

**James W. Alexander PTA  
General Meeting - Minutes  
Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 7:00 pm  
Killarney's Publick House, 1644 Whitehorse Mercerville Road**

**Call to Order and Establish Quorum:** Kristine D'Ambrosio called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance immediately followed. Kristine motioned to establish a quorum, seconded by Elaine Griffin, and approved.

**Approve January 2023 Minutes:** Valerie Zieniuk stated that the minutes from the January 2023 meeting are available for review at each table. Keri Carlton motioned to approve the January 2023 minutes, seconded by Kristine D'Ambrosio and approved.

**President's Report:** Kristine D'Ambrosio reported attending a recent meeting of Hamilton PTA Presidents, at which those present discussed progress on the food closet, the possibility of air conditioning in multipurpose rooms coming soon, and potentially having printed report cards for elementary school students. Kristine also shared that she, three other Board members (Keri Carlton, Michelle Grunbaum, and Valerie Zieniuk), and Mr. Bookholdt will attend the Mercer County Council PTA dinner on Thursday, February 23.

**Treasurer's Report:** Sophia Knapp reported \$15,532.00 in the main checking account, \$800.17 in the Games of Chance account, \$500.00 in petty cash, and \$5.00 in the savings account. She shared that our bank, Investors Bank, is transitioning to Citizens Bank. There have been issues with seeing February transactions online, which should resolve once it is March and a February statement is available. Sophia noted that they would hold off on purchases with the credit card for a day or two while we figure out the new credit card and its lack of a PIN. She asked Mrs. Burke for updates on what the teachers would like to do with the money left from declining the renewal of Brain Pop. Mrs. Burke stated that the teachers took a poll and preferred a subscription to Teachers Pay Teachers or an increased reimbursement amount from this PTA. Mrs. Burke noted that Mrs. Katz has quotes for the cost of Teachers Pay Teachers, and she would share those with the Board. Sophia shared that upcoming expenses for this PTA would include Tricky Tray and Assemblies and that the school would need to receive funds for Class Trips soon. Kristine D'Ambrosio stated that the Board could reevaluate the funds for Field Trips after Tricky Tray; Mr. Bookholdt replied that he was alright with receiving the budgeted \$2,000.00 now and revisiting this amount for the next school year.

**Correspondence & Box Tops:** Jessica Carabelli shared a recent thank you note from the third-grade teachers for making Valentine's Day extra special with Oreos for everyone. She reported current Box Tops earnings of \$222.90, and until Tuesday, February 28, any purchase of Pillsbury products earns two bonus Box Tops.

**Standing Rules Approval:** Valerie Zieniuk reported that this PTA received notice after our January meeting that NJPTA had rejected our Standing Rules. She noted that the rejected phrase existed in “Number 14: Officer Duties,” under the duties for First Vice President, Second Vice President, and Third Vice President, and stated that the phrases in question had been in this PTA’s Standing Rules since their original version in September. The current disallowed text says that each Vice President “Shall create special committees; elect/appoint the chairpersons of the special committees,” which directly conflicts with NJPTA Bylaws that govern this PTA. The revised phrasing would read, “Shall recommend the creation of special committees and recommend candidates for chairpersons of special committees.” Valerie called for a vote on the proposed revision, and those members in attendance approved these changes to this PTA’s Standing Rules with a majority voting in favor.

Hillary McWhorter addressed the meeting and noted that while working on the Nominating Committee, it had come to their attention that the President and Treasurer start and end their two-year terms simultaneously. She said that while having these two officers come off the Board is doable, it can make the transition harder for both the new President and Treasurer, who are responsible for managing this PTA’s finances and overall functionality. Hillary proposes to adjust the officers elected in even and odd years in this PTA’s Standing Rules. Sandy Gallucci noted that many PTA organizations in New Jersey have all their officers entering the Board and coming off the Board simultaneously. She stated that what this PTA proposes to do is unique but not illegal. Hillary then shared that part of the proposal to make these adjustments would involve electing a new Treasurer to replace Sophia Knapp for a two-year term instead of electing a Treasurer to serve the remaining year of Sophia’s two-year term. It would also include electing a Corresponding Secretary for a one-year term from the floor instead of a two-year term through a voting process at the April meeting. She noted that while this PTA cannot plan for people unable to complete their term, it can attempt to make things easier for the Board with this proposed change to the Standing Rules. The current phrase is under “Number 13: Elected Officers and Standards of Affiliation” and states that “If elections are staggered (some officers elected in one year and the other elected the next year): President, Vice President 1, Treasurer – even numbered years; Vice President 2, Vice President 3, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary – odd numbered years.” The proposed revised phrasing would read: “If elections are staggered (some officers elected in one year and the other elected the next year): President, Vice President 1, Corresponding Secretary – even numbered years; Vice President 2, Vice President 3, Recording Secretary, Treasurer – odd numbered years.” Christina Trank moved to make these changes from the floor, seconded by Dan Griffin; a majority of members in attendance approved these changes to this PTA’s Standing Rules.

**Room Representatives:** Kristine D’Ambrosio reported for Theresa Timian, as she could not attend. The Spring Parties will take place on Thursday, April 6. She also shared that Theresa procured Oreos for the recent Valentine’s Day class celebrations, and the students enjoyed having that extra treat.

**5th Grade Committee:** Sandy Gallucci reported that this committee met on Wednesday, February 8, and things are progressing. The t-shirt is complete, thanks to a vendor who did a favor for the committee and produced it on budget. Sandy shared that the general 5th Grade Committee and the Party Subcommittee will meet during March. They are working on having all committee members donate items to create a 5th-grade basket for the Tricky Tray. Sandy reminded all that the last fundraiser for the 5th Grade Committee is on Thursday, February 23, at Chickie & Pete's.

**Membership Update:** Elaine Griffin reported 207 members of this PTA, up two from the previous month. She states that she wishes to kick off another membership campaign, which would include sending a membership application out again and employing a targeted approach to contacting families and teachers/staff who are not members.

**Scholarship Committee:** Elaine Griffin reported that this year's scholarship application is available now at all area high schools, and interested parties can obtain it from their respective guidance offices. She stated that there would be two scholarships at \$250 each, and applicants could be moving to college, trade school, or the military. Applications are due on Saturday, April 15 – spread the word!

**Playground - Basketball Backboard:** Hillary McWhorter began her report with the history of basketball goals on the grounds of Alexander; a basketball goal consists of the net, hoop, backboard, and pole. She stated that four basketball goals are currently on the blacktop: two are yellow, and two are not. In April 2019, this PTA ordered two white backboards; one backboard is in place, and the other is not. It is important to note that neither of these white backboards was the one vandalized in June 2022. The white backboard not installed has been sitting at HTSD Facilities warehouse for the last three years, which Mr. Bookholdt has confirmed. Hillary stated that since this is a brand-new backboard, the plan is to submit a new work order and see if Facilities can install this backboard on the existing pole. Regarding the vandalized backboard, she stated that no one wants to put another glass unit up that could shatter. This PTA paid \$852.00 for two basketball goals in 2019; the current quote to do this kind of replacement is \$799.00 plus shipping. Hillary stated that the quote to replace just the backboard is \$499.00 plus \$200.00 in shipping fees. She hopes to utilize PTA funds to replace the vandalized backboard and to find a lower-priced hoop and net for said backboard by the end of the school year.

**Nominating Committee:** Jessica Castronova-Brooks reported that nomination forms would go out shortly with the new terms and years approved for this PTA's Standing Rules during this meeting. Keri Carlton created a paper form and an option to submit nominations electronically via Google Forms.

**Pretzel Sale:** Michelle Grunbaum reported that she ordered 370 pretzels for the recent sale and reported a profit of \$542 to this PTA. She noted that, for future sales, there needs to be a disclaimer about providing exact change and that anything beyond exact change would be a donation to this PTA. An idea came forward that if a student cannot

claim their pretzels due to absence, they can be placed in the Teachers' Lounge freezer until the student or parent can pick them up.

**Reflections – Show Your Voice:** Valerie Zieniuk and Jessica Carabelli reported that Reflections Celebration went well. Approximately 80 people were in attendance to celebrate this year's participants. There were 13 pieces on display, and all 13 students received a medal and certificate. Seven pieces were chosen as Awards of Excellence to move on to judging at the Mercer County Council PTA level, and those students received an additional certificate and trophy. Two of those seven pieces have received awards at the County level and have moved onto NJPTA State level judging. Those two pieces were from Miles Lake for his Photography entry in the Primary Division (grades PK – 2) and Alexa Sottong for her Visual Arts entry in the Intermediate Division (grades 3 – 5). We are so proud of all of our students and our award winners! Next year's theme is "I Hope Because..." and Jessica and Valerie report that they look forward to getting more involvement from the school community and welcome feedback to improve next year's program. Some suggestions included providing more examples of entries online and on flyers and information at Back to School Night in September.

**Let's Glow Crazy Dance Party:** Kristine D'Ambrosio reported that the event came under budget and that the committee ordered too much pizza. She said the kids were active and jumping around, but nothing crazy happened. Kristine thanked the committee, volunteers, and the nighttime janitor for making the event a success.

**Skate Night:** Kristine D'Ambrosio reported for Trish Patsaros, as she could not attend. There were over 200 participants that signed up to come, with over 100 that came out to skate. Everyone had a great time. Unfortunately, one minor injury occurred, with a student reportedly breaking their wrist during this event.

**Parents Night Out:** Kristine D'Ambrosio shared that the Board postponed the scheduled Parents Night Out due to the Hamilton St. Patrick's Day taking place earlier on the same day, Saturday, March 11. She stated she seeks volunteers to help plan and execute an event later this spring.

**Tricky Tray:** Christina Trank reported the committee has been bringing in donations and recommends that people reach out if they want to donate. She also said there is a solid committee to make this event happen, and they also need volunteers for that night, primarily to ensure that items and tickets do not walk. Christina noted the event does sell out, so interested persons should buy their admission soon. She also shared that the Purse Raffle is ongoing and that interested persons can take a book of tickets with them tonight to sell to family and friends.

**Spring Flower Sale:** Hillary McWhorter reported that she got pricing for Easter flowers from a few local vendors and is considering both an Easter Flower Sale and a Spring Flower Sale. She noted no delivery charge when using Timothy's as a vendor. Any interested volunteers should meet with her after the meeting to discuss the Easter Flower Sale details.

## **All Other Business:**

**Scholastic Book Fair:** Hillary McWhorter shared that she spoke with Mr. Bookholdt this evening, and the dates for the BOGO Scholastic Book Fair will ideally take place on Monday, May 22 through Wednesday, May 24, possibly adding Thursday, May 25. She noted that this would be the first Book Fair where Scholastic requires collecting sales tax on purchases.

**Field Trips:** Michelle Grunbaum proposed utilizing the current excess funds left in the Assemblies budget, totaling \$1,000.00, for increasing the amount given to the school for Class Trips from \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00. There was a vote for increasing the budget to provide the school with this money, and the majority voted in favor of the change in funding.

**Teacher's Report:** Mrs. Burke reported that she attended Skate Night with Mrs. Nami, and it was great to see the kids enjoying themselves. She stated that Read Across America Week begins on Monday, February 27, with an assembly, and there is a special project involving students donating a box of cereal. Information on the week's events will go home with students this week. The Spring Party will occur Thursday, April 6, and the Strings Concert on Tuesday, March 21. She reported that the Talent Show would need volunteers to help in the backstage areas during both the Dress Rehearsal on Tuesday, April 25, and the Show on Thursday, April 27; over 30 acts have signed up to audition during the week of March 6. Mrs. Burke reminded all that yearbooks are on sale. Mrs. Everett shared her gratitude for all this PTA does for the school.

**Principal's Report:** Mr. Bookholdt reported that the Kindergarten Tea would take place on Thursday, May 18, at 2:00 pm and will need PTA volunteers to help with refreshments and a PTA representative to speak during the event.

Kristine D'Ambrosio adjourned the meeting at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Zieniuk, Recording Secretary.