

Danbury City-Wide PTO Council  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, January 9, 2017  
6:30 PM  
Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road

Attendance: Lynne Lukasik (C-W Co-President/DHS), Rich Matzinger (C-W Co-President/DHS), Janet Hamilton (C-W Treasurer/DHS), Rachel Chaleski (C-W Secretary/AIS), Dr. Sal Pascarella (Superintendent), Scott Keating (Great Plain), Paul Salvatore (Great Plain), Sharon Amalfitano (Shelter Rock), Mary Ann Strattner (Broadview), Kathy Snow (WMSA), Chrissy Maruffi (Pembroke), Lauren Archiere (WMSA)

Call to Order

- ✓ The meeting was called to order by Lynne and began at 6:34pm. Introductions were made at this time.

Approval of Minutes

- ✓ Kathy made a motion to approve the November minutes. Scott seconded. Mary Ann pointed out an error that Stadley Rough should be replaced with Shelter Rock as part of the Superintendent's Report. (The correction has been made to the November minutes.)

Treasurer's Report

- ✓ The balance at the November meeting was \$751.38. Janet has received dues from about half of the PTO's. The current balance is now \$958.20. The PTO's that have not submitted their \$25 dues are from Rogers Park, Ellsworth, Hayestown, Mill Ridge, Morris Street, Park Ave and South Street.
- ✓ There was discussion about ways to spend the funds. Ideas centered on spring events, such as the CoDA festival. Dr. Sal informed members that this year's festival will not be able to be held at DHS, but possibly at Broadview Middle School. The purpose of CoDA is to celebrate the arts across the city. Lynne will reach out to Jill Russell to inquire about possible ways the PTO might support the festival and will report back to members at the next meeting.
- ✓ Kathy made a motion to approve the treasury report. Sharon seconded.

Superintendent's Report

- ✓ DPS is challenged with low enrollment in the high school instrumental program, specifically with the high school marching band. There has been discussion around purchasing and leasing equipment, which is expensive. Leasing is difficult, because of the level of required approval. The main issue is time and flexibility of the student in order to participate. So, the initiative that DPS is currently working on is how to support students' participation.
- ✓ Dr. Sal gave a brief update on education funding from the state. The state was tasked with reshuffling dollars across CT schools after the recent ruling of the CCJEF case, which the state appealed. The BOE will propose a budget that assumes alliance grant

money, of which 95% is spent on staff. The governor included the alliance money in his proposed budget; however, parents may need to get active in the legislative process by contacting legislators. The BOE is not making any cuts to the current budget. There is a meeting being held tomorrow with the mayor as funds for the city are being cut.

- ✓ Data has been received on interventions, such as Read 180. The programs work with students who have learning deficits in areas such as phonics. The budget may not be able to sustain these kinds of programs and others, like world language.
- ✓ The classroom modules at Shelter Rock are in place and will be open next week.
- ✓ There was a flood inside Mill Ridge, which caused the school to close. The part of the school that was damaged will be fixed and open in the next few days.
- ✓ The district is looking to add more modules at other schools, as class size is expected to increase next year.
- ✓ A question was asked about security at the WMSA dances, which have exceeded 300 students. PTO's may request and pay for extra security, but the minimum cost is 4 hours. In the event that extra security is an emergency, Dr. Sal advises to call 9-1-1.

#### City-Wide PTO Facebook Page and Website

- ✓ A Facebook page was set up for the purpose of sharing meetings and events. Please find us at <https://www.facebook.com/DanburyCityWidePTO>. This is for the purpose of outgoing information only. Messaging has been turned off. Facebook users who click that they are interested or going to an event/meeting will receive reminder notifications.
- ✓ A website has also been created at <http://danburycitywidepto.digitalpto.com>. Digital PTO offers quick, easy and free websites. Rachel will reach out to Debbie to find out how the new address can replace the old on the DPS website drop-down menu. Members were asked to notify Rachel of any errors and/or suggestions for the site. Rachel would like to simplify the URL address. Chrissy offered to assist with this.

#### Guest Speaker: Brett Raphael, Connecticut Ballet

- ✓ Brett spoke to the City-wide PTO to continue the over 12-year relationship between Danbury and the CT Ballet. The CT Ballet has been presenting dance in many forms to students at school assemblies. The Danbury Dance Initiative offers training, mentoring and scholarships for DPS middle and high school students, who would like foundational or accelerated training. The scholarship may be in the form of summer tuition assistance or free dance classes at the YMCA's ESCAPE to the Arts. Students must audition to be considered for the scholarship. It was discussed that auditions and/or a workshop could be held at the CoDA festival. Dr. Sal will provide the contact for the festival. This year, CT Ballet offers a "sampler" school assembly, at which students see a variety of classical, contemporary and musical theater styles. A question was asked about space. If the school does not have an auditorium, then the assembly can be held in the gymnasium. Brett will e-mail all of the schools' administrators to offer dates for the assemblies. If no response, they will be contacted by phone. Flyers were distributed to all PTO members. Brett will also provide a digital copy. It was asked if a notice could be shared on the website/Facebook.

## Treasury Procedures for Danbury's PTO's

- ✓ Janet and Rich have assisted the Broadview PTO with their 501c3 status and insurance. They have since filed with the IRS and are waiting for approval. As a recognized 501c3, you must file each year or the status is revoked. If revoked, the PTO must re-apply and pay an additional fee. PTO's can receive a reduced insurance rate through PTO Today, if they are a recognized non-profit. Paul spoke about past experiences in filing with the IRS and insurance. He advised to call the IRS, after once receiving a revocation letter, because it may not be valid. He also suggests looking into what exactly your insurance covers, because it may not be inclusive to medical claims and may only cover officers' liability.

## Updates from School Representatives

- ✓ Great Plain hosted a Titans hockey game last Friday, which had over 100 attendees. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade is doing an Applebee's breakfast fundraiser on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The breakfast requires a lot of parent participation. The kids are only allowed to serve. It is a fun, profitable event. It is not a drop-off event. Tickets are sold in advance. Walk-ins are not guaranteed to be seated. Fundraisers are mostly completed. A question was asked about the poinsettias fundraiser. Paul said the only issue was the delivery to the school. The PTO was expecting and advertised a Thursday delivery, but Dom's had scheduled the delivery for that Friday. It was discussed to sell tickets for the poinsettias, which could be redeemed at Dom's for individual pick-up.
- ✓ Westside Middle School Academy also hosted a hockey night. There was a Buffalo Wild Wings fundraiser held to raise money for the school play. There is an upcoming Science Fair this month. The PTO will do a clothing drive, where they collect clothing all week long to be picked up at the end of the week.
- ✓ The Pembroke PTO is sponsoring a Titans Hockey assembly tomorrow, followed by a game on January 20. The PTO organizes a basketball program/clinic for all grades. Students are divided into groups and each group receives an hour of instruction/play. They are also hosting a Movie Night on February 3. Students vote on the movie. Admission is free. The PTO sells concessions.
- ✓ Broadview Middle School held a KidStuff Coupon Book fundraiser. There will be a showing of "Screenagers," a movie about technology and internet safety. The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Snowball Dance is seeking parent volunteers. Overall, the fall fundraisers did well. The PTO is offering a No-Device Day tomorrow, where students are encouraged to put away mobile phones.
- ✓ Sharon said the modules arrived at Shelter Rock in December. Work is currently being done on the enclosed walkway. She is hoping that the city will put in a parking lot in front of the school.
- ✓ There are 3 DHS PTO meeting scheduled for the remainder of the school year. The February meeting will be about safety awareness, at which an officer will present on internet safety. The April meeting will have a driver safety presentation with a drawing for free driving instruction. The May meeting is typically designated for incoming

freshmen and their families on what to expect at the high school. It gives a parent-to-parent perspective. This will be its 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Last year, they had about 80 attendees. Dr. Sal suggested recording the meeting. Lynne commended the work of the high school social workers and safety advocates. There was a holiday show put on prior to the break by students of the various musical groups, given to all students and divided into two assemblies. Rich announced that charging stations and a water refill station were purchased for the students.

- ✓ AIS is reconsidering their PTO meeting schedule, as not many parents attend the meetings. Dr. Sal mentioned that enrollment from surrounding towns is low. Rachel acts as a Parent Ambassador, giving tours to perspective families.

#### Other Discussion

- ✓ Dr. Sal mentioned that the district is still working on recovering the money lost by high school students and chaperones who had paid to travel overseas on a school trip. A lawyer was hired. The travel insurance that was purchased did not cover the cost because the trip was cancelled before it happened.
- ✓ Sharon inquired if other PTO's coordinated yearbooks. The Shelter Rock PTO previously used Lifetouch to create and sell yearbooks. They recently switched to Herff Jones and are happy with the quality and price. Students design cover pictures and submit into a contest. The winner receives a free yearbook.

#### Next Meetings (All meetings are open to the public)

- ✓ Board of Education Meetings: January 11 and 25 at 7pm
- ✓ City-Wide PTO: February 6, 2017 at 6:30pm

#### Adjournment

- ✓ The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Rachel Chaleski  
City-Wide PTO Secretary