

**MEETING CALLED BY PTO PRESIDENT SHELBY CONNELL**

ATTENDING: 6 PTO BOARD MEMBERS, 7 PARENTS, 5 STAFF/TEACHERS

**6:30 Special Education Assessment and Services**

Nick Pinzke School Psychologist

Highlights:

- Before seeking special education services/label (which imply something is wrong with the child such as disability, etc), best to work through problem solving for the child.
- District looks at interventions as Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3.
- Initially incorporate teacher-led classroom support such as sticker charts, seating options, teaching expected behaviors, or offering different reading interventions, etc.
- SSIT meeting is next step (includes parent, teacher, and entire team at school including nurse, principal, psychologist, etc). SSIT can be requested by parent but most often initiated by teacher when other supports not helping. This meeting is small group, intensively looking at what is the problem and how to solve. If it doesn't help, first group checks whether identified correct problem and may try other solutions BEFORE assuming child needs IEP.
- IEP can be applied for if needed. Use with caution. Process can look different at each school but eligibility is determined by state and can be found in detail on web. IF student qualifies (must fit into one of 13 areas of focus for IEP approval) the staff will work closely with family to implement plan in timely manner.
- 504 Plan is for disability, medical concern that limits major life function. Some health concerns can be managed w/o a 504 plan (health plan with nurse can work well)
- 504 plan can be thought of as a less intensive IEP in some cases as well.

Thoughtful group discussion and Q&A followed Nick's presentation. Some parents expressed appreciation at how Van Hise staff works with students. One parent commented that this is a long process, and valuable. Keep good notes for your child and always advocate for your child.

Q: How get IEP referral?

A: By law, any parent can contact principal and request start the process. It is encouraged to always start by discussing concerns with teacher.

Q: how long does it take to get referral/assessments completed?

A: VHE works within state guidelines on this and usually completes the work before deadlines set.

Q: Is there stigma with having IEP as kids get to middle/high school?

A: Much less noticeable now than in past because so many kids with IEPs and so many adults in and out of classrooms daily.

Nick Pinzke, our school psychologist, is available for questions or concerns from parents.

<p><b>7:15</b></p>	<p><b>PTO Business Meeting</b>  February minutes passed around for review. Sarah Van Riet motions to approve last month's minutes with any edits made tonight. Dana McCloskey seconds. 13 in favor, non opposed. Motion passes.</p>
	<p><b>Principals Report—Peg Keeler</b>  (Shelby reporting on behalf of Peg in Peg's absence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thersea Miller received distinguished elementary school teacher award!</li> <li>• Want to establish a communications committee in April before spring break. Group will discuss/improve how and who communicates different information to families at school. If interested in joining this committee, please contact Shelby.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>After School Exercise Class —Shelby Connell</b>  This free program (funded by grant Jane Koval got) filled up faster than expected and some families reported not getting flyer same day as other families for the first come sign up. Discussion was had about how to remedy this problem in future to make it fair for all to have a chance at a space. Teachers request give handout for backpack mail with 2-3 days notice and alert them of day it is to go home. Also suggestion made to do email blast that day as well.</p>
	<p><b>Treasurers report—Dana McCloskey</b>  Carnival brought in record funds over \$9000 gross. New this year, carnival baskets silent auction added \$1800. Grant requests from staff will be reviewed and determined next week. Currently PTO has \$48,000 in the bank, some allocated to projects, other can be spent on grant requests.</p> <p>Discussion about large funds raised this year- could we begin discussions about putting money toward a playground improvement? Shelby suggests we discuss this more in May and possibly over summer, make sure correct leaders involved.</p>
	<p><b>Event Update— Shelby Connell</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multicultural night March 21 in the works, on track</li> <li>• Science night April 1, Anyone can come, fill out form if you want to display a project, PTO Website has link with project ideas.</li> <li>• Great Dane night April 7, must mention VHE and they will donate portion to us</li> <li>• Art Fair April 26, adults and children can buy booth space, flyer sent by Beth</li> <li>• K Playdates, past success in summer for incoming kindergarteners. <b>Anyone willing to coordinate this, please contact Shelby Connell</b></li> </ul>
	<p><b>PTO structure next year— Shelby Connell</b>  Trying new board structure next year - instead of 1 VP will have 3-4 coordinators along with President, Treasurer, Secretary. <b>Need to approve/vote board in May</b>  Coordinator positions will include: Communications, Events, Outreach, and Fundraising. We are in need of parents to fill many board and general PTO roles next fall including coordinator positions, secretary, and at-large positions.  <b>Contact any board member if interested!</b></p>
	<p><b>School Kidz school supply program— Sarah Van Riet</b>  Trying new option of buying a school supply kit through Staples school supply company. Finalizing teacher lists and signup option will be in April/May. Cost will be same or likely less than individual would pay shopping on own, offer as a convenience and also help supply some kids for families in need. Note that specials teachers need to be included in supply requests— Sarah to follow up.</p>

	<p><b>Carnival— Carousel Bayrd/Dana McCloskey</b></p> <p>Entire carnival was success as far as funds raised and it was well attended. Auction Baskets were new and feedback was mixed. Some classrooms went all out and got donations and items in basket totaled over \$500 value. Others much smaller. Lengthy discussion on pros/cons of these auction baskets, how to ensure that they stay reasonable priced/value, don't want to detract from raffle bags, how to ensure that they seem accessible to all families (or some feel maybe they don't need to be inexpensive— maybe focus these more to adults for date nights, etc. and less appeal toward kids?) Some parents expressed to teachers that they felt they were being asked to donate significant amount again, after fall direct appeal letter stated we wouldn't ask for money again— how do we approach this next year? All agree it was a learning experience and we can build on this with better communication and guidelines for classrooms next year.</p>
8:30	<p>Meeting adjourned.</p> <p>Next meeting May 6, 2014. (April has events but no general /business meeting scheduled)</p>