idea by Mr. Stellato who is the Student Activities advisor and will send a proposal to Ms. Sage. Meeting minutes must also be taken and turned over to the office.

Wendy thanks Ms. Sage, Mr. Hercik, Mr. DiBilio for coming tonight.

PAC Report: Lori Walker & Jessica Hancz,

-Dr. Roy spoke about Covid guidelines. He spoke about the new online reporting system for families and how this will help the nursing staff who were overwhelmed with reporting. It can be found on the BASD website. Families are asked to report a positive case of a school aged child using the tool.

-Academics are at the mid-year check point. Dr. Silva states they are doing their best to keep up with benchmarks.

-Looking at Freshman and Sophomore Seminar classes at the High School level and ways to improve these. Curriculum is sound, just need to figure out how to get the information to students in a meaningful way.

-Julie Bailey from The Foundation reported their goal is to raise \$400,000 this year. Scholarships will be available soon. Information will be posted on Naviance.

-Basdproudparents.org is a website that encourages parents and the BASD community to get involved in public education in PA. Information regarding funding to public schools, updates, and messages can be found on their website, as well as the BASD website.

Basdnation.org - another website that connects alumni and current BASD community members. The Foundation is trying to build its website as a hub for current and past BASD community members.

-Next PAC meeting is February 10, 2022.

Old Business:

-The Little Caesars fundraiser that we held a few months ago raised \$162. We will have another next month. This fundraiser has participants ordering pizza kits that get delivered to your home. Freedom PTO gets a portion of each kit sold. Link can be found on the Freedom website and ends February 6th.

The PTO had a table set up at the 8th grade parent night. We were able to speak with several parents to get the word out about PTO. PTO has no membership fee or application to be a member. Any parent/guardian of an FHS student is part of the FHS PTO.

Our next PTO Meeting will be ***Tuesday, March 15, 2022***

Meeting adjourned at 8:38pm