

PTO Council Meeting - Mon. Sept. 28th, 2015

I. Call to Order

- 7:05 PM, High School lower cafeteria

II. Approval of Minutes

- motion to approve minutes of PTO Council Meeting April 22nd, 2015, motion seconded, minutes approved

III. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Gregory Hutchings

- The opening of the 2015-16 school year went smoothly. There has been positive feedback from staff on the school year to date.

Slide presentation:

Aspirations of Shaker -

Excellence

Equity - that every student, regardless of their background, has access to a superior education

Exploration - implies that families in Shaker have choices and opportunities that may not be as plentiful in other districts

Mission Statement of Shaker Schools

The District will nurture, educate, and graduate students who are civic-minded and prepared to make ethical decisions; who are confident, competent communicators, skillful in problem solving, capable of creative thinking; who have a career motivation and a knowledge of our global and multicultural society.

Our Vision - that Shaker is the *first choice* school district for *all* students.

Shaker is one of only eight IB districts in the **nation**. IB is pre-K through grade 12.

Core Values:

1. Each student is valued
2. Every student must succeed
3. Diversity makes us stronger
4. Breadth of experience is vital
5. Fiscal responsibility is essential
 - be efficient, don't jeopardize quality
6. We are all accountable

Highlights of 2014-15 School Year

1. Raised graduation rate from 89% to 93%
2. Completed 1st year of 5 year strategic plan
3. Innovative Center for Personalized Learning graduated it's first class of 14 students
4. 8 students won National Merit Scholarships
5. Collaboration with the city, Shaker Schools Foundation and donors on projects

6. Engaged in courageous conversations, ie. with PTO, teachers
7. Negotiated 3 year contracts with bargaining units
 - used interest based bargaining
8. Advocated for changes in state testing
9. Completed 1st phase of education visioning process
 - surveys to be going out to community
10. Recruited top talent from across the nation for positions in teaching, staff and administration
 - many retirements in the past year
 - interview process was revamped
11. Seniors admitted to more than 233 colleges and universities

Parent and Community Engagement

1. Community Engagement Center will open this year
 - to be housed in Stephanie Tubbs Jones building
 - hiring a coordinator, will work in full partnership with PTO council, plan to hire by Dec. 2015
2. Tour Your Schools
 - will be every month October thru May
 - training planned for parent and student ambassadors
3. PTO Brown Bag Lunches
 - direct communication between school PTO presidents and Dr. Hutchings
 - limit to 10 per session

Lessons Learned in 2014-15

1. Effective communication is essential
2. Don't make assumptions
3. Transparency has its own implications
4. Organizational change requires courage
5. Discussion and collaboration are vital

Continued work for 2015-16

1. Foster a culture that every student can achieve at or above grade level
2. Continue to identify barriers that exist - practical, cultural, systemic...
3. Continue to evaluate our assessments.
 - Ensure that student assessments both inform and improve instruction
4. Technology plan - become a "Google district"
5. Middle School initiatives - Goal: To make the MS our teaching and learning lab
6. Maintain momentum of collaboration with all stakeholders

Questions for Dr. Hutchings:

What is a "Google district"?

The school's system server would be through Google and function on a "cloud". E-mail accounts would be thru G-mail. Students would also be given G-mail accounts. Staff/students would work in Google docs, i.e.. course syllabuses, other documents...

There would be many other additional supports and resources students and teachers would have access to.

Goal is NOT to eliminate textbooks.

Explain more about the Innovative Center for Personalized Learning?

Previously students not successful at Shaker High School were sent to a program at Richmond Heights (given bus passes, tuition). These students were brought back into Shaker to this center which opened in the Stephanie Tubbs Jones building. It is a smaller community for these students, employs blended learning with on-line courses and other resources (job skills training, psychologist, social worker, other).

Phase 1 was last school year (1st class of 14 students). Phase 2 will add on-line college courses. Phase 3 will add resources for teachers for on-line professional learning. Staff would use the space in the evenings. Max capacity is 50 students at a time and can currently service 100 students in 2 sessions, 9 am to noon and 1 to 4 pm. There is an agreement with the city to expand if needed.

Question asked about communication and other community initiatives:

- Dr. Hutchings meets with Earl Leiken, mayor of Shaker Heights, once a month.
- Shaker Heights Schools is working with real estate agents to help promote our schools and draw new people to our community.
- Hired Scott Stephens, Executive Director of Public Relations and Communications, in July 2015.

IV. SHTA Report - Matt Zucca

- Matt Zucca, VP for Shaker Heights Teachers Association (SHTA), gave brief overview. SHTA meetings are once a month. SHTA tries to work in collaboration with each school's PTO. This year 5 days of professional development PRIOR to school starting, helped the school opening run smoothly. Supports in place for new teachers to district. A mentor is assigned to every new teacher. Questions, feel free to contact him at zucca_m@shaker.org

V. Treasurer's Report - Beverly Saylor

- see attached Budget
Shaker Council PTO Budget for 2015-2016 reviewed. Motion to approve budget, motion seconded, budget approved.

Of special note re: Budget -

1. "Constant Contact" used by all schools for their on-line newsletters
2. Bank fees increased this year due to a factitious name change, required to bring all PTO's under one name
3. "Fidelity Bond" is our insurance
4. "Tax Return Preparation" is payment for the CPA used.

Note made that PTO Council finances recently audited successfully.

VI. President's Report - Candith McMillan/Missy Sherwin

- started with introductions of those present at the meeting
- Candith updated us on summer activities that took place:

“Honest Conversations” - Dr. Hutchings and building principals had an open “chat” with the community. There are plans to hold these “chats” again at the end of November and in the Spring of 2016.

Shaker hosted an educational summit in the HS upper cafeteria - discussion about what future education will look like

Convocation was held August 22nd. Dr. Hutchings opened the new school year and welcomed back ALL staff members.

Review of last PTO Council meeting - April 22nd, 2015 - Amanda Schindley, director of AVI Food Services gave a presentation. They are the food service provider for all Shaker schools. We were reminded that we can use AVI for any school program food needs.

VII. VP of Communications Report - Susan Vodrey

There are 4 areas of communication for PTO Council and Shaker schools:

1. DIRECTORY - this year the district-wide school directory will be accessible only on-line or as a smartphone app. Notices are sent out periodically with instructions and a link to enroll. It is simple to do, has a lot of cool features (searching, filtering, GPS directions) and new families can be incorporated thru-out the year. Thanks to Sue Swales and Irene Meyerhoefer for all their help with this.
2. NEWSLETTERS - all 8 schools use Constant Contact for their newsletter. Thank the volunteers who do this for each school, it is a lot of work! Please submit reports for the newsletter as PDF's. Community news is going to be taken out of these newsletters. These items were making the newsletters too long, so were put in as “links”. Few people are clicking on the links and they take a lot of extra work to put in. Events must be school-sponsored in order to be put in the newsletter. Other community events can be advertised on the “Shaker On-Line” calendar.
3. WEB PAGES - all school's PTOs have a web page. At a minimum budgets, meeting minutes and nomination slates (for 30 days prior to voting) should be posted there.
4. DISTRICT CALENDAR

VIII. VP of Financial Management Report - Elizabeth Roeder

- sent e-mails to all financial managements chairs with forms, reminders, etc... and asked if they would like to meet.

- Meeting with Sarah Divakarla, Roxanne Jaber and Van Aken District rep to come up with a community social that can be combined with a fundraiser - Beer Garden event Spring 2016?

IX. VP of Outreach Report - Carina Reimers

- Red Raider Day Sept. 12th, was a big success. Tickets sales/raffle went well.

- New Families: names of incoming families to the district are given to each school's outreach chair, those families are then called directly.

- Tour Your Schools is Oct. 12th

X. VP of Parent Education & Advocacy Report - Roxanne Jaber

- November 18th (tentative date) there will be a Family Health and Wellness program with a keynote address and then break-out sessions.

- meeting with Ouimet Smith, Director of Student Affairs, and brainstorming ideas for new programing.

- looking into coordinating on a service project with “HandsOn Northeast Ohio” on MLK Day.

XI. School PTO Reports - PTO Presidents

1. Boulevard School - Traci Carpenter/Erin Zelin

- they have a new principal, Neil Robinson, and 2 new front office secretaries, all is going well
- have 4 kindergarten classes this year, each with 17/18 students per class
- Back to School Bash was rained out, having a surprise mini-bash next month for students
- hosted International Family Night
- ran a used book sale
- Oct. 23rd is their pumpkin and bake sale

2. Fernway - Peggy O'Donnell/Tania Zucca

- back to school picnic held in the gym due to rain
- Fall Festival is in 2 weeks

3. Lomond - Katie Lownes/Karen Gillooly

- Fall fundraiser is a cookie dough sale
- back to school Blacktop Bash
- Father's Walk Your Child to School Event was a major success; heartwarming to see dad's walking their children to school
- annual Pumpkin Affair being held Oct. 17th

4. Mercer - Jennifer Bordeaux

- last minute increase from 3 to 4 kindergarten classes, lower student #'s in each class
- back to school Ice Cream Social a success
- Mercer Olympics (their big fundraiser) starts week of Oct. 5th

5. Onaway - Stacey Hren/Nicky Turco

- the school

adopted 2 charities Ronald McDonald House and Bellfaire

- AVI providing all allergen-free snacks for their events
- Spirit Walk fundraiser thru-out this week: pledges are collected for # of laps students walk around the track
- their Eco Club was launched, run by the High School environmental club: composting, education programs, other...
- hosted a community dinner and fed 600 people, most of the food from local farms and AVI
- will be launching a community book read on the topic of Hunger

6. Woodbury - Heather Weingart/Sue Buddenbaum

- Team building for 5th graders held at the beginning of the school year, an awesome event!
- the Book Fair started today
- Family Fun Night is October 23rd

7. Middle School - Maria Pelletier

- 1st PTO meeting of the year was well attended
- 2nd Annual Raider Rainbow Run was held on Friday 9/25; run by Meredith Camp and Tiffany Goldstein, over 350 students participated, students from all elementary schools were there, raised \$28,000!
- free seminar Twitter Talk will be held Oct. 8th
- co-sponsoring a talk with Your Teen Magazine
- started a local garden

- Thanksgiving Pot Luck to be held again this year
- 8. High School - Renee Boyle/Susan Vodrey
 - painted the teacher's lounge over the summer
 - hosted a meet-n-greet August 12th for James Reed, the new interim principal
 - hosted a summer greet and information session for 9th grade families new to Shaker Schools. Thanks to Lisa Vahey for helping to spearhead
 - hosted a welcome back lunch for teachers
 - helped with 9th grade student orientation on 8/21; helping with tours for new students coming in after the start of the school year
 - 1st PTO meeting on 8/31 was well attended
 - started a monthly teacher appreciation effort, small tokens of appreciation for the teachers each month
 - Parent-teacher conferences this year will have an option of evening hrs. available to those parents who work
 - planning a program with Junior Achievement on Jan. 22nd for 10th and 11th graders on career readiness

Meeting adjourned at 9 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria Hunter