

**Sycamore High School PTO  
General Meeting Minutes  
Friday, Jan 10, 2020 – 9:00am**

Call to Order, 9:01

Angela Radakovich/Alissa Simms

Approval of Nov 2019 Minutes

Camilla Millar

<http://tinyurl.com/quickminutes>

Principal's Report

Doug Mader, Principal

- January 9<sup>th</sup> is Freshman Camp day. The same evening is academic fair. It is targeted for freshman and parents. It starts at 5:30 with a short meeting with Mr. Mader. Then there is a breakout for students to talk about specifics of classes and curriculum.
- January 29<sup>th</sup> is recommendation day. Typically there are about 40-50 parent overrides. It is not typically recommended. They track data. He says parents know their children best, but wouldn't recommend overriding the recommendation unless their child is self-paced and gets to work without a lot of parent intervention.
- There was a meeting recently about students who are in danger of not graduating. Parents are made aware so it is a team approach for student's to get across the finiline.
- They are taking a look across all departments to make sure kids are being pushed, but not breaking the envelope. AKA what is a honors vs accelerated vs AP class. Is there ever a consideration to move Algebra 1 to 8<sup>th</sup> grade so they could get to Calculus by graduation. There is a problem that our best students are taking high level math at the junior high so they get credit at the state report card level.
- Our graduation rate is lower because we can educate special education till age 21. They are considered a drop-out if they don't graduate with their cohort. That is sometimes reflected on the report card.
- There is no trouble filling the Synnovation Lab. It is a one-of-a-kind program in the United States. There have been road-blocks, but the kids are learning about self-discipline, self-mastery. They have learned that they need to build executive functioning skills first. One of the biggest road-block is kids getting behind. They need to make sure the kids are in it for learning and not for grades. Next year, they might look a derivative of the program like it is just part of the day in the lab.
- Mr. Mader met with architects before the break looking at raw data (# students, # classrooms, # teachers). Then the architects spit out how much square footage is needed, etc. There have been several ideas thrown out including moving the front of the building, moving the bus drop off area, adding square footage over the commons. They came in during holiday break with a 360 camera to get a great idea of the building. It will be 2 years until first changes are completed. There is a team coming together to give ideas, then they will meet with each department. Since we are a public school, they have to go out to bid. We expect construction to start during school. We'd like to do academic areas during the summer. He doesn't think design and bid will happen by this summer. If

there is private funding that can come through, there might be some construction outside for the stadium this summer.

- There was a question about executive functioning and teaching kids about teaching study skills to all kids, not just the Syn Lab kids.

#### Faculty/Staff Representative's Report

Ann Delahnty-Koenig, Counselor

- Some students getting first applications out, some students just getting accepted
- Next week junior high meeting to give instructions Bringing in a program called Adapting to Life. It takes 4 days to do. Freshman will do it in May. The counselor's goal is to get it to all students next year. The district wants to get it to all junior high kids, then even adapting it to the Greene level students. They will talk to seniors next year about transitioning to life. There was a question about tracking the effectiveness of the program. Mrs. DK knows it is evidence based. It is tracked through Children's hospital. You can google Adapting to Life, Cincinnati Children's hospital.
- Student recommendation day is coming up
- Coffee with the Counselors on May 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Tweaking schedules a bit for kids that have some problems. Seniors can't drop full year classes at this point just to make life easier.
- Mrs. DK went to a program about suicide prevention the day before. She was impressed and learned that there are a few kids who weren't on anyone's radar who come to the counselor's attention. She wants to implement that program next year during the next semester. Every year the staff gets training about suicide prevention and procedures. Students who report to a coach will get a wellness check from the principal and from Officer Payne. It is a myth that talking about suicide increases the rate. Mr. Mader feels strongly that we need to find ways to reduce stress including less homework over breaks and even looking closely at summer homework. He is looking at weekly schedules to see if there is a way to reduce stress.
- There was a discussion about adding a skills class perhaps before school starts, during study hall, or Aviator bell. Mr. Mader was very open-minded to suggestions.
- There was a comment about the culture at the school and the positive changes that have happened at the school.

#### President's Report

Angela Radakovich/Alissa Simms

- Senior Class recognition and baby ads are due March 1.
- The PTO budget was switched around this year and there is money that is coming directly from the PTO for Odd Couples. The price of tickets does not really cover the event.
- Odd Couples (March 7). There will be some changes: a professional DJ instead of a band. The theme is Queen City Blast. Dress as anything Cincinnati. There is a student committee which has never happened before. They will start taking registrations at basketball games. There will be some work nights to help paint decorations on Thursday nights. Don't wait for your kids to ask you, register and bring them! You won't have to reserve a table with 10 people. It will be a more casual, station-type dinner.

- After Prom (11:30-3:30, April 18/19). We changed the time of after prom so it is 11:30-3:30. Students do not need to go to prom to go to after-prom. They still need some help with sponsorship and volunteer coordinator. There is a meeting next Thursday night. Things are slowly moving forward. This event is almost completely self-funded. There was a question about only letting Juniors and Seniors attend so we don't 'burn-out' kids by attending too young and not wanting to go later.
- They are still in the process of hiring a manager. They are moving things forward By Law presentation. With a paid bookstore manager, the board realized we will need a new Board Position. This position will be called VP of Bookstore and work closely with the employee of the bookstore. There was a proposed change to the bylaws. The current VP will be renamed to VP of Operations. The changes are being proposed under Section IV of the bylaws. There was a suggestion to make an amendment by Angie that the Bookstore manager shall not serve as the paid manager of the bookstore. There was also a discussion that the manager should not serve on the executive board.
- There was a question about who is the 'boss' of the bookstore. The contract is held by the district, but the suggestion was made that it needs to be decided who has the hiring and firing privileges. Aka If the PTO board and the district have conflicting ideas who does the employee go to? Sarah Baker made the comment that the district has told us that they are not interested in the day to day operation and managing of the employee. Alissa will discuss where all the documentation for the responsibilities and roles of the employee with the HR person at the district. The board will make the corrections and submit the proposed changes of the bylaws and they will be posted to the quick minutes and will also be put into the weekly school email.

#### Vice President's Report

Carrie Dippold

- A committee of 10 met during December. There were 21 submission for proposed projects. The total ask was about \$14,000. Initially, Mr. Mader looked through proposals and weeded some out to be covered by school or construction. The total submitted after that was around \$7700. Carrie shared some project requests. There are very specific guidelines including that anything associated with other boosters at the school (SBOB, Athletics, etc.). The motion to pass all approved requests appeared to be in the unanimous.
- Pipkins receipts can be dropped off in the front office. Three percent is donated back to the school.
- The nomination process will start soon and the executive board slate will be presented in March.

#### Treasurer's Report

Carrie Dippold

- Total assets \$119,000
- The bookstore is a little behind in sales, but they have also spent less money. So total P&L is about the same.
- Membership numbers are about at goal.

- The AVES Hangar Report (Bonus hours Jan 16, 5:30-7:30pm).

Recording Secretary Report

Camilla Millar

- Sycamore Ambassadors will be a program for New and International Families. The committee will start planning meetings soon. Please contact Camilla if you are interested in this

Corresponding Secretary Report

Sarah Baker

- Alumni Lunch recap. It was done the last Maria Wright, Becky Dawson, and Missy Reardon coordinated. It was well attended.
- General Staff appreciation update, Carina Henry and Carrie Jorgensen did a coffee bar as a thank you for staff last month. The next Staff Appreciation event will be held next Wednesday.

Old/New Business

- There was a plug for the Athletic Boosters Social February 22, March 1<sup>st</sup> Brewery with an auction. Boosters is trying to make a donation to athletic facilities. You don't have to be a member of Boosters to come.

Announcements

- The GEAR committee is sponsoring a student forum on January 22nd. It will be a panel of high school seniors for kids to ask questions and hear about
- Scholarships from PTO are not open yet, but we'd like to open it up soon.

Adjournment, 10:55 A.M.

**Coffee with the Counselor Jan 22 @9am (topic: scheduling +)  
PTO Meeting is Friday, Feb 14 @ 9:00 am**