

## **Velma Hamilton Middle School PTO Meeting September 13, 2017**

**Present:** Eileen Snyder (PTO Secretary), Cindy Barbera (Teacher Liaison), Afan Ottenheimer (PTO Co-President), Sherry Niede (PTO Fund Raising), Melissa Hornung (PTO Volunteer Coordinator), Shahanna Baldon (PTO Co-President), Nichole Von Haden (Acting Assistant Principal), Jessica Taylor (Principal), Hannah Renfro (PTO Vice President), Kirstin Bloy (PTO External Communications), Stella Yun, Shelby Connell (PTO Fund Raising), Margaret Jenks (PTO At-Large member), Margo Plant, Mike McLain (PTO Treasurer).

**Introductions (Shahanna Baldon):** Attendees introduced themselves, minutes from August meeting were approved.

**Principal's update (Jessica Taylor):** Hamilton has just under 800 kids as of today, which is the lowest number in several years. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday count is coming up. There has been an influx of students from out of district.

Thanks to picture day volunteers, it went really well. It was the first time we've done pictures during the instructional day; Lifetouch did well. They used the gym, and worked with Mrs. Koval (the PE teacher from Van Hise), who took her elementary kids outside to make room for photos.

Jessica has been working on acclimating Nichole Von Haden to the Hamilton community, etc. Nichole mentions that she has an open door policy, and wants to hear from people.

Communication has been a focus this year - helping families know what their kids are doing at school. We will continue to send a weekly family newsletter to all families. One new system that is being tried is a Academic Assignment Calendar which will be linked into the family newsletter. It is a view-only spreadsheet about what happened in class that day and what homework has been assigned.

Shahanna asks about the School Improvement Plan (SIP) timeline for implementation. Jessica notes that there are 6 areas that are identified, district-wide. Implementation started during our all staff Welcome Back Conference in August. Instructional Practice area; paying particular attention to African American students and students in special ed. The content area is inquiry-based reading - close reading in which students read multiple times for more purposes. School structure area, meeting by subject area. Jessica is not sure yet how the PTO can contribute, as it is still the initial phases for this year. Shelby asks, is plan available on the website? Should be, not sure if it's there yet. Nichole adds that they're engaging in learning partnerships, and cultivating a thriving community for all students in the classroom.

**Budget Discussion (Afan Ottenheimer for Mike McLain):** Rough overview: The PTO raises about \$10,000/year, and there is general agreement that we shouldn't keep money in the bank unless we're saving for something long-term; since we're not doing that, let's spend what we have up to our reserve (\$5,000) and what we've already allocated to spend this year.

Afan sent out a survey about what line items we should have in the budget every year and what should be considered for grants or one-time funding. 5 people voted; some people wanted to discuss the items before voting.

**Discussion about the budget survey (Afan and Shahanna):** Margaret Jenks provided an update on her idea about music lessons. The problem solving group from West is looking at doing something as a STEAM project, and trying to get funding through Epic. Since the group is pursuing their own funding, Margaret suggests not funding the plan through the PTO right now. Afan suggests reminding the students they can ask for seed money if they need help getting started. That money would fit under the grant category.

Someone suggested consolidating snacks for after school clubs and food for a resource room. Afan says the after school snacks are generally for clubs; the resource room more like something available to kids all day. Could kids get snacks from the resource room after school? Jessica suggests it's better right now not to have a resource room that someone has to staff/manage, and Jessica and Cindy Barbera both say it's better to keep the two separate - some kids go to the nurse to get snacks, but then that comes from the nursing budget. Also, sometimes the club snacks are used to entice kids to come to clubs (i.e., study room), which is much different from kids who need food because they missed breakfast. In the past, we've only funded snacks for homework club, and the club chaperones have had to ask for the funding. Cindy suggests doing the club snacks as a grant.

Hannah Renfro clarifies difference between annual funding and grant process. Annual makes it part of the budget; grants require an application. Afan suggests putting snacks in the annual budget, because our bylaws state that anything that's not part of the budget cannot get funding in between meetings if it's over \$250.

Margaret asks what's the different between teacher/staff supplies and project supplies. Shelby Connell thinks it grew out of a discussion about the Medieval fair; Cindy thinks that most teachers would ask the PTO for a grant for a new project.

Shahanna suggests differentiating between furniture and supplies. Supplies (for crafts, etc.) would be called consumables and furniture and other more permanent materials would be called capital expenses. Jessica mentions that last year's supply drive brought in a huge amount of stuff, so if that's going to happen this year, we might be able to let that fall off the budget.

Then, the Medieval Fair becomes project funding. Shahanna explains that the fair is put on by the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Students make things to sell (crafts or food), and the supplies required to participate cost money. The question is, whether it should be its own line item or be folded into other supplies. Shelby points out it's easier to keep as its own line item.

Shelby wonders if Kristin Ensminger (school Social Worker) needs a budget right now, since there's not really a resource room yet. Jessica suggests maybe leave it off for now, since she gets district money - Jessica will ask her about it, but suggests we put funding for Kristin in grants for now.

School sponsored field trips are almost always covered by the additional funds requests at the bottom of the field trip form. Jessica uses general donation money, but Cindy also almost always has extra money in the end. Afan asks if it would help to budget for it just in case (we don't have to spend it if it's not needed). Jessica would like to see it in the budget so we can advertise it to homeroom teachers, etc., so that kids who would normally not think they could do it would not count themselves out immediately. And as a new funding stream, it would be good for advertising.

Future Problem Solvers, Science Olympiad, etc. High dollar requests. Is the way we respond to these requests aligned with our philosophy? Are the kids in need getting the money? We know the requests come and we'll say yes, so we should budget for them. Shelby cautions that we should look at the overall budget, or we won't end up with any money for grants. It may make more sense to offer what we can in a given year, or leave it as a grant. Hannah suggests that we'll have a second round with actual money before the budget is finalized. Afan points out we can always do an amended budget. There was some discussion about whether/how many kids opt themselves out of clubs like Math Counts, Science Olympiad, and Future Problem Solvers simply because they know there's a cost and they know their family can't pay. Even though all of the clubs announce at the outset that no child will be turned away because they can't pay, some children do anyway. It was agreed we need to consider the clubs with an equity lens, and work to make sure that the students who participate in these groups are representative of the school as a whole.

Family and community events (parent dinners) - these are PTO events, formerly done as community suppers. There's a parent here who's a researcher on family engagement with Hmong and \_\_\_ families, maybe that parent will be interested in leading these. It's agreed to keep that line in the budget.

FACE, also pretty unanimous, let's keep.

→ Afan needs to leave early, so the discussion of the Bayview event on the agenda is moved to this time. There has been a request for funds for teachers and interpreters to visit Bayview to meet the families who live there, and who might either not feel comfortable coming to school, or who might need extra personalized attention with

interpreters. Margaret wants to make sure that the families know they're still invited to Hamilton for Back to School Night, even if the meeting at Bayview happens. Jessica will pay for a Hmong interpreter to be able to go. This funding would cover other costs, such as pizza for the families. VOTE: Shahanna moves to approve \$150, Kirstin Bloy and Hannah second, the motion passes unanimously.

Back to family and community events; these are already in the budget, at \$350.

FACE events are part of the SIP and Parent Connect. In the survey, there's a separate line for transportation for parent connect (vs. transportation for other events). Shelby asks if transportation would be needed for any other events. Jessica says yes, Shelby suggests doing all transportation as its own line item. Money for FACE will be added to the annual budget.

Band/orchestra/choir: Someone had included this for funding of a separate instrument that kids could use to practice over the summer. Instruments handled by the district, though, not the school. Margaret suggests making it a grant - consensus was that it should be a grant.

Stage - there will be lighting put in, it just didn't happen this year. This will be a grant.

Kitchen upgrades: no updates. Jessica says the stove broke, and the district will split the cost; the school's part of the cost to replace the stove is \$500. We'll hold off on deciding about this one until we have an update on the kitchen remodel.

Staff supplies are put under grants.

Events to Highlight and honor the legacy of Velma Hamilton. Her biographer is happy to help upgrade the web site, etc. If there's a little money set aside, maybe we could do something like a block party or dance on her birthday. Jessica says the PTO used to do a dance on Velma Hamilton's birthday; maybe we could revive that. Margaret has talked to a bunch of people who knew her about who she is, so she can write a song for the school. She suggests a tea with these ladies who knew her, so the kids can sit down and hear her story.

All school assembly - struck from the list. There are too many people, it would have to happen in an outside venue. But, we're doing the fun run, and that involves the whole school.

Translation services: Funding for translation fits under FACE (family/community engagement) events, so this item is taken off the list.

Additional art and music opportunities - See Margaret's update above. This will be put under grants, because the students are seeking their own funding.

Leadership opportunities for students - Shelby is thinking of it as something where the students could have more of a voice/role in the school. Nichole has found that there are some new district-provided resources available. This will go under grants

Technology needs. Strike for now, or have as grants.

Wright/Cherokee/Hamilton community building: Shelby suggests that since the schools all end up at West together, it would be nice to do something together, like the run some east side middle schools do. An event on same day/same time, with a t-shirt; just to provide some sort of common ground. Maybe a grant, not necessarily a grant through the PTO. Sherry suggests doing something having to do with who each school is named after. Shahanna suggests having the high school partner with it. High school problem solvers are hoping to involve all the students in all the middle schools.

YWCA Racial Justice Summit, Oct. 3 and 4 - This is a local, annual conference on racism. Hannah noticed the session about youth in leadership, thought it looked like an interesting opportunity for staff or students to participate in. How does the funding work? The early deadline is passed, we'd have to pay for the day; Shahanna suggests that if the youth would come for part of the day, the summit organizers could maybe adjust the cost to cover food only. Hannah asks if there's a group that the money could be funneled through. Jessica says there are groups, but the timeline is a little tight. Hannah says maybe we could bring someone into the school instead? Shahanna suggests leaving the line item vague as "race equity," then it gives us flexibility if staff or students want to do something specific. We have to take the cost of a substitute teacher into consideration, too. Shelby asks if it could be a topic in a staff meeting. The Racial Justice Summit is a local event, tied into the local scene, which is different than having someone come in. The cost for two days is \$300, day one only is \$200, day two only is \$175. This was put into Grants or other.

Books for racial justice book club - fold in with the item above? Hannah would like to have a sub committee or some kind of group, looking at how to tap into current kid groups/clubs, so kids can participate in these discussions. Maybe buying the books would be a nudge to encourage the group to form. No current race equity structure, but there's something evolving. Hannah will think about her idea and put together a specific proposal for the next meeting.

School/theater performances: bringing groups to perform here - this was an idea for promoting racial justice. Given the lack of performance space in the school, the idea was tabled.

**Budget (Mike McLain):** Mike reminds us that the budget doesn't have to be exact, it just reflects our thinking at a point in time. There will be an adjusted budget through the year; every month we will get the original budget, the current adjusted budget, and the projected balance. Then we start over at the end of the year.

Preliminary amounts assigned to items that we decided should be in the annual budget (with some discussion). These will be discussed further via email and finalized/voted on at the next meeting. See last page of minutes for summary table:

Funding for Math Counts, Science Olympiad, and Future Problem Solvers trips: \$2100 for all three (\$700 each).

For other trips (Washington DC, Costa Rica, Quebec), maybe we can find a way to have students be involved, but privately - a way to involve staff/PTO, so teachers know they can come to us. Maybe have that as a specific fund raising piece - something like the parents-only fundraiser at the distillery that was suggested at the last meeting. Shahanna suggests that Jessica approach families that have already given to start off; Margaret suggests budgeting \$1,000 just to have something in case the fundraising doesn't take off and someone need some help (as happened last year).

FACE funding could maybe cover speaker fees and materials like books.

Velma Hamilton Dance: A Hamilton parent is a DJ and has DJ'ed dances at Van Hise in the past. He may be willing to donate his services.

Medieval Fair: There are 5 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms with 10 sections working on the Faire. \$50/section would be \$500.

Bucky books - Shelby will send out an email tomorrow via constant comment. School gets \$15 per book.

**Volunteer update (Melissa Hornung):** Picture day, went awesome, despite one no-show. There were only 50 students who were not photographed; there is no requirement that they be photographed. Nobody has contacted Melissa about the teacher appreciation coordinator positions. She got an email asking to be part of pto, forwarded from Afan. She replied back separately, saying hi and asking if the person had any questions. It was agreed that Afan should provide Kirstin access to web site to post minutes/agendas. Shelby suggests posting the agenda the Thurs/Fri before the meeting.

The current link from the Hamilton web site to the PTO web site goes to the wrong place and should be fixed. Kirstin can work with Ellen Arney to clean up the school web site. Shahanna will email Ellen about the broken link.

Meeting adjourned.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Proposed Annual Budget</b>	<b>Notes</b>
After school snacks (club)	\$900	\$300/grade
Food/supplies for resource room	N/A	Grant
Travel Money for non-school sponsored trips	\$1,000	
Travel money for academic competitions (FPS, Math Counts, Science Olympiad)	\$2,100	\$700/group
Family/community events (PTO events; community suppers)	\$350	Unused budget from 2016/2017
Family/Community Engagement (FACE) Events	\$500	
Band, Orchestra, Choir	N/A	Grant
Stage/Theater upgrades	N/A	Grant
Kitchen upgrades	N/A	Item tabled pending updates on project
Teacher/staff supplies	N/A	Grant
Events to highlight/honor the legacy of Velma Hamilton	\$200	
All-School Assembly	N/A	Not feasible
Transportation	\$500	
Translation Services	N/A	Budgeted in with FACE events
Leadership opportunities for students	N/A	Grant
Medieval Faire funding	\$500	
Technology grants	N/A	Strike from list/grant
Wright/Cheriokee/Hamilton community-building	N/A	Grant/partner with West High
General Project Making Supplies Fund	N/A	Grant
YWCA Racial Justice Summit	N/A	Grouped with next two items, do as grants
Books for racial justice book club	N/A	Grouped with last item and next item, do as grants
Facilitators for events on racism	N/A	Grouped with last two items, do as grants
School theater performances	N/A	Item tabled
<b>Total proposed annual amount for these line items:</b>	<b>\$6,050</b>	