



PTO Meeting Agenda - September 13, 2023

- Welcome - Meeting began at 7:56a by Maggie Dundon, President.
- President's Update
 - Introduction and Involvement of all to the PTO - We have 54 people online today and over 50 attending in person.
 - Purpose of the PTO - We are here for the kids and our mission statement is to promote education and excellence. We do this by programs for our children and we fund these programs through our friends and family campaign donations.
Acknowledgement of board members and Room Parents. We are appreciative of the time that you can give us. If you are a board member, each seat gets 1 vote. If you are parent who is here to get more information, you cannot vote on issues in which the PTO board must vote on.
- Administration Report
 - Principal – Mrs. Rawson** - Want to thank everyone for being here. It is about us working together to make this a great school. Yesterday I was in a principal meeting and I was thinking how great the school is. Two weeks ago, she received an email that she has been chosen to be a mentor principal. Starting Oct. 3, we will have a mentee principal with her here. He is from TH Rogers. He is the assistant principal there now. HISD is funding another administrator at our campus. He loves TH Rogers but he is excited to learn at an IB school. She thinks it will be a great partnership. She is very excited about the opportunity. She was thinking about lunch and how we should start having special things at lunch for the students. She appreciates the parents coming in. She has been in classrooms a lot. It is so awesome to be in the classroom as it is fun and exciting. One boy in a class, there are different chairs in height and when she comes, he always brings her a different type of chair to sit in. The children are so precious. The doors being open is nice, but safety is first. We are a school where children work in the hallways, we have tutors in the hallway. She was in 5th grade on Monday and about 1/3 were in the hallway working on projects. Children are coming in and out of the class going to

the bathroom. The doors are in the lock position and if there is an emergency, we can close and lock the door immediately. Mrs. Wrigglesworth's door is shut because it is by the Rotunda and a whisper sounds loud in her class. We are writing stories and responding to things. You should see what the kinders are writing in their journal. There was a piece about writing without purpose, but we do not do that. We give the children a purpose to write, just like we give them a purpose for all that they do. We have engaged children in different ways as suggested with Multiple Response Strategy. We have been doing this before, as it is nothing new to us. We like our children to be engaged, excited, and have a chance to talk and write. Before kids respond, we have the children gather thoughts before they speak. This allows everyone a chance to speak. We are doing great here. I encourage you to come and visit and see the things that we are doing. If you have questions, please reach out to me. She has a direct report, but she is leaving as her husband has a job in Canada. It was exciting working with her and she is sure the next person that she works with will be as great. The math test is another thing that she wants to talk about. The Renaissance test is no longer being used. She likes the new test that we are using. Want to update you on West wing project. Someone came on campus and confirmed that the work that is done on the West wing will not need to be maintained by HISD. They were excited to know what we will be doing in the project. We have 5 clever touch boards on campus for the classrooms. It is a giant iPad and any child can project to it. She can send an announcement to the clever touches. Thank you all for your donations. We have many retired teachers who have returned. Mrs. Martinez thinks she is full time, she is here all of the time. We are so lucky to have her. Your donations pay for all the hourly tutors. When we can pay retired teachers, it is so great. So HISD has put in gates in the front and back. There will be a double key entry. when you come to the front, you will buzz in and you will walk in and have to buzz in again. Hopefully, it will be done soon. We will make it look cute and it will be safe. She has one small request. Everyday our plant operator walks the building and an administrator walks in the evening. The gate at the YMCA had a rock propping the gate open. You cannot see it unless you walk up to the gate. Please make sure all gates and doors are shut after you go through them. Do not prop open gates. **Q** - If she picks her son up at 9:05a is that okay? **A** - Attendance is weird. Attendance is recorded at 9a. If you have a child who comes at 9:05a, they are absent. If you have a doctor's appointment and leave after 9:05a, it is okay. Attendance is tied to money and it is key. Every minute is very important. **Q** - If you have a doctor's appointment is it still an absence? **A** - Yes, it is still an absence if you have a doctor's appointment and a note from the doctor. It is excused though. If you take a trip, your child's absence will not be excused. **Melissa** would like to thank Mrs. Rawson because she feels it is refreshing to hear how things are going here in the school and it seems that everyone is happy including the teachers with all the changes happening. At other schools like the

NES, they use slides and she thinks it is okay if you are using materials in the right way. We are always thinking of the best way to do things for the children. The resources given are pretty good and we always do what is best for our children.

- **IB Coordinator – Ms. Blakeslee** - She is the IB and GT coordinator and here to talk about IB today. She wants to provide information so parents can know what is going on. IB is more like web. She brought visuals today. She presented 4th grade TEKS which are mostly skills. We are supposed to do the skills in one year. With IB, we provide the children with a gourmet meal instead of putting food on the table. There are 6 units for each grade level and we plug in our skills and concepts in one unit. One unit has a big idea. Right now, we are working on expressing ourselves in 4th grade. Language includes more than words. There are 3 lines of inquiry which you can think of or outline. Kids learn that language is a lot more than taking notes. It is a way of expressing ourselves. We have the evolution of communication. They talk about emojis and the Internet. Trying to get the children to realize that language is part of our identity. We try to give them an engaging stimulation and challenges. This helps the children connect and helps us to lean towards learner center.
- **Treasurer’s Report – Melissa Pasche**
 - 2023-2024 Budget - copy of the budget was provided. Please share at the tables if you did not get a copy. This is the budget for this school year. Our calendar year starts in July. July and August are quiet as we have not started the school year yet. You will see membership checks and sponsor checks that have come in. This is used to support our school. We have ways in which we can raise money and support our school and children. Any questions that you have about the budget, you can email the treasurer. **Maggie** - you will see that about 1% of budget goes to the PTO administration because we have to pay insurance and sales tax. Most of the funds goes back to the schools and it goes to Mrs. Rawson so she can put in her budget which helps with paying extra teacher assistants and tutors. This helps our students get to where they need to be. It also helps with the IB mission. Please take a look at it and let us know if you have questions. We need vote to approve the budget. Motion to vote by Onora Beltran Zatorski and Motion Second by Cindy Donaldson. 31 votes to approve budget
 - Corporate Sponsorships update **Maggie** - Cricket is the VP of Sponsorships and did an awesome job. They raise over \$50,000 with just corporate sponsors.
 - Tax Exempt Form and Requests for Reimbursements - information is on the website to get information if you are spending money on behalf of the PTO. We cannot pay taxes, want to ensure everyone understands that.
- **Executive Team & Board of Director Updates**

- **Friends and Family – Marvin Itzep – Maggie** -Marvin is responsible for the Friends and family campaign. If you would like a sign or donated money and would like your sign, you can get them after this meeting. We were at \$43,000 at last check. If you have pledge and have not paid, please send your funds by check or pay online.
- **Cultural Exchange Committee – Ebru Senol, Prathima Guniganti, and Deepa Ramachandran** - International Potluck event is Sept. 27 at 5p. It is a casual event where everyone brings a dish that serves 8 to 12 people. It is preferred that it is a cultural dish, but it does not matter. This is an opportunity to get to know others and learn about other cultures. You can contact them if you have questions or want to participate. We encourage you to come. It is a vibrant time and you do not have to cook that night. Just bring a dish as it is like a feast. There will be tables for the different countries. You can bring decoration for your country, but you do not have to. You can also come in your cultural attire. Please spread the word. **Isha** - I would like to encourage Americans to come as well. Please bring a dish and you can bring a dessert.
- **School Rewards/Spirit Nights – Eva Castaneda** - First one was Saturday at UH vs. Rice game. We had 59 tickets. We encourage everyone to participate in Spirit night. The next one is at Palace Social. Please try to make it to at least one of the events as I know that you guys are very busy.
- **Spooky Spectacular – Karen Huang and Mary Katherine Roberts** - Mary is new to the PTO as she has a kinder and her sidekick is James. This year we do not have as many sponsors. We are working hard to confirm spots. We have a couple up in the air. We are pivoting a little with the sponsorship. We have started another plan where we will have family sponsors. You can sponsor an inflatable. As soon as the plan is out, please look at it as we want to get families involved. Boo Booths, we only have a few this year. Our corporate sponsors will host those. The cake walk is back this year. We are waiting on a sponsor for the cake walk this year. It may be turning into a cookie walk. Spooky is Oct. 21. **Karen** - this is my second year doing Spooky. The t-shirt contest is going on now. The teachers will select the winner on Sept. 15. If you have a student who wants to submit a design, please do it ASAP. Ticket sales will start Sept. 22 and we will have them online. We would like for you to paint a pumpkin instead of carving as they do rotten quickly. Next thing, we will have a snack and beverage contest on Oct. 17 to Oct. 19. You can wear an old spooky shirt for the contest on Oct. 20 as well. We are bringing back the snake pit from last year. It allows you to look at the reptiles. We will have new inflatables. We will have the pie in the face this year. The lucky person for the pie in the face will be done by the Twain Tiger. We will have jugs up front to see who will win the pie in the face contest. New to spooky is the bubble lady. She brings about 20 buckets and they will be on the track area. Children can go to the bucket and make

bubbles. We will have a magician also on the stage for 1 hour. It is geared towards Spooky. We will have a quiet room for those kids who may experience too much noise. We have the haunted house. It will be a great time. We want everyone to buy a t-shirt and come. Chick-fil-A will be here as well. We will also have pizza. There will be donations for water, soda, and chips. **Louise** - Is Mr. Obi coming back **R** - Yes, he will come back as the emcee and his friend will DJ. **Q** - What is a Boo Booth? **R** - It is a table where sponsors can promote their businesses. If you are interested, you can sign up online. We will send the information out. Each Friday we come out in costumes so if your child says that they saw a witch, it is us. **Q** - How can you help with the haunted house? **R** - Contact the Dad's club and there is a meeting Friday at Little Woodrow's at 8p. **Maggie** - Dad's club is responsible for the haunted house. It is not crazy scary since it is made by our dads for the school.

- **Haunted House – MJ Jackson, RJ Sealock, and Clay Colvin** - Dad's Club is meeting Friday at little Woodrow Friday at 8p. If you would like to help out with the haunted house for Spooky, please come out.
- **HISD Liaison – Connie Pei** - This is her 3rd year as the liaison. It is a community thing. She knows 2 people who have spoken to the board Isha and Peggy. The agenda items that have passed that may be of interest to you is what she will share. There have been policy changes with board approvals and more power given to the superintendent. He has abilities to change magnet programs at schools. There has been changes to criteria for hiring principals and teachers. There is a new performance appraisal system in place for parents and teachers. There will not be input from employer organizations such as teacher unions on wages, hours, and conditions. Some changes to money, raising the cap on not needing board approval for such items as purchasing which gives superintendent more power to decide. He does not need board approval to approve things up to \$500,00. It is important that we have a great principal like Mrs. Rawson as the changes are hard on a lot of people. She is on FB group with over 4,000 people with things that teachers are concerned about. HISD provided a training on how teachers should teach such as no free writing. Teachers are now being evaluated a lot now even schools that are not NES, such as 25% of performance on student's scores. **Amber** - some process that are happening are not new processes to HISD. Connie tries to stay as neutral as possible. If you want more information or to be involved, she recommends that you attend the board meetings.
- **Shout Outs & Questions**
 - **Maggie** - Want to thank Adan for the yard work that he has done this summer. Want to thank the school store volunteers as they have been working since the summer. We have lots of people who have started their roles. Jenny Hanks and Dwine Meyers have started the Birthday Grams last week, and this helps our 5th grade students. Isha does the

Times every week. Submissions should be done in a timely manner. Submission criteria as follows:

- i) Email Isha Archer at twaintimes@gmail.com and cc Stephanie Schaefer at communications@marktwainpto.org
- ii) Include a contact email address for anyone with questions.
- iii) Include a web address even if you submit a QR code.
- iv) If you've got important deadlines or meeting dates for your committee or event, please include them so that we can add the information to the calendar.
- v) Pictures should be in jpeg or png format.
- vi) If you do not receive an email from me confirming receipt of your submission by EOD Friday, please text me at 703-622-6130 just in case I missed your email.

Thanks to those who help at the beginning of the year with start of the school day and at the end of the day, and also the lunches for the teachers. It is a big job. We greatly appreciate it.

- **Amber** - would like to clarify the West Wing. When she was PTO president, we funded for the outside space from Bash. Teachers wanted an outside space to enjoy with the students. We needed to get approval to get started. The construction work has to happen when the children are not a school. We will keep you updated as the project gets started.

Motion to adjourn by Martha Carruth and Motion Second by Elizabeth Anderson. Meeting adjourned at 8:54a.

