

Sycamore High School PTO General Meeting Minutes Friday, January 13, 2017

Call to Order - 9:03 am.

Minutes from the November 11, 2016 general meeting were approved as read.

Guest Speakers

- Katelin LeBlanc, President of the Junior Class thanked the PTO for after prom support. A theme has been selected for prom but not yet announced. Prom will be at Oasis on May 13. Prom is open to juniors and seniors. Sycamore students can invite a high school student guest who is not a junior or senior at Sycamore. Absolutely no one over the age of 20 is to attend (and no junior high students). A guest form is required.
- Diane Adamec and Paul Balent were present from the School Board. They thanked the PTO, the administration and everyone in the room for support of the levy. The levy passed with 61% of the votes. The levy funding allows the district to continue what we are doing. Most of the levy dollars are to replace state funding which is being phased out. The School Board has committed to not having another operating levy for at least 5 years. An architectural engineering firm is preparing a report about the state of each building in the district. After reviewing the report, the School Board will form a long-term capital plan. Tangible property tax is a challenge for the district. This is the business tax being phased out by the state. Sycamore is one of 28 school that gets less founding per pupil than a lot of private schools. The School Board has been talking with legislators about this issue, and legislators are beginning to see the problem and are willing to take on the cause.
- A parent brought up concern about the Duke pipeline. She stated the currently proposed route is very close to one of our schools. She was asking what is permitted in terms of getting the word out to Sycamore families and disseminating information about the risks. Her understanding was that one group opposing the pipeline was told they could not come to a PTO meeting to talk. Paul, Diane, and the Executive Board felt that was not the case, but with appropriate "rules" (the same ones in place for the levy committee") the group could present about the pipeline just as the levy committee did. Angela and Molly will bring this up at the ASPO meeting.

Principal's Report

- Doug Mader reported that during the current meeting, 400+ 8th graders are in the building. This is the first day of Freshman Camp. The second day will be the first day of school in the fall. The first day was scheduled earlier this year so 8th grade students considering private school can experience Sycamore and have that experience to help them make a decision.
- The RIT program (Response to Intervention) pilot program this year has had very positive results. There will be more of this next year. It is a way of identifying students who need help. Accordingly, and based on response from students currently, ACE bell will be restructured next year. Students continue to resist reading during ACE bell. Next year, the time will be

used for collaborating with teachers, getting extra help, and isolated intervention identified by the RIT program.

- Sycamore has utilized a blended model of scheduling. Staff and administration has placed courses strategically throughout the day so students have the most opportunity to take the combination of classes they want. The schedule was created manually, and a database will be used to “drop” students into the classes. Students will have a list of classes and teachers for next year before the end of school this year.
- Sycamore is exploring a personalized learning “school within a school”. The learning environment will be appropriate for students at all learning levels and have focus groups, and students will learn at their own pace. It is a blended model of learning. Initially, there will be 5 teachers and some academic coaches. The courses will be mastery based and project based. Interested students will apply. The plan is to implement in the 2018-2019 school year, and likely start with 18-19 freshmen and sophomores.
- Administration is having discussions with staff about home work. The goal is to get input and consensus and ultimately to streamline the amount of home work that is reasonable to assign to students.
- A parent asked for teachers to be reminded that all course work is required to be posted on the Blackboard electronic calendar.

Faculty/Staff Representative’s Report

- Ann Delahnty-Koenig reported Recommendation Day (when teachers recommend the level of course for each student the following year) at the high school is January 18.
- Doug and Ann met with the junior high PTO yesterday. Printed planners were passed out. A few are still available, but the course selector is primarily online. Online scheduling was demonstrated.
- Scheduling opens January 19. Students have about three weeks to make their selections.
- Freshman, sophomores, and juniors have all had scheduling meetings. The counseling department will meet with every student (for next year) in February to go over selections.
- Parent meeting for college credit plus is January 31 at 6:30. Counseling staff will meet with students the following day.

Treasurer’s Report

- Sheila Kidd stated the balance in the PTO account is over \$44,000. We received two payments from Coke and have paid for four projects in the last month.
- The bookstore has currently made a profit of about \$9000.
- Jill Whaley reminded present members that the bookstore has recently joined a consortium buying group which gives the bookstore more access to professionals in the industry. Bookstore sales in November and December were twice what they were last year.
- Budget vs. Actual numbers were provided.
- Pipkins receipts will be submitted in the next couple weeks, so please turn in any receipts.

Vice President’s Report

- Suzanne VanDenBrink explained that the PTO currently funds four scholarships at \$750. The scholarship committee would like to increase them to \$1000. We have had excess funds every year since the 2012-2013 school year. This change requires a change to the standing rules. Proposed wording was provided in the agenda. Angela Radakovich made a motion that the amount of each scholarship be **\$1000 this year and the standing rules be amended to not specify the amount of the scholarships**. Tammy Fales seconded the motion. There was discussion about the standing rules wording change. The executive board proposed wording that did not specify the amount of the scholarships to avoid needing to change the standing rules every time scholarship amounts are changed. Jill Whaley raised concern that not putting a dollar amount for the scholarships may allow more money to be spent than was raised. This was noted, and it was decided to add the terminology “each of 4 scholarships of up to \$1000 per year”. The executive board cannot exceed the budget by more than \$500 without a vote from the PTO membership which adds additional protection from spending more on scholarships than is available. All the other schools in the district also contribute to the scholarship fund, and a district wide fundraiser is held at City Barbeque for additional funds. An additional fundraiser could be added if needed to raise enough funds. There are ample funds this year for \$1000 scholarships. Angela Radakovich motioned the standing rules be amended to state “**each of 4 scholarships of up to \$1000 per year**”. Mary Tyler seconded the motion. All present were in favor.
- Suzanne will be forming a nominating committee for next year’s PTO. Please see Suzanne if interested in a position or on serving on the nominating committee. Sitting on the committee does not preclude an individual from holding a position. Nominating committee members should have current or incoming students, and will likely be requested to make some phone calls as part of the committee responsibilities.

Corresponding Secretary Report

- Elizabeth Bruggeman discussed current plans to centralize all international opportunities in the Post-Secondary Planning Center. Information would include both school sponsored events and private opportunities.
- Elizabeth shared about a specific opportunity with an organization started by a Sycamore graduate to host students from Spain for four weeks over the summer. Elizabeth shared about the experience her family has had with this and provided printed information about the program for interested families.
- Parents also mentioned programs they are aware of for French and Chinese sister city programs.

President’s Report

- Lindsay reminded everyone of Odd Couple’s on March 11. The theme is Super Heroes’ Ball. The decoration committee is eager for help on Monday evenings. Start thinking about groups to share a table with. We are hoping the back gym floor will be complete so that space can also be used. There are a few sub-chair positions still open for this year. The committee is going to try some ticket pre-sales this year. Odd Couples has Facebook and Twitter accounts – please follow.

- Tami Comerford reported there are still some holes to fill on the after prom committee. A raffle prize chairperson is still needed as well as a restaurants chair and volunteer recruiter chair. The theme will be released soon.
- The senior class event on December 21 at Scene 75 was a great event. About 20 staff members attended to enjoy time with seniors. This was unexpected and added a fun element to the evening. Students were very appreciative of the event.
- Send photos for senior slideshow to Jada Hill, jadahill40@gmail.com

Recording Secretary Report

Mary Tyler

- HUB volunteers once a week is working out well. With the staffing change and new books of interest to the students, circulation has increased by 150% over last year.

Old/New Business

- College spirit wear is being collected for Winton Hills Academy. The staff there would like to plant an awareness of college in their students' minds. Student sizes as small as preschool are needed. Spirit wear will be distributed before March Madness.
- A few committee chairs still need to sign the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 am.

Announcements

➤ Upcoming Events

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| ▪ Friday, Jan 13 th | Report Cards Distributed, Freshman Camp 9am |
| ▪ Monday, Jan 16 th | No School, MLK Day |
| ▪ Tuesday, Jan 17 th | GEAR Forum, 7pm at the JH |
| ▪ Wednesday, Jan 25 th | Coffee with Counselors, 9am |
| ▪ Friday, Jan 27 th | Battle of the Sibbs |
| ▪ Tuesday, Jan 31 st | College Credit Plus Meeting, 6:30pm |
| ▪ February 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th | Aves Theater - Irena's Vow |
| ▪ Friday February 10 | Next PTO meeting |