



## Haycock PTA Meeting Minutes Wednesday, October 19, 2016

### Call to Order

PTA President Neetha Rao called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM.

### Meals Tax Presentation

**Guest Speakers:** Nancy Nghiem - Introduction, Beth Tudan - President-Elect of FCCPTA and Executive Director of The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, David Edelman - Education Committee for Fairfax County PTA

The **Meals Tax Referendum** will be on the **November 8th** ballot. The proposed Meals Tax would be up to 4% and be levied on *prepared meals* ONLY (no groceries). At this rate the estimated revenue from this source alone would be around \$96 million per year. This amount would then be split up amongst the various Fairfax public services including FCPS. The Meals Tax is a County level tax and we will get to keep every cent that we raise within our county. Most other neighbouring jurisdictions, such as Herndon, Falls Church City, DC, Arlington, Alexandria, Vienna, and Fairfax City, have had a Meals Tax for over a decade and some for much longer. 25-30% of the revenue raised from the Meals Tax would be generated from non-Fairfax residents such as tourists, visitors, and residents from neighbouring counties who come to dine in Fairfax.

**Question:** Who has oversight over money? The Board of Supervisors has taxing authority.

If passed, the School Board decides how to spend the money. Schools still need to be vigilant to request money from the School Board.

**Question:** Is the money guaranteed for schools forever? No, it's guaranteed for the schools only while the current School Board is in place.

**Announcement:** Looking for volunteers on election day: Please sign up at [yesmealstax.org](http://yesmealstax.org)

**Beth Tudan:** FCCPTA and The League of Women Voters is hosting an event next Thu, Oct 27th in McLean at 7PM

### Secretary's Report - Alison Seddon

Copies of meeting minutes from the last PTA meeting (October 2016) were available for review.

Motion to approve the October 2016 PTA Meeting Minutes:

- 1st - Katie Pisocky
- 2nd - Heather Kimmel
- All present approved the meeting minutes



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**Treasurer's Report - Rachel Hunter**

- Thanked Heather Kimmel for serving as the PTA Treasurer for the past 2 years.
- Movie Night 1500 expense made 700
- PTA supports classroom teachers by providing reimbursement for classroom supplies up to \$150 for returning teachers or \$200 for 1st year teachers during the 2016-2017 school year.
- No changes to the budget were proposed

**VP of Operations Report - Jessica Davis**

**Student Directory Update**

- Jessica is the Directory Chair this year.
- PTA uses A to Z to create the student directory.
- Family/student data was received this week from the school. We're working on reconciling the data. Goal is to send directories before Thanksgiving.
- If you receive an email to verify info your family's information, please verify as soon as possible.
- PTA members will be sent a printed directory.
- Every family should have access to the A to Z online directory to verify their information.

**VP of Social Report - Katie Pisocky**

**Costume Ball**

- Please come next Saturday
- Only kids have to pay

Positions open for Heritage Night and Game Night

- **Question:** What is game night? Families bring in games and play them

**Auction Update:** The committed has started working on the auction this Spring. Cathy Sarris is getting donations.

**VP of Curriculum Enhancement Report - Monica Kumar (update by Neetha Rao)**

**ASA Update**

- ASA is going well. There will be a Spring ASA session.

**STEAM Night**

- Coming up. There will be volunteers and paid vendors for family friendly science activities beginning at 6pm. There will be 6-8 activity areas. Passport type activities will be set up in different areas in the school. 4:30-5:30pm: Science Share - it is like a science fair but projects are not judged



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- Applications to participate in the Science Share are due this Friday

### **Haycock Grounds Improvement Workday - Sunday, Oct 23**

- Preparing raised beds for winter, plant bulbs and things now to blossom in the Spring, and get started on a pollinator garden
- Starts at 10am
- **Alison Symons:** There is a sign-up if your family can volunteer. We have a good amount of supplies, but please also bring own supplies to this event.

### **VP of Fundraising Report - Karen Leiser**

**Armchair Fundraiser:** Raised over \$27,000. Goal is to raise \$40,000 in 40 days

**Restaurant Nights:** Alison Symons will be the committee chair. First event will be at Flippin Pizza in Falls Church City on Monday, November 21st

### **Box Tops - Jennifer Monken**

**Question:** What are Box Tops?

- Some General Mills products have Box Tops coupons. Each Box Top coupon is worth \$.10.
- Schools redeem Box Tops for a monetary donation from General Mills. Schools get checks 2 times a year in Nov and May.
- Almost all of the cafeteria tables were purchased with funds received from the Box Tops program
- There is a Box Top app that allows families to earn additional Box Tops for their school. Jennifer explained how the app works.

October collection of Box Tops starts tomorrow.

- Please look for monthly collection sheets in the Tuesday folders.
- Each month there will be a drawing to pick a student for participation, so please make sure you send in child's name and grade.
- Please send in your collection sheets even if the sheet is not completed.
- Please still send in Box Tops even if they are not attached to a collection sheet or cut out.

### **Haycock Merchandise - Scottie Fleming**

- PTA will be selling merchandise at the Family Costume Ball
- Please visit the temporary online shop from 10/25/2016 - 11/11/2016 to purchase spirit wear



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**Karen Leiser:** Reminded attendees to use the PTA's Shutterfly and Amazon links for purchases and to register grocery cards

**Recommendation:** At events, instead of selling bottles of water, PTA consider selling reusable water bottles or biodegradable cups for attendees to get water at the school's fill stations.

### **VP of Community Affairs Report - Jan Strozer (update by Neetha Rao)**

**Event: Stop Hunger Now** - Sat, Nov 5th starting at 8am

- PTA has reserved 2 shifts with 70 slots available per shift
- Children of all ages can help at this event

### **Principal Updates - Mr. Donnelly & Mr. Reeder**

Opened address to PTA with questions from meeting attendees.

### **Halloween Parade:**

How was the decision made to cancel the parade?

- At past 6 schools Mr. D has worked at, none of the other schools celebrate Halloween.
- Perceived Halloween is more of a religious celebration
- Not every student or culture celebrates Halloween. Instead a Fall Festival Celebration would be more appropriate.
- Regional Office worked with Principals in few schools that celebrate Halloween to stop celebrations because these celebrations are not inclusive for all students
- Not aware relatives come to see the parade and it's a celebration embedded in the school's culture
- At a Principal Coffee last year, spoke with one parent last year about the Halloween Parade

Discussion Highlights:

- There was strong support from the parents to continue the Halloween parade for Kindergarten
  - The Halloween Parade is a Haycock "Tradition" and embedded in the school's culture
  - A petition was circulated among the parent community to keep the Halloween parade
  - Several parents emailed about a petition that is going around
- There are some parents that support not celebrating Halloween
  - Parents feel pressure for their kids to participate in the parade even though the families do not celebrate Halloween
  - There are a few free lunch families at the school and some of these families feel it's a burden to get a costume
  - Heard there is a feeling that there is a contest with kids costumes



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- As a new parent, it's scary to be a voice on the other side not supporting a "tradition."

For this particular event how can we include all students?

- Kids who don't celebrate Halloween can have an alternate activity.
- Kids who do celebrate Halloween can participate in the parade.

**Parade Update:** Decision was reversed and the Halloween Parade will go on. There should be an event that involves every student.

How did we find out parade was cancelled?

- Kindergarten teachers were supposed to communicate with the Kindergarten parents that the parade was cancelled.
- Not all parents received this communication

Do we have parents from the Principal Coffee?

- Parade cancelled due to personal religious beliefs
- Take the parade off the calendar in 2016
- Halloween is an American tradition and the parade has been held at Haycock for the past 34 years
- Suggestion: Be transparent when making decisions

Moving forward there should be a system for communicating

- Parents agreed with the information contained in the petition. Though objected to the way the petition was presented to parents.
- Reversal of decision proves Mr. D does care about the students.
- Not productive to continue this discussion about cancelling the parade since the decision was already reversed

PTA can be facilitators of communication between the school community and administration

- No one from school admin or parents came to the PTA with this issue. PTA is here to support.
- Both sides need support, PTA President meets with Mr. D on a monthly basis
- PTA is another vehicle of communication between admin and parents

Will there be a parade in 2017?

- Will there be a data driven decision?
- How do we move forward to make decisions that include feedback from parents?
- Parade does exclude the some students



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### Bigger Problem - Communication Issue:

- Mr. D: Have a committee of staff and parents to make a decision
- Sending a letter feels personal; also send a follow up email
- Parents are looking for better communication
- Parents are looking for acknowledgement if things go wrong and communicate we are working to improve
- Have an open communication - would appreciate over communication
- Families have moved here so their children can attend Haycock
- There used to be an anonymous teacher survey that has questions that addressed: What worked? What didn't work? In the summer the issues were discussed.
- Parade was never discussed at the last principal coffee
- Mr. Donnelly has an open door policy. If you really have a problem, you can talk to him. As a parent, has never been denied a conversation with Mr. D.
- We are happy to have Mr. D here. Not all principals are available to us the way Mr D is.
- Mr D. is visible and available
- Suggestion: Create a Survey Monkey for parents to select a preferred method of communication
- Suggestion: Use Room Parents to send emails communications to parents

### Scott Reeder:

- Our new Assistant Principal.
- It's been a joy working here for that last 3 weeks.
- You may have seen me at Camp Highroads and at the Kiss and Ride
- Feel free to meet with me to discuss issues

### In the Classrooms:

- In many classrooms, teaching math workshop (tweeted picture) and learning about space (tweeted picture)
- **K:** Getting ready for pumpkin patch trip & Fall themed party and parade
- **Art:** Partner with local banks to present student's art work. Getting ready for an art show. An email will be sent to the parents of students participating in the show.
- **Counseling:** Teaching students about bucket filling & working 6th grade buddies
- **2nd Grade:** Going to Arlington Cemetary learning about vet and tomb of unknown soldier
- **4th Grade:** Watch presentations about different regions & parents were able to see this
- **5th Grade:** Camp Highroad - Mr D and Mr. Reeder spent alternate nights at camp. They were able to meet with the kids and zip line. The Teachers work really hard planning this trip each year, as all planning is done outside their contract time.



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- **Library:** Book fair is coming up
- **PE:** Students are working on ball throwing skills
- **Cougar Science Program:** Provided a summary of projects classes are currently working on

**Staffing Update:** Have open positions for 3 Special Ed and 1 ESOL. School is fully staffed with classroom teachers. Mr D. will be traveling to university fairs to recruit teachers.

**Events at the School Next Week:**

- Hospitality - Brynn Hodder: Apples & Pumpkins Festival - 8 apple dishes & 8 pumpkin dishes. Teachers and staff get to eat from 10 AM to 4 PM.
- Canada Sunshine Academy: Teachers will be observing responsive classroom practices at Haycock
- Mr. Reeder & Mr. Donnelly will take turns leading morning meetings in the classrooms
- Kiss & Ride Area: There are unsafe activities happening. A map to repaint the lines has been created, which includes more arrows and lines to direct traffic.
- 4th grade parents are concerned about mold in trailers and grade is split - some in trailers and some in building
  - There is mold in the quad. An inspector is coming Friday to do mold testing
  - By law, K - 3rd must have a bathroom in the classroom. So, only 4th to 6th grades can be in the quad.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

In Attendance: **31**