**Independence Middle School**

**PTO General Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, September 22, 2016 – Independence Middle School**

The Independence Middle School General PTO Membership met on Thursday, September 22, 2016.  In attendance were board members Bari Levitt, Michelle Walgreen, Angie Fischer, Anne Rutter, Abir Abdelmoaty, Karen Preisendorf, Jennifer Van Kirk, Tracey Murry, and Kathryn Koerner.

**Call to Order -** Bari Levitt called the meeting to order at 9:50 a.m.

**Minutes** –Jen Van Kirk made a motion to approve the minutes from May 19, 2016. Heidi Rizzo seconded the motion.

**Principal's Report -** Kathryn Koerner

* Mrs. Koerner recognized the PTO for their contributions. She encouraged all parents to volunteer. You can volunteer from home if you can’t come in during school hours.
* Mrs. Koerner listed the ways that PTO has supported IMS. PTO dollars were spent on murals that make our school more desirable. Our gym has been updated with the help of PTO and JTAA. PTO supported school technology by purchasing a laptop cart. PTO supports behavior efforts (spirit sticks, SOAR celebrations, pep rallies, honor roll breakfasts). Teachers also make request for their specific needs and the PTO considers each request.
* The superintendent’s strategic plan is available online. His focus includes attendance and discipline.
* Final Friday – Mrs. Koerner discussed why she asks kids to wear a college shirt. She intends to get kids thinking about their future.
* Highway to High School Parent University is one night, usually in January or February. Jupiter High School guidance department comes to talk, but it is intended for all parents (not just those that will attend Jupiter High) to discuss graduation requirements of the state of Florida.
* Mrs. Koerner reviewed some of the math requirements in high school. IMS offers several classes that count towards you child’s high school GPA.
* Parent University – Previous topics including online safety were discussed.
* One-Penny Sales Tax: The district will give IMS over $4,000,000 in facilities if the Penny Sales Tax passes in November. IMS will also receive $600,000 in technology updates. Technology would be updated with all whiteboards becoming a smart board with touch screen. Please look into the information regarding this tax before you vote. The sales tax will expire after a specific amount of money is raised.
* Increased enrollment – We have 14 concretables. Last year we had 1,356 students. We were projected to have 1,376 this year, but new communities opened, and we are at 1,422 students. We have had a number of schedule changes. There is still a chance there could be more. Some children will get a new teacher. Class size average needs to be 22. If we reach capacity, then boundaries would have to be re-drawn or the county may reduce out of boundary students that are welcomed into our academies. They may also add more concretables to allow for more students, but that would take over the tennis courts.

**President’s Report –** Bari Levitt

* Upcoming Board Position Vacancies – Bari encourages everyone to look in the packet, that was handed out, and review the PTO Board positions. We raise a lot of money for the school and we would like this to continue. The bulk of our fundraising work is done between May and October. The work can be done from home or on campus. Board and General meetings were discussed. GoDaddy will be switched to Shopify. We are making this transition to Shopify next week, so we would love for someone to shadow us now.
* Business Partnership Update – All of this year’s Honor Roll Breakfasts have been paid for by business partners. Dr. West, Harmony Martial Arts, and Mathnasium are sponsoring those. Home Away from Home Healthcare and Garden’s Dermatology are helping us by paying the cost of our SOAR celebrations.
* PTO Membership - Dr. West also did Dollar for Dollar matching for our PTO memberships. Thank you to him.

**Financial Report** – Treasurer’s Report – Jen Van Kirk

* 2016-2017 Budget was reviewed
* Accounts Update
1. Shirts sales have been phenomenal. Expenses were discussed. Our cash balance was discussed along with budgeted expenses that we plan to spend later this year.

**Secretaries Report** – Anne Rutter

* Website update – We plan to switch our PTO store from GoDaddy to Shopify.

**Volunteer Report –** Karen Preisendorf

* Volunteer Orientation – VIPS registration can be done in the front office.
* Flu Clinic will be held October 28th. We will need 6 volunteers from 10:45-2:00.
* Book Fair is scheduled for November 14th-18th. We will need volunteers.

**New Business -** Bari Levitt, President:

* Budget surplus spending proposal was discussed. Parents were asked to rank the options that included the following options:
1. Newsela: This would make Newsela available for teachers as a software resource. Science, language arts, and social studies can all get appropriate news articles from this software. There is a free, no cost version of Newsela, but an upgraded version is available for $11,250.00 every year. This is very expensive and we cannot guarantee that the PTO will bring in enough money to fund it in the years going forward. Students can access this from home.
2. Flowcabulary: Benchmarks are done in rap form. Mrs. Koerner saw a teacher using a 30-day free trial. A video will explain setting, plot, etc. in a rap form to make it fun. Last year they bought the subscription for $2,000.00. It is unknown whether students can use the program from home.
3. Laptops to fill the cart would cost $10,140.00. The cart used to store and transport them costs $1,617.00. We could possibly even get two of these, but we like to keep some money in reserve. They have to be computers chosen by the district due to the vendor bid process.
4. Facilities upgrades – Examples of this would be purchasing benches outside, murals, etc. The Penny Tax will not cover these things, since they are considered campus beautification. Adding a digital marquee would be another example of facilities upgrade. Originally when the school was built, what we think of as the front of the school would have been the back of the school. Mallory Creek wasn’t built yet. This is why the marquee is located on the side of the school. The cost of a digital marquee is $55,000. Abacoa HOA would have to approve the brightness of the sign.
5. Online Tutorial in the Media Center – This option was discussed to fund tutorials for the EOC’s. There is a 100% pass rate on our EOCs. This proposal would be for additional money for the teachers offering tutoring. There doesn’t seem to be a strong need since our students are all passing these exams.
6. SOAR celebrations. There is one SOAR Celebration that is not yet covered by a business partner. It will cost $450.00.
7. Ink Cartridges are very expensive. $4,000.00 would help cover what the school is currently spending. This is in addition to our current budgeted amount.
* A broken tennis net was brought to Mrs. Koerner’s attention by a parent who would like to see it repaired. P.E. has 70 or more students so tennis is not played during P.E. Only the Intermural team uses the court. Mrs. Koerner will look into this. There are no sanctioned tennis teams at the middle school level.
* Parent University Topics – Highway for High School, Life Coaching, and Internet Safety were discussed.
* Eagle Gear Shoppe Clothing Additions – We are considering an addition to our clothing store. It would be a hooded long sleeve t-shirt. We would limit colors to light gray and navy. The eagle would be in white, with “Independence” in collegiate letters down the arm. It would sell for $25 in order to make it profitable. The hooded t-shirt doesn’t come in youth sizes, but it does come in an extra small adult size. Everyone loves this – it is recommended it be done as a pre-order.
* Upcoming Dates:
1. Sept 23 – Back to School Dance 6-9 pm
2. Sept 30 – Final Friday
3. Oct 3 – No School
4. Oct 5 – PTO Executive Board Meeting
5. Oct 10 – SAC meeting 6:00 pm media center
6. Oct 12 – No School
7. Oct 13 – PDD Early Release
8. Oct 17 – All State Auditions, Chorus
9. Oct 18 – Showcase of Schools, Fair Grounds 4-8pm
10. Oct 20 – End of First 9 weeks
11. Oct 21 – No School
12. Oct 24 – Fall Picture Make Ups
13. Oct 24-28 - Red Ribbon Week
14. Nov 1 – IMS Academies Open House

**Next PTO General Meeting: November 17th, 9:45 AM in Cafeteria**

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m. Michelle Walgreen motioned to adjourn, Angie Fischer seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

 Val Rozzo, co-Secretary

                               Anne Rutter, co-Secretary

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