

Connally PTA Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2015 at 6:30 pm

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Lisa Rankine, PTA President.

Attendees

Lisa Rankine, Sung Lee, Debbie Samoson, Teresa Scott-Tibbs, Michelle Seabrooks, Diane Harvey, Leonor Mendoza, Olga Garcia, Tammy Dewitt Le, Norma Lane, Mr. Fillmore (Kickstart Teacher at WMS), Kermit Ward (Principal), Cindy Padavick, Tammy Le, Claudia Arguello, Linda Casper, Tiffany Carlson, Leala Vinson, Ramiro Garza

Introductions

Everyone went around and introduced themselves in the room, including parents, board members, teachers, and principal.

Treasurer's Report-Sung Lee

Per Sung Lee, he was handed documents from 5 years back from Caroline; e-postcard (Form 990-N) must be filed by PTA annually with IRS to be considered tax free; sales tax form needs to also be filled out by Sung Lee so needs to be given to him once received by PTA.

Ending balance as of 6/2015 = \$5,369.68

Allocated \$2,000 for 4 scholarships at \$500 each

Current balance =\$3,369.68

If alterations need to be made to the budget, this can be discussed amongst PTA Board Members.

Welcome to Mr. Kermit Ward, Principal of Connally High School

Mr. Ward shared that some of his big surprises at Connally were the quality of kids that CHS has here! He has worked hard to shock the system since the beginning of the school year because when he walked into the school before he became principal he would see kids talking on their phones, outside of class, etc. Now that expectations have been elevated, the kids have risen to those expectations and cell phone use in the hallways has been wiped out. Kids who came from Westview Middle School where he was principal last year have influenced Dessau kids too because they know Mr. Ward and his expectations. Teachers have shared with Mr. Ward that classes are calmer and kids are more engaged. One thing to note about high school kids is that they always want to know the "why"--the reason behind why certain things need to happen or change. So Mr. Ward has to remember to always stop and explain or clarify so that the kids understand.

Mr. Ward also encouraged us to look at the CHS website as it has a different look and feel and will start featuring our kids and the great things they do. High level parents like PTA members tend to focus on little things that will help make the school better so check out the site for any feedback. Norma Lane pointed out that right now there is no drop down for band but Mr. Ward will look into that. Per Mr. Ward, Jennifer McCauley takes care of the site and updates.

Diane Harvey shared that she loves the debate coach. Teresa Tibbs shared that UT has a program that comes to schools to speak to the kids and Mr. Ward did not know about it so she will forward information related to this. Sung Lee asked about school safety and the left turn on Howard. This is a city issue per Mr. Ward. It was also mentioned that some kids run across to Walmart all the time and some kids park there because they do not have the permits to park in the school. Mr. Ward said his main concern is to ensure the kids inside the school building are secure first. If he focuses on all that is happening on the outside, then he will be spread too thin and his main focus is the security for the kids inside of the school. Debbie Samoson suggested going to the City about adding a possible cross walks at the bus stop in front of CHS.

It was asked what we can do as PTA to help CHS? Unfortunately CHS has never really had same standards as other high schools in PISD so we need to meet those standards! Mr. Ward wants us to take care of the kids and teachers. One of his projects is to help bring current events to our kids and educate them on financial planning. If any parent knows of a cable company or contact that can help sponsor CHS with cable, installation, or equipment please let Mr. Ward know so he can connect with that contact.

The Focus Portal is not ready yet as it is not working as expected but Mr. Ward will follow up with district by tomorrow, September 16, 2015.

Some parents noticed that the front office is now a bit different than before. Per Mr. Ward, the Superintendent approved office desks for the front office so they have a different look and feel.

Overall, Mr. Ward is happy with the kids. He likes to attend all PTA Meetings and is currently taking some online courses to get this doctoral degree in school improvements. He will be doing through end of December on same days that we have PTA Meetings but will always be ready to step out from class time to come speak to PTA.

Guest Speaker-Mr. Fillmore

Mr. Fillmore is the Kickstart teacher at Westview Middle School. He came to our meeting today to ask for donation from PTA for 3 Connally students that won several titles each at the USA Nationals. They will be attending the world championship in England in 30 days and are currently raising funds for travel, meals, hotel, etc. Anything that PTA can donate will be much appreciated. Some kids have a gofundme account however will need about \$4,000-\$5,000 total to get these kids to the championship.

PTA Board Members will need to discuss and vote on this item.

Membership Report – Teresa Scott-Tibbs

Teresa Tibbs is collecting dues from all members for 2015-2016 school year.

Teacher appreciation report –Debbie Samoson

Debbie Samoson was co-lead last year for Teacher Appreciation and is leading it this year. For start of school, she made banners and put them up over teachers' mailboxes (and added pens/pencils in their box) welcoming them back to school. Today she brought in coffee, filters, other supplies to put in Teacher's lounge. She also spoke to Ms. Quach Vu who is the teacher appreciation coordinator for the actual teachers about getting a birthday list so we can acknowledge all teachers on their respective birthdays. Ms. Quach Vu shared with Debbie that one of the favorite things they did last year was walk around with a cart full of sweets and stopped by each classroom for teachers to take a "Sweet Break". They loved it!

Cougar Celebration 2015/2016 –Diane Harvey Anderson

Diane Harvey shared that Cougar Celebration 2016 (CC2016) is made up of a group of parents that help raise funds for seniors to enjoy a huge end of year graduation party at the school without the need to go out and get into any other kind of trouble. One of the upcoming fundraisers is Homecoming Dance on October 16, 2015. Donations of water and soda are needed and tickets will be sold that week. There will be a photo booth like last year, pizza, concessions and decorations!

Also, CC2016 started selling beer at all UT Games and Mary Hale coordinates events at COTA. Also, another fundraiser is the flocking of flamingos for \$25. If interested in flocking someone for their birthdays or any occasion, please contact Cathy Cook at cathy_cook@hotmail.com.

Holiday Bazaar – Leonor Mendoza & Diane Harvey

Diane Harvey is leading this effort and Leonor Mendoza is shadowing her because Diane will be out of town November 13th & 14th. Bazaar Committee needs to meet asap to check status on everyone's role and make sure we are on track. Leonor asked for help on promoting the event and passed out some flyers and will email soft copies. She also asked for parent volunteers and shared that student volunteers will be requested as well. Some parents volunteered to help out in different ways and Leonor or Diane will follow up accordingly.

Scholarship Committee Report – Michelle Seabrooks

Michelle Seabrooks shared that scholarships of \$500 each are given to senior students who have a paying CHS PTA parent member. Last year, PTA gave out 4 scholarships! This committee usually kicks off in April and Michelle is looking for volunteers that are not senior parents to help review applications in April. Leonor Mendoza volunteered to be part of the committee. We encourage all senior parents to pay their dues for PTA and have their student apply for a scholarship!

Budgets

Per Lisa Rankine, we will take the budget discussion offline and review with PTA Board Members.

Next PTA Meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2015 at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned around 8 pm CST.