

NewTech High @ Coppell PTSO

October 5, 2009

Minutes

Attendees:

Ranjini Agarwalla	Becky Gross
Bridget Bell	Marca Hiller
Laura Bitterman	Tina Jenkins
Tabitha Branum	Mary Keane
Connie Braun	JoAnn Leach
Kristen Brown	Kathy Lonborg
Laura Clay-Fix	Michele McClew
Carol Davis	Karen Pearsall
Sylvia Dendy	Kristy Racz
Alison Durkee	Sandy Williamson

Kristy Racz called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM. Minutes of the August meeting were approved.

PTO President's Meeting Update

- Kristy Racz attended this month's meeting and gave the update.
- Michelle King, CISD Staff Development, gave an update on the middle school strategic planning process that is getting underway. The kick-off meeting will be this week. Details and the mission statement/tactics are on the CISD web site. Tabitha commented that the general theme for the process is developing higher learning for all. One of the items on the table will be the extent to which pre-AP classes are taught exclusively for all middle school students. Tabitha encourage everyone with an interest to get involved as the strategic plan is a true working document that drives curriculum and change in the District.
- The Educational Foundation will hold its annual Casino Party on October 25. Cost is \$60. Funds raised are distributed throughout the District based on requests from schools. Last year, the Foundation raised \$57,000.
- The Volunteer Today (background check) system is not always transmitting volunteer information to various schools as intended. The District is working to resolve the issues.
- CHS recently held a program called Rachel's Choice, which focused on bullying in schools. Other schools are considering the same program. The cost is \$5,000, which may be reduced if schools partner. A few NTH students who had attended the CHS program spoke very highly of it. Tabitha and Sandy Williamson said that they had considered the program during the summer, but opted for Touch A Life instead. Tabitha said that for the Rachel's Choice program to be effective there is a need for follow-on (school club, pledges, etc.) to keep the movement alive in the school. A few people commented that they supported the decision to focus on one big thing at a time. Rachel's Choice might be better at another point in time.

Technology Update

- The Education Foundation is accepting requests for matching funds for technology. Ms. Spannagel has submitted a request for \$7,500. Tabitha doesn't expect NTH to submit many requests this year. This year's focus will be leveraging current technology rather than additional funds.

Director's Update

- Report cards will be sent home later this week. Tabitha reminded the group that grades for the first term are typically the lowest of the year as student's get acquainted with classes, facilitators, etc. She said the current failure rate is very low, and she's been very impressed with this year's freshman class.
- A group of learners accompanied Tabitha to the Texas Ass'n of Superintendents and School Boards meeting in Houston last week. The learners presented and led some technology sessions. Comments and feedback were very impressive. Only three high schools in the state presented.
- Tours have been keeping everyone busy. Last week, the Blue Ribbon Schools national conference was in Dallas and conference attendees visited NTH to study "best practices." NTH was the only high school on the tour. Tours have been given to representatives from schools in Wyoming, Hawaii and Louisiana recently as well.

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- Homecoming went well. Tabitha and Kristen Brown both commented on how well NTH students presented themselves.
- Kevin Gant, New Tech Foundation, has been at NTH this week for professional development. He's been holding sessions on motivation 'by their own desires' which goes even beyond intrinsic motivation.
- Touch-A-Life networking group fund-raising has been going well and several groups have been doing innovative and creative things. One group secured an iPod and an iPod Nano to raffle after selling their ideas to a district rep from Apple.
- The PSAT will be October 14. All learners will need to be at the regular time that Wednesday (no late start). Sophomore and Junior students will take the standard PSAT exam, with the scores counting toward National Merit recognition for juniors. Freshmen will take a Knowsys PSAT exam.
- Junior students had fantastic day at AT&T job shadowing orientation. One mentor was assigned to every two students. A highlight was a conference center where they interacted with an AT&T employee in China.

Treasurer's Report

- Alison e-mailed the financial statement. Cash on hand September 30 was \$16,373. Since the statements were distributed, there have been additional Write-A-Check donations, bringing the total to near \$11,000.

Directory

- JoAnn Leach reported that final formatting of the directory is being completed. The finished product will be sent to the printer next week and will be distributed the following week.
- PTSO Board members have been given a CD with designs completed by Digital Portfolio II students. Board members should review and select their favorite and let JoAnn know. The winning design will be printed on the back cover of the directory.

WebSite

- NTH currently uses PTO Manager. All other schools in the District are using PTO Connect.
- PTO Connect has an easy-to-use web site and a volunteer manager. It does not have a financial package. If we switch to PTO Connect, we'll need to purchase/use separate software to manage the PTSO financials.
- PTO Manager costs \$249/year. PTO Connect costs \$335.
- Karen Pearsall made a motion to approve a \$335 budget item to switch to PTO Connect. JoAnn Leach seconded the motion, which was approved.

Fund-Raising

- Kathy Longborg announced that there will be a car wash on Saturday, October 24 from 8a – 1p. Each student will be given 10 tickets to sell at \$10 each. Each learner will be asked to sell at least four tickets. More information will be distributed this week.
- If every student sells four tickets, we will surpass the fund-raising goal for this year.

Learner Activities

- On October 23, bus transportation will be provided to Fright Night @ Six Flags.
- The second annual Smores Day will be Wednesday, October 28.
- We will sell end zone tickets for group seating at the November 14 TCU-Utah game. Learners will provide their own transportation, but will sit as a group at the game.
- A Lock-in will be held December 11 at InterSkate. More details to follow.

Learner Enrichment

- The Family Place will be at school on Wednesday to present an internet/cell phone safety program. They will also discuss START, an 8-week training program to which students may apply. When they return in February to discuss dating safety, learners who participated in the training program will be involved in the presentation.

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- On October 28, an ad lib comedy program will be presented, along with presentation skills. Also, learners will be introduced to a film festival assignment. The film festival will take place later in the school year.
- In December, Star Talk will present a Chinese language and culture immersion day.

Other Business

- HotSync will be published later this week.
- The spirit wear committee asked Tabitha to talk to the Learner Council about a Pajama Day to support the intro of New Tech pajama pants. The committee is also looking at hoodies. They may set up a table to sell spirit wear during Friday lunch.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM

Becky Gross
Secretary
NTH@C PTSO