

September 2009 PTSA Meeting

The September meeting was called to order at 9:35. In attendance were: Jean M. Tompkins, Lauri Harder, Kim Breda, Diane Corcoran, Julie Gorman, Pam Robey, Lisa Devoto, Kathleen Joyce-Kirk, Peggy Palmer, Candy Wood, Anne Andrews, Laurie Bruhin, Lisa Weggeman, Teresa Lelash, Jean Tompkins, Patsy King, Dana Johnson, Diane Knapp, Kim Ryan, Claire-Anne Meskers, Janine Johnson, Trisha Tourigny, and Arlene Darrow. From the Administration and Staff: Mr. Tom McMorran, Ms. Gina Pin, Mr. Jim Devoto, Dr. Nuzzo, Mr. Henry DelAngelo, Ms. Paula Panos, Ms. Anne Kipp, and Ms. Mary Ann Sheehy. Region 9 Board Members: Tony Neidenbach and Thomas Logie.

PRESENTATIONS

Pam Robey gave a slide presentation showing the results of the PTSA Survey. We had 810 families enrolled at Barlow last year and 135 participated in the survey. Pam went over each question/page and showed detailed results. The group discussed the possibility of having evening meetings and ideas for future meetings. The group also reviewed recommendations of what the PTSA could "do better" for the families of Barlow.

Mr. McMorran introduced the teachers and staff that were present. He started his presentation with the 3 broad functions of the brain showing that in order to get academic excellence (rigor) we need to reduce stress and fear so that the brain can function more efficiently. If we want rigor, we need relationships and relevance. Those three together equal sustained learning. The goal of JBHS is to be among the handful of high schools that perform at a rigorous level.

Next Mr. McMorran gave details to the group about X-Period which he said has academic criteria as well as a civic charge and a social charge. Ms. Sheehy gave us a handout of the "2009-2010 Student Activities Program" and went over the clubs in detail. We have 51 clubs this year and had 38 last year. The goal will be to have the students take ownership and to integrate this into the rest of their school life.

Mr. McMorran then spoke to the group about Mentoring and Advisor Groups. Barlow would like to have "all 250 freshmen to have a team of people in the building who know them by name and will be there to help them all 4 years." The Advisor groups will consist of 8-10 students and they will discuss topics relevant to their grade.

Mr. DelAngelo spoke briefly about Freshman Orientation and outlined some goals that may help lower anxiety for the incoming students.

Dr. Nuzzo gave a quick overview of the State Science Fair which will have its presentation in March at Quinnipiac. Her group, called the CT Science Academy and Research, meets after school and she would love to have any interested students join her. She is interested in applying for a mini-grant.

HEAD OF SCHOOL REPORT

Mr. McMorran was asked if Barlow would be airing President Obama's report to school children today. He said he would not be showing it "live" but they may show it in the context of history or current events in the future.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PTSA meeting began at 11:00 with a welcome from Kim. Her two major focuses for the year are increasing membership and volunteers in the PTSA. Minutes from the last meeting were read and approved (Breda/Weggeman).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Kim began the business portion of the meeting by going over the PTSA Executive Board positions and having each representative give a quick overview.

Buzz Book: Dana Johnson said that 188 people used the on-line form for membership/Buzz Book. About 225 people have mailed in their forms. She will be sending out one last email to remind everyone of the deadline. She did not include safe homes this year. She may need help labeling and will send out an email a few days before Open House.

ERCC: There will be no family university next year because of the poor attendance this past year. They will be having 4 mini meetings instead. The first is scheduled for Dec. 3 and will be "Beat Bob" at volleyball and will be a full school assembly. ERCC meets next Tues 12:15-1:30.

Volunteer Coordinator: Lisa Weggeman said she has a list of approximately 40 volunteers. She will compile her list and update jobs and then a revised Volunteer Opportunities Form will be available via a link on FOCUS and the JBHS website for reference.

Open House: We will incorporate the new initiative of having tables with volunteer sign-up sheets for upcoming PTSA-sponsored events. Peggy Palmer will organize these tables and set up. She and her co-chair Anne Andrews are also in charge of refreshments for Open House.

Reflections: Claire-Anne Meskers requested info from the past chair people.
FOCUS: Diane Corcoran would like to get it out at Open House. Please send her any info or photos from Prom or Graduation.

NEW BUSINESS

Region 9 Board member Thomas Logie spoke about the college application process and had a few suggestions about how to generate more information. He suggested we videotape a panel doing a Question/Answer session and perhaps workshops and he thought it would be a good idea to include the Administration and experienced JBHS parents.

Kim asked for ideas of what to discuss at the next meeting. We decided to see if we could repeat the presentation done last year by Guidance on College Preparation through the 4 years and the College Application Process, and follow up on Mr. Logie's idea of having Ian videotape the presentation, possibly to be posted on the JBHS website.

We need a new leader for the Transition Advisory Committee to take over for Jean M. Tompkins.

We are strongly considering doing some Evening meetings, each with a guest presentation; perhaps do a Webinar?

Region 9 Board member Tony Neidenbach asked for support (not money) from the PTSA on a new project for Barlow practice fields. He said "the fields are down to bare bones, not safe or usable." \$200,000 needs to be raised for this project and he said that the support of the entire community is the only way to make it happen. Kim and Tony agreed to discuss further.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10. The next meeting will be October 13, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauri Harder
Recording Secretary