

PTSO General Membership Meeting
September 14, 2015

Attendance:

Chris Kiser	Rhonda Mustafaa	Sida Lei
Deborah Kiser	Chrissy Park	Priti Patel
Kelly Wilson	Sandy Woods	Vanessa Mason
Shari Devoe	Angela Benson	Deborah Haywood
Liz Mullany	Kidada Bivins	Veronica Harsley-Dean
Elena Jordan	Luisa Powe	Tracy Frye
Stacie Kelly	Violet McNeivney	Julie Gorski
Beth Engelhardt	Shirley Norman-Taylor	Janice Myers
Mary-Jean Hale	Brian Green	Sarah Le
Principal Ragone	Suhana	Taylor Barry
Latonya Jones	Remy Frizzelle	
Camille Nichols	Mike Stein	
Jin-Feng Wang	Tricia Buddle	
Denise Krein	Barbara Cammarata	

President Janice Myers called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

May 2015 Minutes: Reviewed quickly the highlights from our last general meeting in May. Suhana motioned to approve the Minutes. Liz M. second the motion. Minutes were approved.

President Report Mrs. Myers: thanked everyone for attending the meeting and shared with the group that she wished all our meeting could be as well attended as this first meeting of the year.

She shared that PTSO meetings will alternate between morning and evening meetings to allow a wider group to attend.

Christina McClosky is updating and improving our webpage. The goal for the website is that it will ultimately become a “one stop shop” for everything you may need to know, purchase or have a question about in the near future.

Finally, Mrs. Myers made note that budgets cuts are in varying places throughout the 2015-2016 budget. An observation was made that membership being down, a decline in volunteerism and donations slowing shows us that it is time to focus on possible fundraising ideas for the PTSO.

In closing the President shared a theme she would like to see gain momentum this school year is: “One Team One Fight” to foster a closer partnership with the staff, student leadership and the PTSO to accomplish shared goals which is key to success on many levels.

Student Reps: Sarah Lei and Taylor Barry were introduced as student leadership representatives that will attend PTSO meetings. Again, an effort to strengthen partnership/communication within the school. They shared some upcoming events including Homing Week beginning October 12-16.

Academic Boosters: Suhana Rei, the chairperson, was excited to bring middle school activities back to the high school. Some of these activities were neglected during the transition of the Secondary school becoming two separate entities. These activities include Science Olympiad and Odyssey of the Mind. Their goal is to eliminate the confusion over what clubs are available and the insecurities around joining those clubs. Their webpage once up and fully functional would ultimately have a very user friendly guide for every club, where to go and who to contact.

ANGP: This year is being referenced as the "Big Experiment". The group is keeping it fun but committed to a flat \$50 total fee for admission to the 2016 ANGP. The intention is there will be no increase in price, as the event gets closer. There is hope that any student that wants to go will be able to go due to the new pricing.

3 chair positions are still open.

- Publicity and Advertising
- Men's Warehouse POC
- Lead Security Volunteer

If anyone is interested or knows of someone that would be interested they are asked to contact Elena or Brigid Williams.

ANGP urges everyone to support all fundraising efforts this year as they promise to keep the cost of admission at an all time low. Some of their fundraisers include but are not limited to: grad seat raffles, flocking with flamingos and now stallions. Lawn signs for seniors and dining for dollars.

Vice President Report, Julie Gorski: Barnes and Noble is being considered for a fundraiser sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Store says we could have an open mike/talent show, which draws families in, and we would get % of all our purchases go back to the school. Out of town supporters will be given a code so SOCO gets credit for those purchases as well. We are currently looking for an individual to chair this event.

2nd Vice President Report, Chrissy Park: stated that involvement with your child's school makes a difference and it is her hope that we not continue to see the same few faces doing everything. She said that the Giant A+ rewards program was getting underway. She asked everyone to make sure their Giant card was linked to South County so we can collect those rewards. She also mentioned that Amazon was an under utilized reward system but the benefits are worth taking a few minutes to link personal accounts to the high school. Finally, she thanked the volunteer chairs, specifically Kim McGoff, that led the back to school breakfast efforts for the staff.

Treasurers Report, Kidada Bivins: Proposed the 2015-2016 budget to the general members for approval.

Highlights include:

- Academic Boosters program enrichment contribution \$1,500
- Minority Student/Parent Achievement Committee-program enrichment contribution \$2,500
- Scholarships decrease from \$4k to \$2K
- Directory Expense Increase from \$700 to \$1,000 due to digital upgrade
- Technology w/o a budget \$due to 17K in last two years

Shari DeVoe made a motion to approve the budget. Elena second the motion. The 2015-2016 budget was approved with no objections or abstaining.

Membership Update: We currently have 380 members. 98 are students, 61 are SOCO staff members. There are @ 180-190 staff members at SOCO. Mr. Ragone was going to make raising the percentage of staff becoming members his “personal mission”. It was also asked if the PTSO Membership form could be sent home with interims. That question was going to be checked on and Mr. Ragone would follow up as needed.

Principal Report, Mr. Ragone: His vision or theme to carry through this year “For every student to reach his or her potential.” He continued by saying “we can’t get kids to realize their own potential if they are not comfortable in or about school.”

Wants to improve moral and spread positive tone by asking students in their homeroom classes to create a portrait of a graduate. Teachers did not collect these “portraits” however they will be a continual topic of conversation. A part of this exchange was for each student to also create a SMARTER goal. Teachers, counselors and even administration will talk about these goals with the students as the year progresses.

The back to school documentation process was different this school year and seemed to attribute to a smoother running Stampede.

Maps were suggested as a helpful tool for the next Stampede.

The LCAC will begin the tutoring program at the Lorton Library on M,W,F. Kate Evans is the teacher responsible for this great program getting off the ground.

Other ideas Mr. Ragone is considering for this school year:

- Lower grade/upper grade mentorship program

**9th or 10th grader with a junior or senior.

- Identify Master Teachers and utilize their success and practices to help other teachers achieve to the next level.
- Possible club day
** to be held during lunch shifts so students can see and hear about all the clubs that are offered at SOCO. This is done for the rising 9th graders the winter before they arrive at SOCO. A need is felt to do this again so every student may know all the options available to him or her.
- Professional day
** local professionals visit to share stories of the work force, their experiences and what they feel helped them become successful.

Finally, Mr. Ragone said he was going to rethink and address with the staff the ways in which we assist with academic advising. Students stretching themselves in one AP or honors class may be a push in the right direction. This is a larger conversation that would be continued, as parents must be included in this effort.

New Business- Need a PTSO volunteer to take on the Teacher of the Year Award nomination process. This is the first year for this program and would need to be moved on quickly for our nominations to be considered at the county and state levels.

Minority Achievement Committee (MAC): Veronica stated their missions to identify and bridge the minority achievement gap. The group has big ideas and they continue to evolve. They stress the need for volunteers to make things happen with an emphasis on a good cross section of people. Diversity in leadership and volunteers will be important to their success. The MAC differs from the MSPAC as it is a club, with a teacher sponsor and falls under the Administrator, Jeremiah Caven. Veronica is also the committee chair for the MSAPAC.

Announcements: The next PTSO meeting will be the Principal's Coffee on Tuesday, October 6th at 9:00 am.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:10.