

Highcrest Middle School PTO
General Board Meeting Minutes
September 2, 2009

Laura Hine and Kathleen Park, PTO Co-Presidents, called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Over 40 people attended this first PTO meeting of the school year.

Kathleen introduced the new PTO website. Please make sure all email information is updated. November 11 is the Parent Party. It is a Wednesday night. November 12 and 13 are parent/teacher conference days with no school. It will be at the Wilmette Golf Club and the price will be around \$20. The theme is "Band Together" with a local band the Tbyrds, featuring parent, Byrd Matejka.

Yearbooks may be purchased online through the Jostens website. Additional add-ons are available to personalize your child's yearbook.

Approval of Minutes – The minutes from the May 6, 2009 meeting were approved.

Budget – Kathleen pointed out the bottom line, -\$24,500. This includes the donation to the school for Smart Boards for \$20,000 and a donation to Youth Connection for \$2,000. These gifts are from last year and were approved by the general board during the 2008-2009 school year. The budget was approved.

Molly Sullivan, HMS Service Project Coordinator – Takes place October 23 and 24, coinciding with National Service Day. Highcrest donated over 50% of their collections last year. A flyer will go out to the kids to collect items needed by various agencies. Volunteers will sort it on Friday and donations are delivered to a drop site located in the area on Saturday morning. The Monday after the kids love to hear how much was collected and donated. They are set for volunteers for Friday. They could use some extra hands on Saturday from 9 to 10 am loading donations into cars.

Bill Perkins, Youth Connection – YC provides after school programs for middle school and junior high. He is a marketer for them, pro bono, a Wilmette dad. YC is a separate 501c entity. RAD meets in the Highcrest cafeteria from 3:40 to 6 pm. They put on a fall play. There were auditions. They were many applications. The play will be on

November 6, 2009. Julie, the on-site director for RAD at Highcrest, could not be here today. They get 25-30 kids per day. It is a drop-in program. They get a snack, homework help, or go to the gym or outside if the weather permits. It is free. In the spring they host the TGIF party for 5th and 6th graders. They will be doing community service as well. They have had great success with volunteering at a soup kitchen with parent involvement.

They are relaunching the Den at the WJHS with a Gripp Grant from the D39 Educational Foundation.

Kathleen introduced Melanie Biggs - She is the PTO liaison for faculty at Highcrest. This is a new position and we are delighted to have her.

Sarah Prouty, Response to Intervention Committee for D39 - RtI is an instructional model for providing varying degrees of support. They provided a brief overview and will return in November to provide a more in-depth presentation.

The goal of RtI is to deliver evidence-based instruction and interventions that match students' academic and behavioral needs. They distributed a brochure that explains their process.

Luke Pavone, Principal & Cassie Black, Assistant Principal - Cassie Black introduced herself. She is extremely excited and pleased to be joining the HMS community. After graduating with a degree in psychology from Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, she returned to her home state of Colorado to pursue an educational specialist degree in school psychology from the University of Northern Colorado. After finishing her internship, she moved to the Chicago-land area and worked as a school psychologist at a middle school in Schaumburg from 2002-04. While she thoroughly enjoyed her time in Schaumburg, she pursued the opportunity to work in a high school so that she could coach high school softball as well. From 2004-08 she had the opportunity to work as a school psychologist at Lake Forest High School and coach JV softball and enjoyed her role as both a school psychologist and coach. While working in Lake Forest, she began pursuing a master's degree in educational leadership from Roosevelt University. Upon completion of the program she accepted a position as a Student Services Learning Coordinator in Highland Park for the 2008-09 school year. As a learning coordinator, she had the opportunity to work with teachers and families to support all students in making academic and social/emotional growth, and oversee the IEP

process in both an elementary and middle school. She enjoys playing and coaching softball, attending sporting events (especially baseball), and traveling. She is looking forward to a great 2009-10 school year!

Luke welcomed everyone. It is his second year. We have had many staff changes. We have a young staff and many are starting families. He introduced many new staff members. Parents will have a chance to meet them on curriculum night. There is a new part-time German teacher who will support the German teacher and will be in the class all day. Chris Hine who works in the office was diagnosed with breast cancer over the summer. She had surgery last week and is doing well. She is expected to return in October.

They are trying to go green as much as possible to reduce cost with postage and paper. They will send most information electronically.

What's new at Highcrest? The tile was replaced in the Gym C hallway, known as the blue hallway. Bleachers were installed in Gym C. It can hold 400 students in one place for enrichment and assemblies. The auditorium only holds 200. They can have all of the 5th or 6th graders in Gym C at one time.

Highcrest purchased 9 Smart Boards, 5 with funds from the PTO. They created a Smart Board schedule, blocking out when the teachers with Smart Boards have open periods so that other teachers could use them. Right now they are in the science and math classrooms. It is his goal to install Smart Boards in all classrooms within the next two years. Those that don't have Smart Boards do have LCD projectors, and mobile carts.

Performance series assessment (Scantron) starts on Tuesday, September 8. In the past it has taken Highcrest 14-15 days to complete the testing for all students. Luke and Cassie sat down and developed a schedule and they should be able to get it done in 4 days. The teachers will be in the class during that testing. Please make sure students are here during that time frame. Tuesday through Friday (Sept. 8 - 11), with ½ day make up on the following Monday (Sept. 14). There are many benefits to implementing this new schedule. The information will be available to the teachers much sooner. Students start at grade level and then they progress based on the student's ability. It does not start where they left off last year. Test results will be made available more frequently than last year. They use the results to modify instruction as need be.

They changed the lunch schedule to 2 periods. They added two additional scanners. It is running smoothly.

The 5th grade connection will be this Friday. He thanked the PTO for moving it back one week. He has been amazed at how well the 5th graders have acclimated to the school. If your child is having any transition issues, please let us know. We are here to help.

Curriculum nights will be held on September 9 for 5th grade and September 16 for 6th grade. At 7 pm all parents will meet in Gym C with one general session to present the related arts special teachers. Then parents will meet with their respective foreign language teachers then they will go to the homeroom classrooms.

First fire drill last Friday, full evacuation in 2 min 35 seconds. They were all silent. The duck and cover drill is coming up next.

He encouraged parents to contact him with both the good and the bad. He has never seen the amount of parental support as he sees here in Wilmette.

Parent question: timing of the new directory, class list? The hope was to have it out at the end of September. We have not gotten the information from the district yet. The information will not be proofed, it will be printed as it was entered online during registration. The district is waiting for some additional registrants. Only 5 families are needed from Highcrest. Any thought to going online and making it available electronically? There are privacy issues here and many people like a hard copy to keep in the car and it would be a very large pdf file.

It will be smaller, four columns vs. 2 and smaller font. The District is downloading it into the format, and there will be no special formatting. Hoping to get it out early October.

Meeting adjourned at 10:12 am.

Minutes submitted by Sarah Jacobs