Danbury City-Wide PTO Council

Meeting Minutes (Proposed)

Monday, December 7, 2020

6:30pm via ZOOM

Attendance: Jade O’Connell (Vice President/AIS), Paul Salvatore (Treasurer), Kathy Snow (Secretary), Sal Pascarella (Superintendent DPS), Kevin Walston (Ass’t Superintendent DPS), Anne Mead (Director of Family, School & Community Partnerships), Suzanne Welchel (DHS), Michelle Walsh (Broadview), Christine Sweeney (Rogers Park), Chrissy Maruffi (Pembroke/WSMSA), Gina Alladin (WSMSA), Lisa Ruffles (King Street), Janine Schonfeld (King Street), Christine Fournier (Mill Ridge), Estela Camacho (Morris Street), Yenny Martinez (Morris Street), Kia Bradshaw (Park Avenue), Amy Hutchins (South Street), Janna Masella (Stadley Rough), Rachel Chaleski (BoE liaison), Kate Connetta (BoE liaison).

Over 30 additional participants.

Call to Order

* The meeting was called to order by Jade O’Connell at 6:40pm.

Welcome, Introductions and Updates

* Jade welcomed attendees, meeting was held via zoom.
* Conducted introductions.
* Kathy conducted roll-call, (see attendance list above).
* Motion was made to accept minutes of Oct. 5, 2020 meeting by Chrissy Maruffi. Seconded by Estela Camancho. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report (Jade)

* Should be no major changes from the last meeting balance as we are not collecting dues this year.

Updates from School Representatives:

* **DHS:** had the first PTO meeting virtually, it went well. PTO is continuing to work on the athletic side of school and has added additional signs for athletic entrance. Currently working on making the blue wall in back of school a “senior year wall”, similar to some other high schools in the area. Had a mask sale that went very well and also sold yard signs for 2021 seniors
* **Rogers Park:** had a PTO meeting in November. Provided gift bags for teachers during conference night. Not doing fundraisers this year Been helping provide meals for school families in need.
* **WMSA:** first PTO meeting was held in October. Discussed ideas for fundraiser, selling spirit wear. Will focus more on how PTO can support the school.
* **AIS:** have had multiple PTO meetings, not fundraising this year. Held a food drive. Asked a question about how folks make payments during virtual fundraisers. Payments other schools use include Venmo, Square, potentially can use MySchoolBucks but suggested that idea be looked into further.
* **King Street:** had 3 meetings so far. Held a virtual Halloween photo contest for pumpkin carving & costume. Winners received gift cards to Ground Donuts. Also held a food drive and had a virtual book fair. Planning spirit week in December.
* **Mill Ridge:** new Principal is very active with PTO, did a Believe fundraiser, approx 2% participated with $400 profit. May try to do more such as Boosterthon or virtual dance party. Spirit Days are planned for December.
* **Morris Street:** held PTO meetings which were more QandA with the Principal, most of the communication comes from social media, remind or emails. Doing a mask sale but not planning any other fundraisers. Putting up an artificial tree outside school for students to put notes of gratitude on (Tree of Gratitude). Working with school nurse, etc. to ensure safety when hanging notes.
* **Park Avenue:** have not had a meeting yet. Working with the Principal on a virtual bingo night.
* **Pembroke:** had a November PTO meeting, attendance was down from past meetings. Planning to offer a virtual Mad Science program, where kits are sent to students. Will try to hold this on Wednesdays when all students are on distance learning. Going to try to have virtual reading nights. Made laptop sleeves and masks with school logos and will give to every student when school is back in session in hybrid mode.
* **South Street:** had one PTO meeting, attendance was high. Waiting for school to start in hybrid mode to plan another meeting.
* **Stadley Rough:** had a meeting in October. Held pumpkin carving photo contest, winners received gift cards for pizza. Not fundraising this year, looking to support the teachers and raise school spirit.

Superintendent’s Report (Dr Sal)

* Congratulated Danbury High as they won $10,000 for registering voters.
* Mentioned the Summit Project (at the Matrix building) This space will be used as a middle/high school and a project team is currently meeting to define its use. It will be a magnet school type/career academy school. Challenge will be equity and who can go to the school. It will house approximately 1,200 students.
* Osborne Avenue building is in process of becoming an extension of Ellsworth Avenue school.
* Feedback on virtual teacher conferences was very positive. Having them virtually allowed parents to join from work and not have to schedule time off or not have enough time getting around the building.
* District is working on distribution of food and improving that process as well as the menus. Using school buses to distribute meals.
* Mentioned the Reopening Forum which is going to be held Weds, Dec. 9th via Hatters TV. 125 questions have been collected from City stakeholders to be addressed as well as talk more about the intention to return to school. Return will be in Hybrid, families will still need to be flexible as cases of Covid may affect certain cohorts.
* 2021-2022 School budget is being developed.
* There was not a big bubble of new students that registered after the beginning of school this year like there was last year. Kindergarten level may be larger next year as parents may have opted to keep children out of school due to Covid.
* Dr. Sal answered questions from attendees:
  + Would parents be able to change the choice of distant learning versus hybrid? Each school community will be sending out information to their specific families about confirming choices.
  + Will Covid testing be done at school locations over holiday break? Dr. Sal did not know if buildings would be open for this testing and will find out and answer this at the Wednesday, 12/9 Forum.
  + Would there be weekly testing for staff? Not planning on mandatory testing at this time. Focusing more on distancing strategies, cleanliness, etc.

Guest Speaker:

* Erika Haynes, Director of Community Engagement: School and State Finance Project
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  + [www.schoolstatefinance.org](http://www.schoolstatefinance.org/)
* Jen Nakos, Community Engagement Fellow: School and State Finance Project
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* Presentation attached.

Next Meeting

* January 4th via zoom, details to follow.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00pm