

**Santa Monica High School PTSA–General Meeting
Santa Monica High School Cafeteria**

Advocating for the health, education and welfare of all children

**PTSA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2010
5:30-7:00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Sherrie Berger, Maryam Bolorchi, Shirlene Comfortes, Lauri Crane, Marguerite Dunne, Kim Eyler, Rochelle Fanali, Karen Gardner, Pam Goodman, Lee Jones, Kristin Kanan, Rebecca Kennerly, Lynn Leavitt, Chris LeGagnoux, , Maurice Maxwell, Richard McKinnon, Debbie Mulvaney, Rose Nelson, Patricia Payró-Freeman, Consuelo Perez, Toni Reamer, Diane Reynolds, Stacy Sharf, Kimberly Shine, Elizabeth Gelfand Stearns, Lisette Toppel, Laurie Yehia, Winnie Wechsler

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. in the Samohi Cafeteria. President Debbie Mulvaney presiding.

1. WELCOME AND THANK YOU

- Welcome to all. Kristin Kanan was introduced as the new Grad Nite chair who is also responsible for email blasts.
- Approval of minutes: There was no approval of minutes.
- Introductions: There were no self-introductions.
- Back to School Night: Debbie Mulvaney reported that in spite of a few problems, things went okay. A lot of people showed up and Barnum Hall was packed. An amazing event thanks to Elizabeth Gelfand Stearns and others.

▪ **Samohi College Fair/Panel** - Debbie reported that schools love our College Fair, because they feel welcome and thanked Lynn Leavitt, Diane Reynolds and Elizabeth Gelfand Stearns. The night went very well, said Elizabeth, who added it couldn't have been done without the help of Maryam Bolorchi, Marguerite Dunne, Diane Reynolds and their amazing volunteers. A few alumni parents, such as Michael Chwe and Sandy Black, represented their alma mater.

▪ **Dinner Hosts:** Thanks to Lee Jones, Winnie Wechsler and Lisette Toppel for our delicious dinner.

2. REPORT FROM SAMOHI PTSA PRESIDENT DEBBIE MULVANEY:

Information from PTA Council

- Two calendars for the school district are being proposed: the first one is the traditional one, while the second would go from August 23 to June 8. The latter has several benefits, including the fact that the winter break would take place after the end of the first semester, and that our students would no longer be disadvantaged when taking AP tests, while they now

suffer from a deficit in instruction of 2-3 weeks. At this point, furlough days are not included, but a possibility that is currently up for discussion would be to have a winter/ski week around Presidents Day. Negotiations with the teachers union are in progress. The PTA Council is voting in support of the new calendar.

- Point Dume Marine Science Elementary School has applied to become a charter school. With that goal, they have to form a non-profit organization. A public hearing on charter status for Point Dume will take place at the November 4 Board of Education meeting in Malibu, and a decision to allow them to go forward will be made at the next Board meeting, December 2, also in Malibu. Should Point Dume be allowed to become a charter school, the District could collect up to 1% in rent. If accepted, they could begin to function as a charter in September 2011. In the event that our Board rejects their application, they have the option to appeal to the Los Angeles County and ultimately to the State Department of Education.
- Other issues discussed include: teachers' evaluation review, the Middle School initiative concerning the issue with boys' results (which is being folded into the strategic plan) and the installation of the new Board Members on December 7.
- Debbie announced The Taste of Santa Monica event, to take place on December 3, between 2 and 4 p.m. in the Samohi Cafeteria. RSVPs are required.
- Measures Y and YY don't provide a lot of comfort considering the latest budget cuts coming from the State, that would translate into 12.8 million dollars in cuts for SMMUSD. Y and YY would enable us to mitigate about 1/2 of that deficit but not all. Therefore it is essential that they should pass, and everyone is urged to give 2 hours to phone bank or participate in a precinct walk. The Superintendent is preparing a contingency plan, which includes the cuts previously planned before Save Our Schools. Among additional cuts being contemplated are the elimination of music at the Elementary level and reduction in cleaning, and many others cuts, including summer school. These cuts would also impact the new third college counselor, which we might lose. Rochelle Fanali took the floor to say that if we don't work on this, who will? We need to fight complacency, as this is a very difficult election, in a climate where lots of voters are doubtful and an active opposition has risen. It is not a given that these measures will pass, and there is no Plan B to get the funding elsewhere. Lisette Toppel asked what guarantees existed that the City would allocate the funds the way we want them to. The issue is that in order to get a guarantee that the funds will go to the schools, you need 2/3 of the votes, but only 50% +1 are required for an advisory measure. Debbie responded that the City Council has made public promises, with Lynn Leavitt adding that the City itself had put these measures on the ballot, and Rochelle stating that it is smart to trust this city, which has a track record of helping the schools while the very active PTSAs hold their feet to the fire. Debbie added that the increase in sales tax represents 50 cents for each 100 taxable dollars, or

about \$50 year for the average family. The basic necessities are exempt, as they are for the existing sales tax.

- Debbie talked to the Superintendent about the parking problem at Samohi, to see if students might be allowed to park at the Civic Center Public Parking on 4th Street at a discount. There is a proposal to offer a discounted rate for teachers and students on the top floor of that structure. As part of BB, when the North Lot is closed to construction, teachers will get spaces there, and some students may too. There are an estimated 100 spaces on the top floor.
- The City of Santa Monica offers grants for transportation to arts events; applications must be filed by November 22. Information is available online at <http://arts.smgov.net/programs/GrantPrograms.html> under Arts Transportation.

3. PARENT GROUP LEADERSHIP REPORT:

- **AAPSSSG Update:** Maurice Maxwell reported that they had their last meeting in September, with College Counselors and representatives from Division 1 colleges, JCs, and the tutoring system. Their next meeting will take place on November 15 where test scores for students of color will be discussed.
- **ELAC Update:** Consuelo Perez announced that they had a good turnout at their college information meeting, with about 80 parents and 20 students present. And on October 18, about 60 parents turned out to hear Dr. Pedroza talk about discipline at school. The attendees were also told about Y and YY and urged to vote.
- **Announcement:** Debbie announced the State of our Schools event, scheduled for October 25 at 6:30 p.m. in the Main Library. The district budget will be presented
- **Special Ed:** Lee Jones introduced herself and Hilda Hureña as the Samohi volunteers from PRN (Parent Resource Network), a group that is available to help parents of students with IEPs at all schools. Their contact info is: leejonesprn@yahoo.com and hhurenaprnsmmusd.org. Lee went on to talk about Jonathan Mooney, the author of Learning Outside the Lines, who spoke at Grant School. Now an award-winning author, he was a problem child, diagnosed as a “loser” who would end up in jail or worse. Because of his dyslexia, he learned to read at 12 years old. He became a soccer player and was accepted at Loyola Marymount College, but transferred to Brown University. He doesn't just speak of ADHD, the achievement gap, etc. but about differences in general. Hearing him talk was an amazing experience, and Lee thought he might be a wonderful person to have talk to students, especially here at Samohi. Lynn Leavitt suggested this might be a good book for the All-School Summer Reading, and the board agreed to relay the idea to the committee.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Report from Treasurer Kim Eyer:** Kim reported that as of 9/1/10, the Opening Balance was \$199,143.63; the total income for the month was \$122,827.84, while total expenditures totaled \$15,273.59. The ending balance on 9/30/10 was \$306,697.88. She noted that \$188,500 of the balance came from registration and was distributed to other organizations on 10/16. Kim moved to ratify bills paid by checks 6951 - 6965 for a total

of \$12,941.18; the motion was approved unanimously. She also moved to leave \$1500 in office copiers and transfer \$5000 from office copiers to Technology in the 2010-2011 budget, as the office copier lease was already fully paid. A motion to be recommended that change to the General Meeting was approved.

▪ **Reflections:** Chris LeGagnoux reminded everyone that this year's theme is "Together We Can". Flyers are in the College Center and in English and Art Department offices, etc. For more specific information and to look at previous winners, go to CAPTA.org and look for "Reflections" under Programs and Services.

▪ **Annual Giving:** - Rose Nelson reported that so far they have received \$74,574, from the email blast and registration, while the annual budget totals \$128,200. These donations came without mailings or calls. Annual Giving is still targeting mostly technology around the school, and Debbie explained that a technology inventory is in the works to make sure that there is at least one working computer in each classroom. Chemistry is done for instance, but there are holes. Lisette Toppel suggested getting quotes from teachers to promote the need.

▪ **Transportation/Bike It Day:** - Richard McKinnon said that the October 13 Bike It Day was a great success, with thousands of students coming to school on bus, by bike or on foot. The movement to transform the culture is spreading with support from Freshman Seminars and help from the City and the Police Department. Richard also and Rochelle Fanali also reported on the first Site Council of the year, where the focus is on lifting student achievement. They are looking for proposals and funding for the Single Site Plan for Student Achievement. Rochelle added that on November 9 at 4 p.m., a special meeting would be convened with a PowerPoint presentation by teachers and staff, probably in room T104 at Samohi. The presentation represents two years of work to analyze which factors contribute to the achievement gap. All are invited.

▪ **A Midsummer Night's Dream:** Patricia Payró-Freeman reported a change of date: the Samohi Theatre's production of Shakespeare's Comedy will open on December 2 and run through 11, with 6 performances.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

- Dori Bosetti of MarketAmerica.com: the URL shopsamohi.com is available, which could provide access to an online program that is free to non-profit organizations, partnering with 3000 retailers. The idea is to provide a school portal to redirect to the MarketAmerica shopping site. Going through the portal, prices are the same, but discounts and cash backs are available and a percentage of the sales go to the school. The retailers include travel services, Macy's, etc. Dori has a team of fundraising experts and will work with someone from the PTSA. Debbie's idea was to put a link on Samohi's home page. At this point, Debbie requested the board try it by going on nomadicshopper.com to see what it looks like. Whether or not to sign up for this will be discussed at next month's meeting, as would the logistics involved.

6. SPECIAL GUESTS

- Officer Stockwell and Officer Jaen of the Santa Monica Police Department Youth Service Division came to tell the Board about a wave of prescription drug abuse and sales, as well as to inform everyone about curfew rules in effect. Nationwide, there is an epidemic of prescription drug abuse. In the last 7 weeks, Samohi saw 5 arrests for controlled substances infractions. The Youth Division works to help young people make the right decision. In Santa Monica, there is a daytime curfew when school is in session in addition to a nighttime curfew, which starts at 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and at 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Tickets are given out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

State of Our Schools -Monday, October 25, 6:30 pm, Main Library, MLK Auditorium

Coffee with the Principal -Tuesday, October 26, 8:30 am, Roberts Art Gallery

ELECTION DAY – Tuesday, November 2 – Remember to Vote!

AAPSSSG Meeting - Monday, November 15, 7:00 pm, Cafeteria

ELAC Meeting - Monday, November 22, 6:30 pm, Cafeteria

November PTSA Meeting - Tuesday, November 9, 7:00 pm, Math Department Night

Veteran's Day - NO SCHOOL - Thursday, November 11 & Friday, November 12

Public School Week – Open House at Samohi – Thursday, November 18, 10:30am

Thanksgiving Holiday - NO SCHOOL – Thursday, November 25 & Friday, November 26

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Patricia Payró-Freeman
Co-Recording Secretary