

NewTech High @ Coppell PTSO

September 14, 2009

Minutes

Attendees:

Ranjini Agarwalla	Marca Hiller	Debbie Anderson
Jean Ainsworth	Lu Ann Kamstra	Mariza Chandler
Bridget Bell	Mary Keane	Judy Humphreyson
Laura Bitterman	JoAnn Leach	Nancy Jenner
Tabitha Branum	Kathy Lonborg	Linda Mason
Connie Braun	Michele McClew	Daggi Wallace
Laura Clay-Fix	Karen Pearsall	Lisa Wensel
Carol Davis	Kristy Racz	Kirk Wensel
Alison Durkee	Donna Ramsey	Sylvia Dendy
Kelly Durso	Sandi Tanner	Sharon Mankin
Krista Finnegan	Anne Tatum	
Becky Gross	Sandy Williamson	
Kirsten Brown		

Jean Ainsworth called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Minutes of the August meeting were approved.

PTSO Board Changes and Updates

- Jean advised that there were a few more changes to the PTSO Board. Laura Bitterman has been nominated to serve as marketing co-chair, Candee Holmes will be responsible for the bulletin board, and Carol Davis has been nominated chair for the Project Evaluation committee. Bridget Bell made a motion to accept the nominations. Karen Pearsall second the motion which was approved.

PTO President's Meeting Update

- Jean will send a full set of notes from the last meeting via e-mail. She wanted to be sure the Board was aware of upcoming community forums, beginning in October, when community members will have the opportunity to provide feedback to the Board of Trustees and administrators regarding school budget issues and opportunities for balancing the budget. The District is currently operating with a budget deficit (funding levels are at the same per-student level as the 2005-06 school year). More information will be forthcoming, likely in the form of CISD e-blast e-mails.

Technology Update

- Jill Galloway will speak at the next meeting to discuss CISD's matching funds programs for technology, but she was unable to attend. We hope to have her at the next meeting. Requests can be submitted as early as October.

Director's Update

- Tabitha made the Board aware that the mother of a NTH student, Kyle Kilpatrick, who has been battling breast cancer for four years isn't responding to treatment. Tabitha would like to put together a basket of dinner gift cards to support Kyle's family during this difficult period. Anyone who would like to help can send monetary donations or gift cards to school to Tabitha's attention. Allison Durkee suggested that the PTSO benevolence fund could help with a donation as well.
- School administrators and faculty have placed renewed emphasis on Trust Cards at school to increase the attention on the three tenants of trust, respect responsibility. Students wearing/showing their Trust Cards have been randomly selected for special recognition. Tabitha hopes to eventually have a chance to recognize all learners individually during the course of the year.
- In response to several e-mails and inquires from parents and other community members regarding NTH's absence from an article in last Sunday's Dallas Morning News that highlighted high-performing schools, Tabitha reminded everyone that many rankings, including this one, are based on longitudinal data over a period of time. Since NTH has only one year of history, it isn't considered when rankings are compiled.
- New Tech was recently recognized in a journal article which highlighted awards won for the school's design, architecture and use of technology. Tabitha will e-mail a link to the article for all to see.

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- Tabitha solicited Board feedback on this year's Director's Dialogue series. She will schedule 12-14 sessions, open to any parents, to attend to provide feedback, express likes/dislikes and get Tabitha's thoughts on any areas of interest. Board members indicated that 12-14 sessions would likely serve the needs of this year's NTH parent group.
- Open House is tomorrow evening, beginning at 6:00. Parents will walk through their learner's schedules with 4-minute mini mods. At about 7:15, an overview of Dual Credit will be provided for students of juniors who are taking those courses.
- Tabitha assured everyone that she and her staff are still working to help all the students adjust. Contrary to what some think, this year isn't necessarily easier than last, even if some things are more predictable.
- Kristen Brown asked anyone who has pictures from last year or the start of school this year, who would like to share them, to please send them to school on a CD or flash drive so that they can be loaded to an external hard-drive which will serve as a permanent archive (without consuming space on the District servers). CD/flash drive photos have better resolution than those sent via Snapfish or similar programs.

Treasurer's Report

- Alison asked if there were any questions on the financial statement that she e-mailed prior to the meeting. Write-A-Check and PTSO membership fees have been the big items so far this year.
- She reminded everyone that check request forms are available as a download from the PTSO web site. Please complete and e-mail to Alison, along with scanned copies of receipts, for reimbursements. Hard copies of the forms will also be processed, but e-mail is most efficient.
- Since PTSO monies from the school store are being collected this year (different from last), those funds will be held at the school and Alison will collect weekly for deposit into the PTSO account.

Fundraising

- Kathy Longborg announced that \$8,900 has been collected so far through Write-A-Check. Ninety of 390 families have contributed. Signage has been placed around the school and the campaign will be promoted at Open House. Kathy asked everyone to spread the word that the more we collect now, the less time we and our learners will have to spend fund-raising later in the year.

New Tech Gives Back / Enrichment / Community Service

- Bridget Bell reported on behalf of the committee that the New Tech Gives Back kick-off for this year's Touch of Life foundation-based program will be this Wednesday from 10:30-2:00. Pam Cope, the founder of the Foundation, will be there to explain the foundation and its objectives. Parents are welcome to attend. Bridget reminded everyone that the Touch A Life Foundation, based in Coppell, was founded after Pam Cope's 15-year old son died suddenly of a undetected heart defect. The foundation, inspired by stories of children in Ghana sold into slavery, has a presence, including schools, in Ghana, West Africa; Vietnam and Cambodia.
- Each networking group will "adopt" two children served by the Foundation.
- New Tech has established a goal to purchase 50 laptops for children served by the Foundation through another organization called One Laptop Per Child, www.laptop.org. Sample laptops will be available at Open House and on Wednesday. The laptops are built to withstand rough conditions and can run with solar power. Laptops must be purchased through Amazon in 25+ unit increments for \$250 each. There was discussion regarding whether PTSO can hold and disburse funds to support this program. There may be conflicts with the 501(c)3 status. Alison will check further. Sharon Mankin suggested that Touch of Life Foundation might be able to help with logistics of collecting charitable donations for this purpose.
- Tabitha emphasized to the Board that she's sensitive to concerns about supporting organizations abroad when there are people/organizations that need help locally and in the U.S. She emphasized that NTH will continue to support local causes. Tabitha and the PTSO Board chose this program to help learner's understand their role in responsibilities as global citizens. She hopes that they will understand the power of a combined voice as they develop a sense of empowerment. She thinks the story in Jantzen's Gift will resonate with the learners.
- All sophomores and juniors should wear their New Tech Gives Back t-shirts on Wednesday
- Last meeting, we announced that we would visit Las Colinas film studio as part of Wonderful Wednesday programs this year. Sandy Williamson reported that those plans have changed and the visit won't happened this year.

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Other Business

- JoAnn Leach will be contacting PTSO Board members who have not joined the PTSO. Membership is a requirement to serve on the Board.
- Updates for the school newsletter should be sent to www.hotsync@yahoo.com
- Any marketing pictures/school pictures should be sent to Laura Bitterman (labitt@tx.rr.com)

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM

Becky Gross
Secretary
NTH@C PTSO