

Forest Ridge PTA Meeting October 3, 2017

The meeting opened with approximately 25 parents, Dr. Varlack, Ms. Shanks, and teacher representative Mrs. Dixit.

Presidents Report – Our ice cream social was a huge success! We served 425 bowls of ice cream. There were probably more people there, because some were served popsicles and some parents didn't eat the ice cream. We also met a lot of new families at our Back to School nights.

New Business – The PE department asked us to talk about the **October 10th Walk to School Day**. Kids are encouraged to walk and will be given a "leaf" to put on a tree to show they walked. Car riders can park in the neighborhood. Bus riders will walk around the playground. There was a notice sent that you can drop your child off at the library with a permission slip, and we will all walk together to school. Before care children also walk the playground and get leaves.

October 26 – Family Fit Night- A company will come out to provide this evening to us.

Birthday cards – Instead of just the secretary signing the cards, we are going to pass the teacher cards around at our meetings. Everyone is encouraged to sign.

Future Meetings - Please let us know what you are interested in a speaker.... Cyber safety was discussed as well how to deal with the stress our children feel from school. Meara will check out the Family Institute to see if they have any resources.

Minutes from September were approved.

Treasurers Report - Sai was unable to make it, but Jen shared from her email. We have paid for the face painters for the Halloween dance. We also have paid for supplies and the school supply invoice.

Principal's Report - Dr. Varlack asked for our suggestions on how to improve the **afternoon car loop**. We have had 3 accidents in our parking lot so far this year where 3 staff members' parked cars have been hit. We've also had some near misses with several angry drivers. She is concerned with the parents who park, pick up their children, and then walk through our parking lot with young children. She is also concerned with the number of cars parked in the fire lanes. Staff members are to watch children, not to direct and control traffic.

We have reached out to the HC Police to help and hope to have an officer stop by at some point. A parent suggested that we try to get a parent who is an officer to volunteer. Another parent suggested we put speedbumps into the parking lot. We also should widen the sidewalk to give walkers more space. It gets very crowded on the

sidewalk at dismissal. Putting up more signs was another suggestion. Even including the words, "You will be ticketed." We could also put cones by the fire lanes. Dr. Varlack said that we would need to share this plan ahead of time with the parents.

Family file – 246 students have not updated their information for this school year. We have sent hard copies home. We need to be able to contact the parents in the event of an emergency. We can't force it, but field trips and report cards will be withheld from any student without an updated file. Please spread the word! - One parent suggested doing a classroom incentive for this.

Emergency Plans - We have 24 parents who signed up to help in the event of an emergency. This past week at the Admin. Meeting, the former principal of Columbine, was our guest speaker. He highlighted the importance of thinking through your emergency plans and being prepared. Mrs. Dixit addressed how we have practiced to make sure we know where all the children are located during our drills. She also mentioned making sure parent volunteers sign in, and realize that during a drill or emergency, the front office will be looking for you as well.

School Improvement Plan – Each school has this and it basically is a plan for how we will show growth. We have been working on this as a staff and will keep the parents informed.

PTA Delegate - Meara Hartzler was our delegate for October and she shared that they discussed bullying prevention. They also honored Manor Woods as the only HC school receiving a Blue Ribbon this year. They are looking for a name for the 42nd Elementary school. There is a Special Education Council that offers programs to support parents. A parent suggested we share this with our resource staff. Finally, she shared that there is a Community Advisory Committee that the Board of Education has created. It should include at least one representative from each school. We do not have anyone who goes to these meetings. Here is a link to find out more about them.
<http://www.hcpss.org/board/cac/>

Fundraising – Cookie dough packet is due on Friday. We are planning to do a cookbook in the spring and would love to have someone assist with this. Parents will put in their own recipes. Students will have a contest for the cover. We want everyone to be involved. Advertising from stores that our families own will be included. This will be done with a company online and will be available for a year. We would even like to do a taste test night with this! - Perhaps with our multi-cultural evening.

Holiday Bazaar – We are still looking for volunteers. We currently have 8 vendors and need more.

Membership – Encourage everyone to go online and join!

Afterschool activities – These are going quite well with a class offered each day. A question was posed about why we don't have more classes offered. Tangie reminded

us that most of the classes offered at the other schools were under “Howard County Parks and Recs.” Tangie is the only one setting up the classes, reserving the rooms, and making sure the volunteers show up. She would love someone to help her with this job.

25th Anniversary – Committee has not officially met. The teachers have a committee that has met. We will be putting more information out for others to join. We know there are alumni parents who are interested.

Restaurant Night – Lots of families made it to Red Hot and Blue. We are still looking for other venues to do this again. Suggestions of Jailbreak, Qdoba, and Rams Head were given. The November night had to be changed due to the Book Fair. Chick-fil-A is used for fourth and fifth grade fundraising only to help offset the high costs of their field trips. Someone suggested that we put a note on the flyer to say, “If you can’t make it, feel free to send a donation.” Jen reminded us that we have to be careful with how we fundraise. We are only allowed 3 events a year to fundraise, and we are doing the cookie dough, cookbooks, and spring auction. She is not sure if we can ask for donations on the flyers.

Skate Night - This Friday night! Proceeds go back to FRES PTA.

Directory – We can only include families who have filled out the family file. Since we are still 236 families short, we will wait a little longer before we print these. Remember that the only way you get a directory, is if you join the PTA.

Spiritwear has been put on hold. Eddy Eagle is getting a facelift. Ms. Murray has created a new image, but we are working with our spiritwear company to help us make the final Eddy. Tangie asked for the picture to be sent in a high resolution file so that we can use it on our website and other places.

Staff Appreciation – We just had a para educator breakfast! - These women are our un-sung heroes. We will provide lunch for the staff on October 18th. If you signed up for Staff Appreciation, you will get the Sign-up Genius sent to you.

Summer Activities – 23 children participated and they got a prize. Three were sent in without a name.

Movie Night – October 27 – *Lego Batman*, 7PM. We will have 3 other movie nights. We are hoping to get the kids to pick the movie during Technology class. There are concessions and the whole family can come. This movie is free! We charge very minimal for the movies in order to just get the money to cover the license cost. It was suggested that maybe we coordinate with our fifth grade GS Bronze Award to help with donations for Hurricane relief.

Halloween Dance – We do have a committee who will be meeting tomorrow, Wednesday night, to work on the dance, all are invited! The dance will be on October

28, from 7 – 9 PM. We will have a face painter, dance with cool lights (thanks to Keith Gifford), and a haunted hallway. The cost will be \$4. We can set up on Friday night. We need to make sure the younger kids know that this is for everyone! Some kindergarten families were afraid to come last year. The event is for all FRES families, but no strollers.

Holiday Shop – This is the shop where the children get to pick out presents for their families. It was brought up that last year we did not have enough volunteers. It was suggested that we get the word out early on the dates, so working parents can arrange to take off to help. Some other parents suggested just keeping it during the evening hours.

Yearbook – No word on vender yet.

Box Tops Contest – This will be extended to October 23. We can get the money in December if we send it in by Oct. 31.

Dad's Club – Ed is in touch with the Wizards. It will be on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.

Green Committee – Hoping to do a Green Fest with Hammond High again, but we will need more support and advertisement. Is it possible for FRES to save paper by sending out announcements to youngest and only students?

5th Grade Committee – up to 20 members. Jen Gifford, fourth grade parent, is going to shadow on this so that they will know what to do next year.

Gingerbread Night – This is a night for kindergarten families. Kristina, Peggy, Tangie, and Latoya will be working with the kindergarten teachers to confirm a date.

Parents were concerned that the Forerunner would not be going out in emails each week. Perhaps we should set up a ping on FaceBook, but only members of the PTA will get it. We are hoping the school will still send a link to the Forerunner and to the PTA.

