



PARENTS ASSOCIATION

Welcoming Families. Building Community.

Parents Association Open Meeting October 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Denise Prince, Parents Association President, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Paula Hopkins, VP for Volunteers, read the PA mission statement.

In Attendance

PA Executive Committee Members: Denise Prince, Heather Ricks, Paula Hopkins, Page DeZee, Bridget Dadd, Betsy Fenzel, Laith Alnouri, Blair Staunton, Julia Ghafouri, Jessica Taylor White

Faculty and Staff: Jalene Spain Thomas, Chris Bolger, Adelaide Barrett, Erica Thompson, Debbie Weinberger, Julianne Reilly, Elizabeth Markowitz, Dan Spector

Approval of September Minutes

Heather Ricks moved to approve the September Executive Committee Meeting Minutes. Blair Staunton seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Denise Prince explained the PA's goal is to foster a strong bond between parents and support faculty and staff. The PA works to plan community activities, provide volunteer opportunities to get involved with the school, sponsor education speakers and programs for parents, support teachers and inform parents about school and community activities and traditions.

Denise shared that the PA raises funds through dues, Family Fun Day, Logowear sales, Greenery sales and other fundraisers. These funds go to support community-wide events such as coffees, speakers and Bingo night. The funds also support teachers for Faculty and Staff Appreciation and are used to fund gifts and grants to teachers and the Day School.

PA Executive Committee Introductions

Each present member of the Executive Committee introduced themselves and gave an overview of their role.

Head of School Report

Jalene Spain Thomas, Head of School

- Enrollment numbers update: 476 students (Nursery 51, Lower School 289, Middle school)
- Updates in leadership team: Judy Barr was promoted to Director of Health Services, Leah Corradi has been promoted to a 12-month role as Middle School Director of Studies, Sam Mason was promoted to admin team as Assistant Head of Lower School in addition to his role as Director of Sustainability, Ebay Okonkwo will return as Director of Auxiliary Programs.
- Current Issues/Updates/Priorities on Campus
 - Mental and physical health of our community members
 - Illustrative Math curriculum implementation
 - Positive Discipline Implementation
 - Crisis Management Team (CMT) and process
 - Science lab renovations on Whitehaven Campus
 - ITC expansion/Wolfhounds Den relocation
 - New Whitehaven Playground Fence
 - New Key card access installations, door prop alarms, and other security upgrades to ensure a safe and secure building.
- On Our Mind, six weeks into the school year
 - The ongoing conflict in Israel and Gaza. Faculty and staff are engaging students in age-appropriate work acknowledging human suffering, and supporting our community.
 - Acquainting Grade 5 students and parents with the middle school through a series of events and additional events for Lower School families to get to know the Middle School.
 - Athletics - Go Wolfhounds! Soccer and Cross Country teams are having a successful season.
- Sustainability Highlights
 - Student Teams in Grades 2 to 8 are underway
- Advancement Office
 - Shift from Development to Advancement nomenclature
 - The office is open and welcomes parents to visit and get to know the team.
 - The Annual Fund and IDEALS event are the primary vehicles for support of the day school community
 - The PA is the primary vehicle for parents to connect with other parents and coordinates volunteer and engagement opportunities for the community.

Board of Trustees Report

Katherine Lucas, Board of Trustees Chair shared a brief overview of the board's makeup and work. There are 20 members, made up of current parents, alumni parents, grade levels, and experts. The board is a working board, with 12 active committees that meet monthly during the school year, 9 times, and an annual retreat in October. This year it will take place on Sat 10/14 at the McArthur campus. Currently, the board is looking back at St. Patrick's history to inform future plans and growth. The board is focused on their work and decisions being grounded in the mission.

Q: does school still own the mansion building on McArthur

A: Yes and school is looking into the sale of the property

Day School Reports

- Erica Thompson, Assistant head of school for DEI
 - Shared information about the purpose of affinity groups and the various groups that exist at St. Patrick's. Current affinity groups:
 - PBSA for parents of Black students
 - MacASIA for Asian students in the Middle School
 - Jewish Faculty Affinity
 - Jewish Family Affinity Group
 - C3 student group, for Black students
 - Student Led Anti Racism Group
 - White Parent Anti-Racism Group
 - Hispanohablantes - for Spanish-speaking students
 - San Patricio - for Spanish-speaking families
 - GSA (MS) gender and sexuality alliance
- Upcoming Speaker Series event: Gender and Gender Identity 10/17 6 pm
- Positive Discipline Grant Update from Julianne Reilly and Debbie Weinberger, school counselors.
 - Positive Discipline is about building respectful relationships, belonging, and feeling
 - Julianne Reilly is now a certified Positive Discipline trainer
 - Debbie Weinberger has developed a scope and sequence from the Positive Discipline curriculum for each grade level and provides appropriate lessons and programming for teachers.
 - What Positive Discipline looks like in practice at St. Patrick's: doing activities to build schools to be members of a community, how to use their voices and to have students lead problem-solving. Thus far, the energies have been in the Lower School, and this year's focus is on expansion to full school with professional development for teachers, with a Positive Discipline team lead for each grade level
 - There is a Grades 4 and 5 Belonging Team
 - Every other week, there will be a positive discipline feature to continue sharing info with parents and families on St. Patrick's social media channels.
 - Bugs and Wishes are one small Positive Discipline practice that parents may have learned about from their students.
 - Counseling staff supports teachers in delivering this curriculum by teaching PD lessons, co-teaching lessons, and working with students and teachers as needed.
- School Research Faculty Grant Update from Elizabeth Markowitz and Dan Spector
 - The purpose of the project is to see best practices in action and learn from schools outside the region, as St. Patrick's is already connected with many other schools in the DC region.
 - Trip 1 Atlanta 10-23-25: The Mount Vernon School, Atlanta International School, The Galloway School. Attendees: Dan Spector, Markowitz, Alpha Diallo, Beth Cole
 - Future Trips: San Francisco - Nueva, Hillbrook, Khan Lab School, Girls MS Palo Alto. New England New England Innovation Academy, Thayer, Moses Brown, NuVu Middle

Upcoming Events

Speaker Series - Understanding Gender Identity 10/17 6-7:30pm

Family Fun Day 10/21 11a-1p

Wolfhound Family Hike 11/5 11a-1p

Book Fair Pizza Night 11/6 4:30p-6:30p

Book Fair 11/7-11/9

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42am