

Heights Elementary PTO Meeting General Meeting Minutes

Date/Time/Location: March 2, 2021 at 7:00 via ZOOM.

Meeting called to order: By PTO chair Manjula Riley at 7:01 p.m.

Present: Heights PTO board members (absent Anisha Mendonza, PTO Vice Chair), Dr. Dion, Mr. Crehan and approximately 39 participants.

1. Welcome and Introduction: By PTO chair Manjula Riley.

2. SMS DREAMS Club Presentation: By 7th & 8th grade students from the Sharon Middle School DREAMS club

Meeting started off with a wonderful presentation by the SMS DREAMS club. They presented on what the DREAMS club is about, their goals and their upcoming events for the rest of the school year. They encouraged any 5th grader/5th grade parent to reach out to them with any questions. Please see their slideshow for more information.

3. 5th grade Committee: by Melissa Trudeau and Melanie Young-Lee, Committee Chairs

Working on putting together a yearbook and slideshow for graduating 5th graders.

Working on a class gift for the 5th graders. Planning on a drive by graduation celebration for the 5th graders, date TBA.

This committee welcomes any 5th grade parent volunteers who would like to help and/or participate!

4. Book Fair: by Melissa Trudeau- Committee Chair

The Fall Book Fair was such a success that we are having a Spring Book Fair. The Book Fair started on Monday March 1, and will continue through March 19th. This Book Fair will be online only. Book order drive by pick up will be on April 13th.

5. PTO Updates: By PTO chair Manjula Riley

Upcoming event: Readathon will begin next week. Kids and teachers can register on Membership Toolkit and can donate and fundraise there too. The fundraising part is optional. The goal and hope is to get everyone to read, set a reading goal, and log their minutes. There will be fun prizes and special events.

Next Sharon Speaks will be March 16 by Dr Alice Susner on “How to enhance your child’s vision in an electronic world”. Past recordings of Sharon Speaks are on the Heights PTO website. We welcome anyone who wants to help this program or if anyone has any potential speakers/topics.

6. Spirit Committee: by Michelle Crugnale and Rebecca Corke, Committee Chairs

The Hearts for Heights event went well! The Spirit Committee decorated halls with hearts and inspirational wording. Had a great door decorating contest. There were so many creative ideas. Students got hearts to decorate and chose an educational theme. All students got gifts-ceramic hearts to decorate the way they want, these were generously donated.

Firefighter Martin was the special guest reader and did a read aloud for all the students. Just finished up Spirit Week, for both in person and remote students. This was a great event! Today we celebrated the 100th day of school. Students, teachers, staff celebrated this great milestone. There will be some more great spirit ideas coming up for Spring.

7. Teacher Appreciation Committee: Deb Freedman, Committee Chair

New Event: Heights Hedgehog Heroes. This is a teacher of the week event. Students from all grades will get to vote for the teacher of the week, each week will be a different grade level, one week will be specialists, and one week will be the ASD/TBL teachers.

Teacher of the week winners will get a special parking spot, a special sign for the classroom door, a gift card from the PTO, and a special feature in our newsletter.

Thank you to all families who participated in the surprise thank yous for the teachers. Teachers loved it. We might do it again another time.

Teacher appreciation week will be the first week of May. Deb will be sending info about this in April.

8. Box Tops Committee: by Manjula Riley

We continue to collect Box Tops. Drawing for prizes are happening monthly.

Can reach out to Yadelyn or Amy, abfishman@gmail with any questions.

9. Educational Programming: by Jen Ezer, Committee Co-Chair

Most programs for all grades have happened already. The second graders have one program that has not happened yet.

In January, the 4th graders had a virtual Discovery Museum Program on force and magnetism. This was well received by teachers and fit well into their curriculum.

Sheryl Faye was on February 23rd & 24th. 1st, 3rd, and 5th graders had this programming. Sheryl Faye dressed and acted as women from history and also had a Q&A session. For 1st grade, she was Helen Keller, for 3rd grade she was Abigail Adams, and for 5th grade, she was Sally Ride. There was lots of great feedback from teachers on this program, even though it was entirely virtual.

10. Diversity and Cultural Committee: By Manjula Riley, PTO Chair

We are looking for volunteers for this Committee. Each month has already been designated to celebrate certain cultures/peoples. We are currently just looking for people to put together google documents/slideshows with information on each culture for each month.

The Hijab Art Contest due date has been extended to March 15th.

11. Teacher updates

Mrs. Bratt, 1st grade teacher, talked about recess boxes that she put together for when students need to be inside for recess. She got individual plastic shoeboxes and filled them with fun things for kids to do (e.g. puzzles, mini etch a sketch, key chains to color, coloring books and markers). The kids love these boxes! Mrs. Bratt added Lego Kits, and also individual games that they can rotate through safely.

Mrs Carter, 3rd grade teacher, shared her recent Social Emotional Learning (SEL) work. Mrs Carter shared her pathways unit from last month on self management and calming strategies. This month's lesson is on respect and being self aware. She has been able to adapt these lessons to work in the current model we are in.

Mrs. Cumming, 1st grade teacher, shared her recent Social Emotional Learning (SEL) work. She talked about her slideshow on self awareness for the 1st graders. 1st graders did not have a lot of background knowledge on this, so there was a lot of education around this topic. Did lots of activities to help them work on their self awareness.

12. Principal Update: By Dr. Lisa Dion

Dr. Dion expressed happiness and appreciation regarding positive things happening in the school and through the PTO. Especially during the time of COVID, all the work that all the teachers and staff are doing is much appreciated.

Dr Dion. is planning on getting a bulletin board inside the school entrance. This board will be dedicated to issues regarding SEL learning. March is all about kindness. Dr. Dion has also been trying to emphasize the importance of kindness throughout the school year.

Dr Dion told parents that we are entering a new chapter of the school year, with the return to full in person learning in April. There are still a lot of unknowns and questions. Dr. Dion is looking at challenges at new opportunities. She told parents she will be as honest as she possibly can. Parents who want their children to still be remote, have to attend the remote academy. They can no longer stay in their hybrid classroom. Wednesdays will no longer be a half day. Teachers and staff have been working so hard and doing such a great job.

Update on school traffic pattern. Traffic will be all the way to the back of the building. This is up coming and in the works. Construction will most probably happen over the summer. There are many considerations in this project. There are also plans to update the flooring of the playground-to make it a safer and softer flooring. These two projects are coming from the town's capital budget. This is not from the school budget.

Question from a parent about spacing once kids are back in April. Dr Dion is researching and looking at the safest way to do this. There are few options, kids might eat in the classroom or having grade by grade eat in the lunch room with safe distances. New guidelines from DESE, PE with masks still need to be 6 feet apart. In the classroom can be 3-6 feet apart. Without masks outside, 10 feet apart according to DESE. April 1st tents are coming back for outside the school.

Question about whether kids can play at recess. All COVID safe activities are being allowed for kids during recess.

Question about time frame for when in person schooling will start, or when we will know certain information.. There will be a survey sent to parents with children in remote academy, to let the school know if they want their child/children to come back in person. MCAS schedule is drafted, not finalized yet. MCAS has to be done on SPS Chromebook and no Ipads. MCAS ELA will start at the beginning of April. MATH and Science will be in May.

Meeting adjourned around 8:20 p.m.

Next meeting, April 8, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via zoom