

East Meck High School PTSO/In person/Google Meet Meeting 11/14/2023

Attendance: (30)

Mary Beth Ausman, Cynthia Bailey (G), Kimberly Baker (G), Tracy Brown, Carola Cardenas, Angela Concha de Hernandez, Angela Daley (G), Beth Davis (G), Christine Elliott (G), Kndyia Fisher, Christine Haynes, Lauren Hicklin (G), Quillie Hunt, Tracy Jenkins, Carrie Marshall (G), S.Y. Mason-Watson, Rochelle McCormick, Chelsea Mellon, Mary Hasty Millen, Genie Ombach, Maria Papanikolaou, Danielle Stallings (G), Lorree Riley (G), Paola Strand, Deanna Talley (G), William Taylor, Nina Toth (G), Stacy Weis, Joliette Juncadella Welch, Leah Zanville

1. Welcome by Board Co-Presidents K. Fisher and L. Zanville at 7:35am
2. Minutes approved for October 10th meeting, motioned by H. Millen, 2nd by A. Concha de Hernandez, approved by 30 votes.
3. Principal's Report by Principal R. Parker
 - Mr. Parker introduced SRO Officer Jerry Silcox to discuss the school's response to all in-person or social media threats.
 - Anytime any threat is received, it must be vetted, and that is where Officer Silcox's expertise comes in. Officer Silcox has been the SRO for two years and he is one of 5 officers (out of 3000) who focus solely on school threats.
 - i. Every single threat is taken 100% seriously. CMPD and the FBI coordinate to monitor all threats immediately. We don't want to create a false sense of fear by alerting the school population needlessly either.
 - ii. The virtual threat that was made a month ago wasn't terrible, but it took a few days to identify the person behind the threat. Eventually, the person was identified. Mr. Parker won't allow a student on the campus if there is a fear of a threat.
 - L. Zanville asked what specifically will trigger an alert or notification to families. And Principal Parker responded that it will depend on the level of the threat. Officer Silcox followed up by explaining that during a lockdown procedure, he is the only person walking around on campus, but within 30 seconds, every officer is on the way to East Meck. Divisions respond immediately to the schools when lockdowns occur.
 - S.Y. Mason-Watson mentioned that it's disconcerting when you know something has happened, but you don't know the level of the threat or the resolution. And she asked for some system to be established- ConnectEd, Parent Square, a statement, something- alerting parents of the status. MB Ausman concurred and stated that not hearing an update from Mr. Parker is most concerning.
 - K. Fisher concluded that we now know there is a process and we now have a level of trust that we, as PTSO parents, can share with other parents in the future if needed.
 - T. Brown asked about the after hours protocol. How is the school made aware of threats after hours? What is the proper response if a child is the first one to find

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- something after hours? Officer Silcox responded by suggesting that parents or students should definitely call 911 if they hear a threat after hours. And Principal Parker reminded everyone of the “Here Something, Say Something” app. It allows for anonymous reporting and if it's life-threatening, the monitors will contact CMPD and the proper response team immediately.
- Principal Parker responded by promising that in the future, he will always send out communication.
 - i. He emphasized that it's always a parent's choice to send kids to school or not.
 - ii. He can't tell kids not to come to school, but if parents feel better leaving their kids at home, he understands.
 - iii. He wants parents to trust, but he wants them to have the opportunity to make a choice as well.
 - iv. And Officer Silcox pointed out that every threat that comes in is an open investigation, but some information cannot be shared for safety/security purposes.
 - The process going forward: Principal Parker will call and make a notification for any threat.
 - H. Millen asked if the school communicates to the students what will happen if they make a threat?
 - i. Principal Parker said, yes- we cover it in assemblies! If you threaten mass violence to the school, it can be a juvenile arrest. Mr. Parker can only give a 10-day suspension for serious threats, but then there is a determination, community service, and students might be assigned to an alternative school.
 - ii. Officer Silcox followed up by stating that they respond to threats with home visits and/or search warrants.
 - L. Zanville asked how they ID students on campus.
 - i. According to Principal Parker, IDs around necks didn't work. Most teachers/admins on campus recognize a child that doesn't belong. Officer Silcox has even pulled substitute teachers before. But all outside doors are locked, and the blue gate is locked, and library doors are locked!
 - ii. The new building will solve a lot of problems!
 - Principal Parker described lockdowns: We have modified lockdowns, which might occur if a threat occurs across the street. It means the student body can't move from the classrooms, but teaching can continue. During a complete lockdown, no one can go anywhere because there is a potential direct threat on campus.
 - S.Y. Mason-Watson asked what happens if you're on the way to school and there is a modified lockdown. How do families know if there's a threat?
 - i. Principal Parker responded that we rely on Parent Square if we're in lockdown mode. However, we don't want to signal the lockdown procedures to any dangerous people. Any parents in the school during a complete lockdown will be forced to remain in the school, so we

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communicate lockdowns immediately to prevent people from entering the school.

- G. Ombach mentioned how well Parent Square is working and thanked Principal Parker and Officer Silcox for taking all the measures to keep people safe. And C. Haynes echoed the appreciation for everything being done in an impossible situation.
- The bonds passed, and though still at least 5 years away, plans have already been developed. The 500 and 4000 buildings will be connected in some way to keep everything together, possibly behind a locked patio. The construction will take 3 years once they start building. We will not move while it's being built - since it will be built on the baseball and tennis courts. It will mirror West Charlotte high school, though a bit bigger. Hopefully they will put the same accent paintings and quotes on the walls. The current school is 78 years old, but people won't remember what this school looked like. It would be nice to create a historical room for band uniforms and sporting equipment. C. Haynes said she would help put the school in touch with public history students for this purpose.
- Next year is the school's 75th anniversary, if we want to think of something special before the school is torn down. First homecoming queen of East Meck, former principals, etc. Leah said the PTSO would love to partner with this endeavor.
- Principal Parker said he will do anything for his school community. We want to keep it that kind of environment. We continually learn how to get better. Better committees, better communication. It's you all who make it special. It's an honor to work alongside you all. I love coming here. Thank you for all your support, continuing to show up and work alongside us.

4. Financial Report by Treasurer W. Taylor

- Provided reports for review
- So far, we have brought in \$12k, which is more money year to date (excluding the one time grant) than last year. We are still not to our Direct Give goal, but we feel positive about the direction it's going.
- As for expenditures, we are also doing a pretty good job spending. We have spent \$5500 this year compared to \$4000 last year.
- Teacher grants paid out by the PTSO: Couch for counseling room, helped Ms. Rhodes on TOK curriculum, Ms. Patterson re-started Cafe 495 items, part of the funding for Ms. Young's French Immersion Day, approved more funding for IB Science initiative curriculum
 - i. Leah pointed out that the curriculum for teachers is going to be dispersed as broadly as possible.
- October financial reports approved, motioned by W. Taylor, 2nd by H. Millen. Motion passed
- The amended budget included another \$477 for color brochures, \$200 for a grant database, increased \$100 for hospitality initiatives, and increased budget for

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faculty/staff appreciation. Even with these increases, we still have \$12k of excess funds to push to our committees as we get them up and running.

- Amended budget approved, motioned by A Concha de Hernandez, 2nd by C. Haynes. Motion passed
- C. asked if there was a cushion for the 2024-25 school year factored into the budget. W. Taylor responded by explaining that there is a \$5k cushion, so there is actually a surplus of \$17k, with \$5k to roll over.
- Audit procedures approved, motioned by M.B. Ausman, 2nd by M. Papanikolaou. Motion passed

5. Advocacy Committee Report by A. Concha de Hernandez

- A check was sent from the PTSO for a sympathy card to the student's family who passed away.
- Two updates from student services meeting: 1) Counselors are supposed to have 250 students per counselor. They have 350. 2) Senior Help Day - a terrific "touch" for the seniors. Keep an eye open for Parent University
- Angel Tree, in collaboration with Paola. Staff will recommend students - and hope to spread the net as widely as possible. The goal is to push it out ahead of Thanksgiving. L. Zanville gave a shout out to Ms. McCormick and Paola for being such integral support systems within the school! K. Fisher shared that one of her clients works for the department of social services and you never know who is in your circle. Hopefully everyone will jump on board for

6. Direct Give Report by H. Millen and T. Jenkins

- We have jumped from \$4000 to \$7500 in an attempt to get to our \$10k goal.
- We're going to use Giving Tuesday as another way to reach families.
- H. Millen pointed out that last year and the year before Mr. Parker requested funds for teacher gifts. It would be helpful to know that in advance or if there is another specific school need to market.
- M.B. Ausman asked if the QR code is still active. And H. Millen said, yes, the QR code is still active. The QR code goes to paypal.
- S.Y. Mason-Watson said that she has been to every staff meeting trying to boost staff participation and has received multiple requests from teachers for Zelle.
 - i. K. Fisher responded that we discussed Zelle and due to the type of organization we are, we can't use it or venmo. Instead, we bought a tablet. The tablet will house a QR code for cash and debit.

7. Staff Events and Appreciation by S. Weis

- S. Weis mentioned that according to her co-chair, the first staff event went horribly. The budget was too low and there wasn't enough food. Next up, we have our holiday lunch and we are going to ask for donations of the majority of it. There is no real budget for this holiday lunch.

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- M.B Ausman pointed out that there is a place for donations and a place for money requests. We don't want to nickel and dime our parents, and we want to consolidate the asks, especially around the holidays.
 - The holiday luncheon is on the 13th of December. It was agreed that the committee will start with the established group that wants to help, and will include Parent GPS (S.Y. Mason-Watson).
 - Costs for the rest of the year: 1) Teacher Appreciation Week - \$1700 should cover everything 2) End of Year Celebration - \$3000 should cover everything 3) 4 staff meetings on ½-days - ask for donations (the first two were very successful!) 4) Added teacher appreciation days - counselor appreciation, library, bus driver, admin appreciation, principal and nurse appreciation day
8. Open Discussion (open to all)
- K. Fisher reminds everyone that we have a lot of competent people reaching out when they need help and hopefully people feel like their executive board is available and people can respond and reach out.
 - Avian Robotics is volunteering and team members will be driving for the Thanksgiving Parade on Nov. 22nd.
 - S.Y. Mason-Watson said that Mr. Edde donated funds to pay for staff members to join the PTSO - and we need to choose who hasn't joined yet. L. Zanville suggested that it should be people who have joined a meeting. S.Y. Mason-Watson said that it should be cafeteria staff, overlooked departments., etc. K. Fisher said we should find out if they are interested first.
9. K. Fisher adjourns the meeting at 8:57pm.