Ilchester Elementary PTA

Minutes September 12, 2017

**In attendance:** Krista Barron, Beth Benoit, Regina Brown, Marissa Carothers, Dr. Mariah Carr, Elizabeth DeGiulio, Kelley Flesher, Colleen Howland, Carrie Jenkins, Frances Keenan, Amy LoPresti, Amy McCarthy, Ashlei Pinkham, Danielle Rao, Jeanene Reeves, Lisa Richer, Tonya Sigalas, Karen Steele, Heather Tom, Sunny Zhao, and Ginny Zimmerman.

**Call to Order:** PTA President Marissa Carothers called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Marissa welcomed everyone and said she hopes everyone had a wonderful summer. She is looking forward to having a blast and making this a fabulous year. Each person in attendance introduced herself.

**Principal’s Report**: Dr. Carr reported on behalf of Dr. Smith that IES has had a great start to the school year. It’s great for Dr. Smith and Dr. Carr to have a reflective lens, and to see familiar faces among students and staff. Dr. Carr thanked everyone for attending. Additional items that Dr. Smith wanted to share included:

* Chat and Chew opportunities—Dr. Smith and Dr. Carr have scheduled these get-togethers, which are open to the entire Ilchester community. They plan to hold one per quarter on October 25 at 8:15 AM, December 12 at 6:00 PM (immediately preceding the PTA meeting), February 7 at 8:15 AM, and April 17 at 6:00 PM.
* Appointment-scheduling reminder for parents—Please be mindful when scheduling appointments for children so that they can attend the bulk of their instructional day.
* Cheetah Chatter—The first school newsletter is scheduled to come out on September 22.
* Math classes—Teachers are working with students and forming Math classes. Letters indicating each student’s Math teacher will go home this Friday, and Math classes will start by Sept. 18.
* PARCC testing Reports—They are being sent home this Friday.
* Thank you to everyone for your patience with dismissal during the first week of school.

**PTA Executive Board Members’ Reports**

**Treasurer’s Report:** Amy LoPresti indicated that there is not a new treasurer’s report for this past month because there has been nothing paid out since the last meeting. Amy presented the proposed budget developed by the Budget Committee at the PTA meeting in August. Amy has not received any comments about the budget proposal since that meeting. There are two weeks to send any last-minute comments prior to Back-to-School Bingo [update: this extended to three weeks, since Back-to-School Bingo was rescheduled to October 6].

If anyone has spent money on behalf of the PTA, definitely fill out the reimbursement form and put it in the Treasurer’s mailbox, and Amy will process the reimbursement as soon as she can.

Amy will meet with our auditor soon to work on the audit.

**President’s Report:** Marissa reported the following items:

* Thank you very much to Carol Scott, Amy McCarthy, and all those involved in the back-to-school luncheon for IES staff. The luncheon tied in nicely with Dr. Smith’s theme of Refine, Refocus, Relationships, and was very much appreciated by staff members.
* Thank you to Ashlei Pinkham for the new makeover of the PTA newsletter. We are hoping to arrange with the school to have the newsletter embedded in an email rather than a pdf link, so we’ll continue to work out kinks like that.
* A reminder that every committee chair must complete the two online courses for volunteers in the school. They can be found on the Parent Involvement page of the HCPSS website.
* All committee chairs must also become a member of the PTA.
* A reminder to committee chairs that having transition documents is helpful, especially if a committee chair is moving on to middle school at the end of the school year. Transition info. can be very helpful to those who volunteer to fill roles. Ashlei commented that she has a one-page form she created last year that she can send to Marissa that might help committee chairs to summarize what they do. Amy L. also noted it can be helpful for a volunteer’s planning to know what months can be especially busy for certain roles.
* Vacancies and volunteer opportunities—We are still looking for a First Vice-President. Marissa will work with Jill in the front office to send an email blast. Also, Back-to-School Nights are coming up on the 18th and 19th, so volunteers would be appreciated to be at PTA tables. For Bingo night, committee chair Shannon Kraft would appreciate volunteer helpers. We would also like a Social Media chair, which would primarily involve managing our Facebook page. For Facebook, we have considered focusing on posting fliers about restaurant nights and posting reminders about meetings.
* Communications—we will try to send out PTA communications via email with Jill’s help twice per week. Because of staffing schedules in the front office, it would be helpful if we can streamline our communications.
* School Directory—Marissa will be talking to Andrea Ulrich about that on Wednesday, Sept. 13. Information for the school directory comes from the school system and what parents enter in their Family File, and is only shared if parents give permission.

**Teachers’ Representative Report:** Mrs. Jenkins sent out an email to staff asking for items that anyone would like shared.

She received lots of responses that were thank you’s for the back-to-school luncheon.

Also, Mrs. Maglocci is thinking about the spring musical and indicated there could be an increase in expenses this year due to a large cast, possible increase in sound costs, and to replace scenery that has been reused in the past. Mrs. Maglocci asked whether PTA might be able to help with fundraising or if she should plan additional fundraising. During the meeting, details were received from Mrs. Maglocci that she is interested in $600 worth of canvas for scenery and $200 toward costumes. During discussion, Amy L. indicated that could be a lot; and, while the current budget proposal includes an increase for the plays over last year, there might need to be a combination of our fund-raising and an increase in Mrs. Maglocci’s fund-raising. Some possible ways to support the spring musicals were considered, including using funds raised during planned fundraisers and having targeted fund-raisers, such as advertising that a restaurant night will benefit the spring musicals. Regina Brown indicated that the dates for restaurant nights have been set, but one could possibly be added or an existing one could be chosen to focus on the spring musicals. Also mentioned was that girls from one of the older girl scout troops have helped with one of the grade-level plays, so they might be able to help with scenery-building.

In addition, the paraeducators made a request that, if PTA members have materials to be sent home in Friday folders, they would greatly appreciate receiving them at least a day ahead.

**PTACHC Delegate’s Report**: PTACHC, the PTA Council of Howard County, is comprised of all the local PTA’s in Howard County. PTACHC delegates and PTA presidents are invited to attend the monthly meetings. The new president of PTACHC is Vicky Cutreono. Amy McCarthy reported that the most recent meeting was taken up approx. 75% by discussions about redistricting and how that is tied to APFO [Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance], which has to do the maximum number of students, or capacity, that should be at each school and dealing with related issues much sooner than Howard County is currently. Feel free to let Amy know if you are interested in more information about redistricting and APFO.

Amy also reported that the other part of the meeting was led by Dave Clark, internal auditor for the school system, along with members of his staff. They took many questions that ranged from whether helium balloons can be in schools, to moon bounces, to background checks. Regarding contracts to be signed, Clark and his staff are very welcoming to early engagement, and said it’s helpful if they are called before a PTA member has a contract in front of him/her. There was also discussion about portable classrooms and related safety/security parameters. About food trucks, the superintendent is still working on a decision. About movie nights, it’s $100 to purchase a license for one movie, as long as it’s not a Disney movie (Disney has their own licensing agreement). It is also possible to do a bundle that could get a PTA more movies.

About the PTACHC Coat Drive, we can participate between now and Oct. 25. Marissa indicated that she forwarded info. to Andrea Ulrich, will talk to Andrea on Sept. 13, and Andrea plans to start the drive at IES on Monday.

**Donation of snacks for students**—As a result of a message posted on Facebook from another local PTA, Amy asked whether our PTA could create a line item in the budget to provide funds for snacks for children who might not have them on a given day, especially for testing days. The PTA who does it has a line item under a category for at-risk children. During the meeting, the idea of asking paraeducators for their assistance and providing them with plastic containers of healthy snacks, paying attention to possible food allergies, was discussed, and Amy L. indicated that we could create a line item in our budget. Mrs. Jenkins indicated that she has seen some students who just happened to forget a snack some days. Regina Brown recommended $300 for a line item for snacks, and consensus was reached for Amy L. to create the line item in the budget.

Also asked during discussion was whether the school could use donations of clothing, and whether financial assistance for the cost of field trips was available to students. Dr. Carr indicated that the school is able to provide that assistance, and there has to be some sort of communication to find out if there’s a need.

**Cafeteria snacks**—Amy McCarthy asked whether there’s a way for parents to know what snacks are being served in the cafeteria. Dr. Carr will ask the cafeteria manager whether there is standard fare or if it’s gets changed up.

**Committee Reports**

Back-to-School Bingo—Shannon Kraft sent a report that plans are looking good for Bingo. We are partnering with a girl scout troop to collect donations to their Fall food drive. Collection receptacles will also be at school next week.

Box Tops— We are looking for someone to replace the previous coordinator for Box Tops and for Crayola recycling. Terri Jones has stepped aside due to family-related concerns. Marissa has a neighbor who she has put in touch with Terri. If, for some reason, it doesn’t work out with her neighbor, she’ll let us know.

Bulletin Board, Showcase, and Newsletter—Ashlei Pinkham reported that the PTA bulletin board for the month of September is up, and she will change it every month based upon the activities we are focusing on. The showcase will also feature PTA activities, and she is planning to focus on Read-a-thon in October. Feel free to send her items for the displays and the newsletter so she can advertise our programs. We have the showcase through December.

For the newsletter, the goal is to send it out once per month on the same day as the meeting, in part to have a reminder of the meeting. Ashlei also asked whether we could encourage parents to read the newsletter by offering a prize, such as a spirit gear item, for finding a specific word in the newsletter. Those who let Ashlei or someone know they found the word would have their names entered into a raffle to win the item. Response to the idea was favorable, since it’s something fun we can do.

Cultural Arts—Marissa—did you have a report from Kelly on this?

Spirit wear – We have an estimate that we had $480 in Spirit wear and Spirit gear from the Open House. On the September 19 Back-to-School Night, Laurie George will be there to sell Spirit wear, and we may have order forms at the Sept. 18 Back-to-School Night.

Restaurant night—Regina Brown reported that $350 was made from the most recent restaurant night. She is working with Cathleen Lopez. In their written report, they submitted the following:

The IES PTA Restaurant Nights are scheduled as follows:

* Monday, September 11, 2017 - Chipotle Mexican Grill (Dobbin Lane location)
* Tuesday, November 28, 2017 - Tino’s Italian Bistro
* Thursday, January 18, 2018 - Cheeburger Cheeburger
* Wednesday, March 21, 2018 - Uno Pizzeria & Grill
* Tuesday, May 15, 2018 - Chick-fil-A (Executive Park Drive location)

Email blasts and flyers will be sent out prior to each Restaurant Night as well as email reminders. Additionally, these dates will be included in the PTA newsletter. After each Restaurant Night, the Committee Chair will provide the PTA with an update of the proceeds received.

Regarding Facebook, Ginny Zimmerman suggested creating Facebook events to help promote restaurant nights.

Fundraisers—Heather Tom reported that the coupon book fundraiser is underway, and a flier and envelope for ordering will go home to each household in this week’s Friday folders. The coupon book costs $20.00, is created by Our Community Coupon Book, and features coupons entirely from local businesses.

For Read-a-thon, Heather will be meeting with Dr. Smith, Dr. Carr and Ms. Legambi to plan the implementation of this fund-raiser. It is online-based, and students will be asked to create their own page online to collect a one-time donation from friends and families. Read-a-thon recommends that we hold 10 reading sessions, and we can determine the length of the sessions. Mrs. Jenkins asked what will be expected of teachers, and Heather indicated that will be worked out during the meeting. Although Oct. 1 has been advertised as a start-date, we probably won’t meet that date exactly because of the scheduling recommended by Read-a-thon. Update—During the small-group meeting, the schedule was set for a Reader Take-home sheet, provided by Read-a-thon, to be sent in each student’s Friday folder on September 29. The Read-a-thon will actually begin on Monday, October 9 and continue to October 31 with Read-a-thon being incorporated into Halloween celebrations. Teachers will be asked to hold reading sessions in-school and/or ask students to read at home, in whatever combination teachers choose. Students will earn one free prize for creating their page, and can then earn additional prizes. They will be able to choose the prizes they from a selection online, and prizes will be given to them after the completion of the Read-a-thon. Ms. Legambi will work with a group of 5th graders on a video to promote Read-a-thon.

Parents-on-Campus—Plans are to repurpose moms and dads on campus into something else with consideration of scheduling and safety issues, and to help put less stress on parents to attend just one or two days offered. Scheduling issues include not wanting to have conflicts with testing days. Safety issues include having 100+ additional people coming in on each lunch shift. In finding other ways to hold these activities, an attempt may be made to do something that’s more frequent.

Information from the Interim Superintendent about Yearbooks—Marissa shared information that, for PTA’s involved in having yearbooks at their schools, the parent volunteer working on yearbooks will be granted access once they sign a nondisclosure agreement. The principal will be the one who signs the contract with the yearbook vendor.

**Adjournment:** Marissa Carothers adjourned the meeting as of 8:13 PM.

**Next meeting:** The next monthly meeting of the IES PTA will be held on Tuesday, October 10 beginning at 7:00 PM in the school’s media center. A general membership meeting to approve the budget will be held prior to Back-to-School Bingo on Friday, October 6 in the school’s cafeteria. Bingo will begin at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Tom

secretary