

The Harding Middle School PTSA General Meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm September 22, 2009 in the Harding Middle School LRC.

Those in attendance: Martha Neff, Danielle Hammond, Amy Chodzin, Mary Grauel, Laura Sangree, Susan Love, Dawn Stanaitis, Lisa Mullen Cimino, Dawn Bilski, Lynn Foran, Tara Kerivan, Mona Ewing Hatfield, Dawn Kradich, and Principal Keith Ahearn

Welcome – members in attendance briefly introduced themselves.

Pledge of Allegiance

Principal's Report Mr. Ahearn reported that Harding Middle School has been designated as an "Excellent" school according to the 2008-2009 State of Ohio School Report Card. We were elevated from a previous rating of "Effective" by our students who showed higher than expected growth for two consecutive years on the OATs. Mr. Ahearn attributed this Excellent rating to the students' hard work, our dedicated and highly effective teachers and the support of the parents.

In response to the warnings of health officials of the dangers of the spread of the H1N1 virus this year, the students are being instructed in, and encouraged to use, proper hand washing procedures and hand sanitizing solution dispensers will be installed in the cafeteria. The cleaning procedures used by the school janitorial staff will not be altered as they are sufficient, as always.

The Club Fair for students was held last Thursday after school. Students were encouraged to stop by and talk with representatives from each club to learn more about extracurricular activities available to them. There are 23 different clubs this year. Mr. Ahearn asked parents to talk with their child about what they learned at the club fair and to encourage them to participate.

The anti-bullying program that began last year at Harding will continue this year and will be expanded to include professional development training for teachers to implement our own permanent anti-bullying program.

A new Positive Behavior program will begin at Harding this year. This program has been successful at Garfield Middle School. Teachers will have yellow tickets on hand to pass out to students who they see exhibiting good citizenship any time throughout the school. The students then write their names on the tickets they receive and turn them in to the office to be placed in a drawing for rewards.

Mr. Ahearn announced he will be maintaining the Harding School website this year and will be happy to post PTA forms, announcements etc. The website is accessed by going to www.lakewoodcityschools.org and clicking on Harding Middle School.

Students will not be permitted to wear Halloween Costumes to school on Friday October 30th.

President's Report Martha Mueller-Neff announced School Picture Day will be taking place October 2, 2009. Martha asks that any parents available to help with organizing students for pictures please come to the gym that day to lend a hand.

Martha is collecting Box Tops this year. The Box Tops are redeemed for \$.10 each. This is not a PTSA fundraiser as the money goes directly to the school. Box Tops are found on the packaging for many different food and household items. Simply cut the Box Top symbol off the package, save it and send batches of collected Box Tops to school with your child or turn them in at PTSA meetings or give them to Martha.

The next meeting of the Harding PTSA will take place Tuesday October 20, 2009 at 7pm in the Harding Middle School LRC.

Vice President's Report Susan Love reported the dates for this year's school dances are 10/30/09, 1/29/10 and 3/26/10 and the 8th grade dance will be held 6/4/10. Students who are PTSA members are admitted to the dances free of charge and non members pay a nominal fee of \$2.00 or \$3.00. Refreshments of pizza, pop, and water are sold during the dances. The school dances are not designed to be fundraisers for PTSA. Mr. Ahearn asked parents if they approved or disapproved of allowing students to wear Halloween Costumes to the October 30th dance. After casual discussion with members in attendance Susan decided students will not be encouraged to wear costumes to the dance and will instead create a theme for this dance in place of costumes...possibly a "wear orange and black" or other theme Halloween oriented but not involving costumes. Susan announced she will be forming an 8th grade dance committee soon to get started planning the event. She hopes to find a parent willing to take candid photos of the 8th grade students throughout the year to be included in a montage set to music to be shown at the dance and copies sold to 8th graders as a memento of their last year at Harding.

Treasurer's Report Lynn Foran presented the financial activity reports for July 2009 and August 2009. Laura Sangree moved to approve both reports as presented and Tara Kerivan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Next the proposed budget for the 2009-2010 school year was presented. Martha Neff brought up the subject of Liability Insurance for the Harding PTSA unit. The cost is \$70.00 per year and available through the Lakewood Board of Education. The policy would cover the Harding PTSA organization. The \$70.00 was added to the budget to purchase the insurance. Susan Love made a motion to approve the budget with the addition of the Liability Insurance and Tara Kerivan seconded the motion. Martha Neff asked all in attendance to vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Membership Chair Report Membership Chair, Susan Schmidt was absent and Lynn Foran read her report. We have 232 members to date. Dues have been paid to Ohio PTA for our membership so far. It was also reported that the Painless Project, a fundraiser associated with the membership drive, has raised \$912.00 so far.

Council Delegate Report Tara Kerivan attended the Lakewood Council of PTA's September meeting. At the meeting the Golden Apple Award was presented to Charles Geiger. Also, the Lakewood PTA presented a plaque awarded from National PTA for a 24% increase in membership. Highlights from the report from the Lakewood elementary principals: Full day kindergarten has been implemented in all Lakewood elementary schools and 95% of children enrolled in kindergarten in the district are full time students. DIBELS assessment has been ongoing at all elementary schools and all Lakewood 5th graders attended the Instruments on Parade program at the Civic Auditorium and those interested in joining band or orchestra will begin instruction later this month. Mr. Ahearn had covered all points from the Middle Schools report during his report earlier in the meeting. At the High School Dr. Wagner reported that Homecoming weekend would begin 9/25/09 and the district was researching implementing an online registration for parent teacher conferences. Mr. Ahearn then added that the program should be available to everyone soon. Tara reported that the PTA Council Board was looking for volunteers to chair the Reflections Art program and to serve on the Scholarship Committee. The Council will not be holding a fundraising event this year for the Scholarship fund.

Tara also attended the Community Forum meeting held 9/15/09 for all community members to discuss the future of our remaining school buildings. Attendees learned that the outcome of the previous meeting had led to a final decision to go forward with just two more elementary schools and that Roosevelt Elementary would remain open. Phase III would also include renovating the other half of Lakewood High School. It has not been decided if Lincoln Elementary or Grant Elementary will be permanently closed. This meeting was a discussion of factors in making this decision. The Bond Issue for Phase III will be on the ballot in 2010 with construction beginning June 2011 if the voters approve the issue.

Corresponding Secretary's Report Dawn Stanaitis did not have a report but did ask those in attendance if there were any events with the staff she should know about. Mr. Ahearn filled Dawn in on staff members who have been hospitalized or are expecting babies. Dawn will then send PTA's best wishes and gifts on our behalf. Lynn Foran brought up possibly sending a thank you gift to the firm who performs the audit of our financial records each year at no charge. Members offered suggestions for ways to recognize their effort and Dawn will take it under advisement.

New Business

Martha Neff will be reinstating the Mini Grant program for teachers to apply for money to purchase supplies, books etc. for special programs in their classroom. There is \$1000 included in the budget for this program this year. Volunteers are needed to sit on the Mini Grant Committee.

Martha Neff asked if the membership was interested in selling Spirit wear this year and if there was a volunteer to chair the project. Discussion followed as to when to hold the first sale and how much the items would cost. Martha Neff passed around some information from the Ranger Store at the high school and Mr. Ahearn filled us in on upcoming dates for football and volleyball games and the pep rally for both teams. Martha will contact the Ranger Store to determine how long the process is to obtain the ordered items and find someone to chair the project. Watch for information on the website or to come home with your student for the sale dates.

Martha Neff asked for volunteers to work with her to update our organization's existing Mission Statement and to create By-Laws. Amy Chodzin volunteered to help with this.

Susan Love brought up an idea to create a committee of 8th grade parents to work on a fund raising project to help families reduce their cost for the 8th grade trip to Washington DC. Mr. Ahearn added he felt this was very much needed and he has had experience with this type of project in the past. It was decided this would be a project outside the Harding PTSA.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.