

Homestead PTCO

General Member Meeting

May 2, 2019

In attendance: Holly Shrewsbury, Kyle Sorg, Chris Hardy, Daniele Dattilo, Evyan Maniatis, Jill Smith, Elizabeth Bruff, Kathleen Goldy, Whitney Vancil, Jane Cleveland, Erica Jennings, Kelly Lewis, Dora Newlin, Kelly Couch, Lezlie Roosa, Amy Anderson, Ashley Andrews, Sam Houston, Sarah Huston, Haley Evans, Jackie Sparks, Debbie Kramer, Jenn Halliday, Fran Baumgardner, Lara Girtin, Imelda Kellner, Mary Li, Tina Parks, Laura Hoffman, Blythe Leinwand, Holly Georgelos, Tiffany Phillips, Marcela Flores, Lyle Devries, Lara Girtin, Rachel Bandy, Jill Martini, Christianna Politis

Meeting called to order by Evyan Maniatis at 8:31am.

REVIEW OF CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE
NO SCHOOL	Friday, May 3
Staff Appreciation Week	Week of May 6th
Field Day	Friday, May 10th
Summer Food Drive	Week of May 13th
Yearbooks Delivered to Classrooms	Week of May 20th
Last Day of School for Kindergarten and 5th Grade	Thursday, May 23rd
Last Day of School for 1st through 4th	Friday, May 24th

Principal’s Report

Evyan thanked Mr. Sorg for his partnership with PTCO and his repeated willingness to take on challenges, do fun things, and innovate at Homestead. Arrowhead Elementary is lucky to have Mr. Sorg!

Mr. Sorg thanked everyone for helping to make Homestead successful. It’s been a great year marked by Rachel’s Challenge, positive messages on the marquee, the grocery card program and promotions, the Homestead Garden and much more. The former Run4Funds (now Homestead Dash) is also an example of working together to improve our programs – running the event ourselves rather than paying a 3rd party to do it for us. We are just getting started and the energy is contagious. Our students are excited to come to school to learn, and the PTCO is the energizer of the building. We are just “launching the rocket” and Chris Hardy will bring new rocket fuel to help continue these great strides. Mr. Hardy is very aligned with Mr. Sorg’s ideas and thoughts about moving Homestead forward, and Chris brings a ton of experience, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The Innovation Space will be the future of the Homestead building and his former school is in the exact same spot.

Incoming Principal, Chris Hardy, was formally introduced. He has been in the Cherry Creek School District for 21 years. He was previously at Sunrise Elementary for the past 12 years. He is excited to be at Homestead. His education career began as a teacher at Challenge School and then he became Assistant Principal. He then moved on to Dakota Valley as Assistant Principal. Parent partnership is key and his professional theme is “access and opportunity.”

His 2 children have gone through the Cherry Creek system: Fox Hollow, Liberty and Grandview. His wife is a teacher at Canyon Creek. Mr. Hardy was born in Boise, ID, but he has been in Colorado since 1977.

As part of the transition process, Mr. Sorg is starting to spend some days at Arrowhead Elementary and Mr. Hardy will be at Homestead to meet with teachers and talk with students. Their main objectives are to finish the year at their current schools with their current students and teachers. It will be an “ease out, ease in” approach.

Homestead is growing and we are on the precipice of full-day Kindergarten, which involves some shuffling and hiring at Homestead. We have 3 teachers in 1st grade and 3 teachers in 4th grade due to declining enrollment in those age groups – resulting in class sizes of 25-26 students in those grades. We met the enrollment goal to support 4 Kindergarten classrooms next year. One of the rooms will be in the 1st grade hall, then the other 3 classrooms will be in the Kindie wing (the former KEP classroom will transition to a full-day Kindergarten room and we will lose our KEP staff). The academic expectation of full-day Kindergarten is different than the KEP model. Rigor is different. The district needs to get the ball rolling with preparing for full day kindergarten. Usually, the first 2 days of Kindergarten are used for assessments, but we aren’t sure if that will be the case in the coming year. Kindergarten is not a required grade and the district needs to establish whether there are options for full or half day. There’s a meeting occurring tomorrow with principals to discuss what full-day Kindergarten will look like. Our Kindie teams will meet in June to start talking about class lists. Families will be informed of Kindergarten teacher placements in June/July.

Q: A board member asked what the magic number is to push Homestead to hire a 4th teacher in 4th grade. **A:** The new average is 26-27 kids per grade (3-5th), but the school hopes to have 22-23 in lower grades.

Q: A parent asked about the negative press associated with Sunrise Elementary and bullying. What has Mr. Hardy and the school administration learned to help reduce the rates of suicide and bullying? **A:** Mr. Hardy responded that Sunrise had been tried in the news. While a student did commit suicide, it wasn’t related to bullying. There were lots of other circumstances. The police report confirmed that and specified that a suicide had occurred, but reported it was not due to bullying at Sunrise. Suicide has so much to do with the adults closest to the children. The relationship with people closest to them is very important. 30 suicide risk assessments have been completed. Teachers need to have awareness and trusting relationship with the teacher. Many times, teachers don’t even know that kids are struggling. The level of training the district provides is exceptional and helps the school recognize at-risk students and help kids through it. Mental health support in the classroom has also increased. In terms of bullying, Mr. Hardy errs on the side of problem solving – teaching kids to resolve conflict – and distinguishing between being rude and being a bully.

Another parent in attendance felt that the problem (suicide; bullying) is not entirely with the child’s family – it is also community. Our community can help support everyone and programs like Rachel’s

Challenge are an example. **Q:** Does Mr. Hardy feel like he will continue programs like this? **A:** The school and community will continue to partner together to make kids strong and more resilient.

Another parent thanked the volunteers who brought the Rachel's Challenge program to Homestead last year. The program paired the community with the school administration. Mr. Sorg referenced Sungate Kids and how Homestead will be a pilot school for this program that provides education and communication around child abuse. The parent information night is tonight, May 2, 2019. Mr. Hardy shared that Sungate Kids has been at Sunrise Elementary and the program has proven to be a great resource that's helped so many kids and saved the life of one of their students because she was empowered to discuss her situation.

A parent discussed the importance of emotional intelligence (EQ) being as important as school smarts. **Q:** This parent asked what the district's stance is on using educational tools through Facebook. And is the district open to using outside tools and resources to teach kids how to navigate and learn about technology and social media? **A:** Facebook and Twitter are not supported at the elementary school level, but Google classroom is prevalent across the district.

The Second Step program, an EQ curriculum, is going to be a part of all schools. It teaches empathy, respect, and reading emotions. The district decided it was comfortable outsourcing these types of specialties to companies at the elementary level. Parents and kids need to recognize that every time they use the Internet, they need to learn to stay focused and use the tool appropriately. At this age, we want students to make some little mistakes while here in a safe environment. We want them to search and learn as well.

A board member reminded the attendees of the Parent Information Network (PIN) and their helpful and topical live meetings as well as podcasts.

Mr. Sorg discussed the day that kids were off because of the threat to Metro area schools just prior to the anniversary of Columbine. We need to be honest and give facts -- not lots of details, but a general overview of the situation. Communication is very important. We want kids to feel safe and safe to ask questions.

There was some discussion around language used for lock-downs and secure perimeter drills and the need for alignment with the terminology used to help kids feel safe.

Q: After previous events, what has been communicated to parents/community about suicide? **A:** Mr. Hardy said that if he had to do it over again, he'd do it differently as they didn't say clearly what happened. Dr. Siegfried decided this past spring to change the way these communications are handled. Many district mental health personnel were on campus to help. Horizon Middle School was involved in the anniversary and there were a lot of class meetings and work with mental health support. The district is in constant search and discussion about support resources and practices for use at school, in between school and home, and at home.

OFFICER REPORTS

Presidents' Report

Evyan asked the board to approve the meeting minutes from the last general member meeting in March. Daniele Dattilo gave the motion to approve and Kelly Lewis and Jill Smith seconded the motion.

Thank you to all PTCO board members, chairpersons and volunteers. We couldn't have done it without you!

Homestead conducts only 2 fundraisers each year and the new sponsorship program will help supplement costs. Evyan shared that as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, the Homestead PTCO is required to maintain and abide by formal Bylaws. Brenda Mahedy, along with a sub-committee of board members, recently updated the Bylaws of Homestead PTCO to include a new sponsorship program. The revisions specify how all board members can support the new sponsorship program by identifying new sponsors, but that the Vice Presidents manage the overall program. The board just approved the new Bylaws and we also need general membership approval before they can be enacted. An incoming board member at this meeting asked for an overview of the main changes that were made.

Vice Presidents' Report

Kelly Lewis informed the group that a new sponsorship packet was being sent to parents to explain the new program and how the new sponsors will be promoted at all Homestead PTCO events. Additionally, the new sponsorship program may help to offset any shortages related to shrinking enrollment and reduced participation in our two annual fundraisers.

Treasurers' Report

Debbie Kramer provided a year-end financial update and confirmed that we are in the black and all looks good.

Community Outreach Report

Jackie Sparks informed the group that the final Food Drive for the school year begins May 13th and will support kids over the summer break. This program helps 10 Homestead families plus families at Ponderosa Elementary. Jackie also reported that the Clothes 4 Kids bin in the school foyer has been overflowing. The committee is taking donations to the charity almost every week. We collected 76 turkeys during the annual Turkey Drive in November 2018, and we supported 40 families during Winter Wishes in December.

Events Report

Tina shared that it's nice to have a liaison between the PTCO board and the various event committees. Emails have been set up for each event and there's new documentation outlining each event so incoming chairpersons will be able to quickly learn what they need to know about their assigned event. We are also improving communications with the Homestead community, including The Bridge newsletter for the nearby Sturbridge community. This new Events Coordinator offers a single point of contact for each chair to go to with questions, etc.

Innovation Report

Jill Smith shared that the innovation space construction is still on schedule and will begin right after school gets out this month. Construction is scheduled to be complete in mid-to late-August. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony in the fall (we will invite Mr. Sorg to come back to be a part of) and then another Innovation Night in February 2020. This past year's Innovation Night was a great success and we want to build upon it next year.

Volunteer Coordinator Report

Elizabeth Bruff shared a copy of the Volunteer Slate. The remaining open positions are: Library Coordinator and Music Coordinator. Binders are being replaced by a Google Drive account with email and document creation and storage. Hopefully everyone got the email to connect with your next year's chairperson to talk about things.

Motion to approve the 2019-2020 slate was given by Holly and seconded by Debbie. Kelly Kane will take over as volunteer coordinator next year.

Communications Report

Holly Shrewsbury runs the PTCO Facebook page and website and coordinates with Nick on the weekly HAWK newsletter. Holly provided an update on the main analytics: 191 Facebook followers, 91% women; and the PTCO website had 4,000 page-views. Lynn Price will be taking over next year.

Garden Report

Lezlie Roosa shared that the committee is trying to run Garden Club during recess. All classes in all grades will be doing a lesson in the garden between now and the end of year. There will be a Sign-up Genius for watering and maintaining the garden this summer.

Secretary

Brenda Mahedy could not attend the meeting, so Jill Smith provided the update on her behalf. A big thanks to Jackie Gavi for her work on EduKits, Courtney Malnati for Buzz Book and Daniele Dattilo for yearbook. Also to Sarah Esmas and Mary Li for their help with the sign out front and adding positive messages and words of wisdom.

Daniele shared the changes to the Bylaws that encompassed the new language in the sponsorship role and the responsibilities of the PTCO Board. The motion to approve the revisions was given by Rachel Bandy and seconded by Elizabeth Bruff. This updated version will be signed by Evyan and Daniele and then will be sent to Parents' Council.

Meeting adjourned at 10:03