

Attendance: (13) Mary Beth Ausman, Kimberly Baker (G), Angela Vogel Daley, Christina Drogaris (G), Kndyia Fisher (G), Quillie Hunt, Tracy Jenkins, S.Y. Mason-Watson, Chelsea Mellon, Mary Hasty Millen, Maria Papanikolaou, William Taylor, Leah Zanville

1. Welcome: by Co-President L. Zanville at 7:33am.
 - a. We are having some technology issues this morning, so apologies to anyone unable to access the zoom.
2. Minutes: approved for December 12th meeting, motioned by MB. Ausman, 2nd by M. Papanikolaou, approved by 13 votes.
3. Student Advocacy Report: by L. Zanville
 - a. The first ever East Meck angel tree was a great success! Many students and siblings were served. We made it a priority to address whole families. Some support staff helped families, parents reached out to personal and professional networks and entire teaching teams adopted families. Many things weren't even on the lists (bikes).
 - b. Next year, we are going to look for a faith-based or community partner to support this endeavor even more thoroughly. We are considering whether this needs to be its own role or project within the school and PTSO.
 - c. The school is changing greatly and the make-up of the school is growing. This connection will lead to new projects. For example, an unaccompanied minor at East came for baseline support. The student arrived with nothing. We immediately pushed out the need and collections are coming in. So, Mr. Parker has given permission for a permanent emergency closet within the school. This closet will include new underwear and socks. All items will be very gently used or new and we will have guidelines associated with it so students don't recognize items being worn.
 - d. S.Y. Mason-Watson mentions that the robotics team is planning a clothing drive as well. They have already been in discussions with Mr. Parker about it. They don't want competing clothing drives. C. Mellon asks who the recipient is of the robotics clothing drive. S.Y. Mason-Watson says that it is yet to be determined, but the school isn't necessarily the intended distribution site. She is going to connect the team with the PTSO for this initiative.
 - e. L. Zanville mentions that a question about the number of homeless students being served was brought up on social media and the PTSO endeavors to answer all questions. Paola is working to collect this information. Her off-the-cuff estimate is that we have 6 unaccompanied minors and 30 chronically unhomed students. But, those numbers are constantly influx.
4. Community Initiative Update: by L. Zanville
 - a. Victoria Reeder from Monroe Road library was planning to attend this month, but due to the postponed meeting, she will join in February. She wants to share the

private homework support, college counseling, stem support etc. at the library. A lot of kids who don't have 4th block go there.

- b. H. Millen states that we are so lucky to have that library! There are so many students who utilize it. M. Papanikolaou mentions that she meets students over there. L. Zanville continues to mention that we are hoping to help grow the library program even more and use our social media and communications to share what's available with all parents.

5. Financial Report: by W. Taylor

- a. Reports provided for review
- b. The numbers are still tracking, but they have slowed a little bit in December. We have had a number of matching gifts come through, so we are now way ahead on matching this year.
- c. Similar to last month, we're doing a good job putting money to work. We have spent \$1800 on grants.
- d. We created one new line item to pay for the staff holiday meal in the staff special projects line.
- e. There are internal talks about direct giving getting another push again in the spring, so keep posted for that.

6. Principal Report: by Principal Parker

- a. Update about the person who died by suicide on campus this weekend- the parents didn't have any signs. The boy went to East as a freshman in 2016 and then graduated from Butler. The brother went to Butler as well. According to the mother, he always thought East was a quiet and comforting place. A place isn't just a physical building, so his mother considered the fact that he returned to a place where he felt safe. At 5:45 in the morning, he texted some friends and called 911. The police flew a drone over the school. C. Mellon asks how he was able to climb on the roof. Mr. Parker says that there is no ladder, but he must have climbed.
- b. MB Ausman mentions how the prior week was mental health week and asks if the suicide will get somehow directed into that. Mr. Parker responds that they are reminding all the kids of support and they have counselors on hand.
- c. S.Y. Mason-Watson mentions the Remind that went out and the follow up as well and thanks Mr. Parker for keeping the school community informed. She says that it occurs that we often say that resources are available if you need them, but what is the guiding principle for more intentional asks? Do we have an opt in versus opt out? It's challenging and it needs to be done in the right way. She wishes that L. Riley was in attendance since it's her professional area of expertise. The reason she asks is because at her small all girls boarding school, any time anything happened, a health situation or a discipline matter, there was an assembly. No matter the time. When the decision was made, even if it was 4am, an assembly was held. This highlights the importance of connectivity and reaching students on a personal level. Mr. Parker responds by saying that he'll

talk to the student services department to get their advice and the district's recommendation.

- d. Exams are getting ready to crank up. Some students get exam exemption. Some have to do credit recovery and turn that into teachers. Exams are half-days. School gets out at 12:30. MB. Ausman asks what happens if students don't have an exam? In that case, students aren't expected to come. Everyone gets out at 12:30 (that is the school's policy). Wednesday is a make-up day for exams and Thursday is a teacher workday, so if students don't have make-up exams, they have no school on Wednesday or Thursday. For 1B, students can sign in late. For 1A, school ends at 12:30. No early dismissals. MB Ausman follows up by asking what students can bring in to keep themselves occupied. Mr. Parker says they can bring in a novel to a state test and that is it. Teacher made exams have more leniency.
 - e. Online question: K. Baker wants to thank Mr. Parker as a freshman mom for sharing the information over the weekend. It helps to be able to process and talk about situations. She wants to share as a parent and former educator how much his empathy is appreciated. Mr. Parker responds by saying that he intended to keep his word with communication.
 - f. L. Zanville mentions how we should incorporate this information into next year's Nest.
 - g. L. Zanville says that Kamala Harris was here in Charlotte and said we would get special federal funding for mental health services. We have no idea how it will affect us. Everyone, top down, says we need more help. Fingers crossed that will have some net benefit. SY. Mason-Watson says kudos to her for speaking to the students privately so they could have more private conversations.
 - h. Mr. Parker finishes by thanking everyone for the holiday support. The holiday celebration was at Heff's on North Sardis Road. It will most likely be "our place" for now since they shut it down for us and it was a quick and easy commute.
7. Hospitality Report (addition): by L. Zanville
- a. Thank you to everyone for all of the continued support. Between November and all the holidays, there were a lot of asks. We will have some more parent-supported events coming up, but in the meantime, we just want to thank everyone for showing up for our teachers and staff.
8. Open Discussion (open to all):
- a. L. Zanville reminds everyone that we still need help with the nominating committee. We have one person who has stepped up as a volunteer, but we need at least two new people to help us identify new volunteers and a slate for next year's board. In addition to what the PTSO is trying to do as a whole, we are trying to do more to inform parents, but our membership numbers are low. 2345 is the current enrollment of the school and we are not reaching people. That is one of our goals for next year: continued communication. H. Millen points out that it's due to the fact that the push for membership is only when people are at

school. We need more people on our membership committee and a more holistic approach.

- b. Q. Hunt asks what percentage of PTSO members are staff members. K. Fisher asks for a repeat since no one online could hear. And she mentions nominating committee needs as well. She says that she has reached out to someone else about that as well and encourages everyone to consider helping out.
 - c. M. Papanikolaou says that the SIT team was supposed to meet the previous Tuesday as well, but the meeting was cancelled due to the inclement weather. She wants to know what she should take back to the SIT team at the next meeting. It was suggested that she update the SIT on the clothes closet and the nominating committee needs for the PTSO.
 - d. S.Y. Mason-Watson asks if we have a QR code for the stand alone device. In her experience, the staff members are adverse to paypal. A QR code would be preferable. W. Taylor said he would look into it. S.Y. Mason-Watson then asks if teachers and staff must be members of the PTSO before applying for grants. L. Zanville did not know if that was a requirement, but said she would look. If it isn't a requirement, it probably should be.
 - e. K. Fisher says that her daughter asked how students are supposed to get involved with the PTSO. What are the student requirements for being involved? We have grade level opportunities. We would like to see more students involved. C. Mellon shares that last year we only asked the students to come to the evening meeting and offers to share the form that was used the year before.
 - f. L. Zanville concludes by saying that she feels very confident about the expenditures this year. Grants have gone to all parts of the school and we are getting great returns for the money that we will be able to use year after year. We are being good stewards of your money.
9. L. Zanville adjourns the meeting at 8:33 am.