



Dorothy Hamm Middle School
DHMS PTSA General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, February 15, 2022 7:00pm (Zoom)

MEETING MINUTES

I. Welcome and Introductions

- Kristen welcomed all attendees to the DHMS PTSA general membership meeting and opened the meeting with a fun request for participants to tell us what grade their child is in through the chat function.
- THANK YOU to Karen Freeman for hosting the DHMS PTSA on her virtual platform and all her assistance on managing the Zoom calls!
- Special welcome and THANK YOU to Ms. Emma Foley, who will be presenting tools for navigating student organization at tonight's meeting.

II. Required Actions

- At the February meeting Kristen reminded PTSA members to vote on the October General Membership Meeting minutes. Following that February meeting, the membership voted by electronic ballot to approve the October meeting minutes.

III. Principal's Report (Ellen Smith)

- Ellen mentioned a very successful Parent Chat on February 14, which had around 60 parent participants.
- Ellen introduced Ms. Emma Foley, a 6th grade social studies teacher, with expertise and a Master's degree in educational technology, to discuss the available tools for navigating student organization.
 - The Daily Planner/Agenda is a key tool in helping students get organized.
 - Students are prompted at the beginning of each class to write down their homework and put reminders in their agenda. Part of TA on Mondays is used to organize their agenda.
 - Ellen really values paper planner agenda; there is good evidence that the process of writing helps kids remember and process things. But in this time period, many kids may feel more comfortable with a digital format. There are some homework apps that might be useful, but thus far, Ellen hasn't seen one that works as well. The key is to help a student think through what approach works best for them as they try to get organized and keep track of work.
 - Canvas is another tool in figuring out what homework your student has.
 - All canvas webpages should be organized the same way with quick links to current work.
 - The "To Do" list and "Calendar" on the dashboard are useful tools to check to see what needs to be done or what is coming up and to help the student stay organized keep track of things.
 - Parents can set up an account as an "observer" status, to observe the student's account. Or they can access the account using the student's id and password.
 - Currently, the parent observer accounts aren't working. Ellen will send an email to the APS information services to check on that.
 - Canvas is used also in high school and college.
 - There is also a Canvas App where a family can keep track of the assignments.
 - StudentVue is useful tool for monitoring homework or projects that are graded.
 - Canvas will be more useful for monitoring homework; StudentVue only contains the homework that gets graded.
 - Can help checking on what assignments are missing.



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- Sometimes, when a student fails to turn in an assignment, it will be marked as missing but graded as 50%. This means that the assignment is missing but is intended not to penalize the student's behavior for failing to turn in the assignment.
- If a student submits a late assignment, the student needs to send a note to the teacher because teachers do not get a notification of when missing assignments get turned in late.
- Ellen reminded parents that course request forms are due for rising 7th and 8th graders by February 25th. The counseling team has made presentations to all the classes already.
 - Ellen encouraged parents to talk to their kids about the course selections. Parent signature is needed. Parents can reach out to grade-level counselor with any questions.
- Covid testing update
 - DHMS has a new testing company with a new testing date—Monday morning 7.30-9.30 am.
 - Ellen reminded parents that they will need to re-register their student to opt-in to the testing program because APS has contracted with a new company for the testing.
- Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences
 - Ellen noted that the conferences are coming up March 3 (afternoon) and March 4 (no school March 4).
 - DHMS will be sending around a sign-up genius for parents to sign up for 5-minute conferences with teachers. It will be a virtual “arena” style conferencing approach. There
 - Sign-up will be a first-come/first-served approach, as there are not likely to be enough slots for every student's parent to visit with a teacher. So, feel free to consider which teachers you most want to talk to.
 - Also, Ellen encourages students to join their parents in conferences.
- Spring Sports
 - Ellen mentioned that DHMS is starting to get ready for spring sports. Swim and Dive and Track are coming up; the interest meeting is on February 22.
 - If you are interested in participating, your student will need to have physical form on file with the school.
 - Winter sports are still going strong:
 - Girls' basketball team had a win over TJ today
 - Wrestling has a match against TJ on Thursday.
- End of the year planning
 - Ellen mentioned that there are conversations with the school Superintendent about the end-of-the-year celebration. They should know more about what that promotion will look like soon.
- Testing
 - Ms. Cerrud reported that the 8th grade will have a writing test (3/17-18). SOLs will be scheduled for the end of April and May.

IV. Record Prior Items

Kristen and Dena discussed how to approve the October 2021 General Membership Meeting Minutes. It needs to be verified that at least 10 voting members have approved the minutes, so Kristen reminded people to vote, using the link in the latest Phoenix newsletter.

V. President's Report (*Kristen Shattuck*)



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- Kristen drew attention to the fact that the APS school Superintendent has proposed significant changes to the Virtual Learning Program (VLP). Kristen encouraged anyone interested in check out the links in the Phoenix newsletter sent out on Monday.
- Kristen also mentioned the APS community engagement opportunity “Living Schoolyard Initiative.” For those interested in that initiative, check out the Phoenix Post.
- Kristen mentioned that the PTSA has been busy appreciating teachers and staff, including the upcoming (February 18) event to provide breakfast for the teachers.
- Kristen noted that there will be many opportunities for volunteering coming up. In particular, the PTSA has started planning the spring community event (similar to the outdoor party that was held in the fall). In addition, we will be putting together a celebration for the 8th grade promotion, for which there will be lots of opportunities to volunteer, particularly for 7th grade parents.
- Programs (*Christa Mansur*)
 - Christa reported that PTSA was able to fund 20 of the teacher grant requests, for a total of over \$12,000.
 - Carole Russo and Ms. Kennedy worked hard to change the science fair from in-person to virtual. DHMS had 9 finalists, who were entered in the regional science fair at Wakefield High School. THANK YOU to volunteers and participants.
- Membership report (*Susan Rao*)
 - Susan reported that DHMS PTSA currently has 530 members (as of end of January) and has taken in \$14,385 in membership dues.
 - In the past, there have been additional membership drives in the spring, but the last time to likely do one is in March, since most people joining after that are typically carried over into the next year.
 - Kristen mentioned that the PTSA is considering some additional opportunities to do another membership push before the end of the year, possibly at the spring community event.

VI. Treasurer’s Report (*Kami Ragsdale*)

- Monthly financial report
 - Kami reported that current income to date (as of January 31, 2022) is \$36,468. The ending cash balance as of 1/31/22 (less outstanding checks) is \$46,866.

VII. New Business

Ellen encouraged people to watch the APS videos for Black history month and DHMS broadcast team videos; they are excellent! Kristen mentioned that the links are in the latest Phoenix post.

VIII. Upcoming Dates

- **Monday, February 21** – NO SCHOOL for students (President’s Day)
- **Friday, March 4th** - NO SCHOOL (Conferences)
- **Thursday, March 10** – **Saturday, March 12** – Annie Jr. Musical
- **Tuesday, March 15th** - DHMS PTSA Meeting, 7:00pm
- **Wednesday, March 16th** - Early Release (11:54am Dismissal) ***B Day** (Gold Day)*
- **Friday, April 8th** - End of 3rd Quarter
- **Monday, April 11th-Friday, April 15th** - NO SCHOOL (Spring Break)



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- **Monday, April 18th - NO SCHOOL (Grade Preparation Day)**

The meeting adjourned after 45 minutes.