

**Santa Monica High School PTSA
Executive Board Meeting
Tuesday, October 20, 2009
Agenda**

1. Welcome and Thank You

- **Welcome and Introductions** – Elizabeth welcomed everyone.
- **Back To School Night** – Elizabeth thanked Stephen, Richard and others for doing a fine job working on this.
- **Samohi College Fair** – Elizabeth shared profuse thanks to Patti, Tina, Marty and Judith for a tremendous job on the biggest College Fair we have had to date. It went extremely well thanks to their hard work.
- **College Admissions Panel** – Elizabeth thanked the team of Diane and Deb who have worked so hard to bring us the panel which will be the subject of our General meeting.
- **College Center Volunteer Corp** – Elizabeth thanked Sherrie and Sandee once again for setting up and working hard on a system for parents to volunteer in the College Center. Things are working very well on that front.
- **Dinner Hosts** – Elizabeth thanked Patty, Tina and Marty for providing tonight's meal.

2. President's Report – Elizabeth

District Priorities

1. Budget Crisis and Emergency/Temporary Parcel Tax Committee: With respect to this dire situation, two groups have been formed: the Superintendent's Budget Committee and the Emergency/Temporary Parcel Tax Feasibility Committee. The second group is a broader group appointed by the School Board to look at the possibility of placing a parcel tax on the ballot as soon as spring 2009. Focus groups have already been conducted and in two groups, one composed of women and the other of men, when the question was proposed about a tax of \$425 parcel, though there were other issues, there wasn't a complete "What, are you crazy?" response.

2. The Superintendent has talked about the following priorities: the Strategic Plan Process, Student Achievement, and Pathways. Pathways involve ensuring that our teachers work together, making links between elementary, middle and high school teachers and teaching. The middle Schools are stuck in the middle academically so there will be a lot of focus on them going forward. The District is looking at API scores and will be working with staff and teachers to impact students, based in part on their learnings from those scores.

that a number of dedicated people have contributed to the development of the equity fund over time. The Plan recently adopted by the Board contains a number of exemptions that lots of time and effort were spent in crafting. A formula for distribution different schools was also determined. This was all discussed and recognized at PTA Council today because it represents most of effort that raises money that goes into equity fund. Samohi has cleaned up its long established protocol, and we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to a few people here for changing the way things work and the way we will be looked at in the District going forward. Thanks go to Amy Van Pelt, Lauri Crane, Laurie Yehia, Deb Love, Lynn Leavitt, Patti Braun, and Elizabeth. Samo currently is entitled to in excess of \$82. Samo is in full compliance, which is huge, because we have now set the bar for everyone else.

4. Homework Policy Update: A homework policy was adopted at the last School Board meeting. Basically, it gives the responsibility to site governance to put plan in place, but the policy is different for each level. High school is unique because of AP classes, etc., but each school site will be adopting a homework policy. The guidelines were the result of an on-line survey and Site Governance input.

3. Principal's Report – Dr. Pedroza

- First, Dr. P discussed the fact that tomorrow's "Bike It" event is happening. The concept is that since parking will soon be greatly reduced, this moves us toward the mentality we will have to adopt which is that some of us will have to ride the bus, ride bikes, etc. The Superintendent, Elizabeth, Dr P and other District celebrities will be riding and everyone was encouraged to join.
- Equity policy is now finalized so we are trying to abide by expectations. We will be accountable as will other schools.
- Samohi continues to provide help for struggling students during school day. We are continuing "POP" (personalized opportunity program) for students who are failing English and math in 10th or 11th grade. Special assignment advisors are working closely with data being generated from that. Study skills and very specific help with English and math and whatever is giving particular students trouble (e.g. quadratic equation) are addressed. Certificated people conduct the program, they are paid hourly and are not teachers because we can't afford to pay teachers to do this.
- Over the next couple of months, especially in November, College admissions are paramount. A lot of effort will be made to include the ELAC group and to provide counseling, to make sure information is distributed as widely as possible.
- Dr. P explained that we had two days of block which splits all classes. due to a day long and previously highly

about SID's. We have block scheduling so this presentation for freshman and seniors can be made during the last two periods in the day. Third and fifth period didn't happen for those groups because they go to the assembly.

- Dr. P reported that the teachers and administration are at mediation.

- Dr. P reported that total enrollment is between 3050 – 3065; the average per class is supposed to be 32; 35 is grievable. Because we are required to report official numbers to the State, we submit numbers the first 5 – 6 days of class. The last number we submitted re total enrollment was in that range – the number is presented that includes those with IEP's and another is presented that excludes those with IEP's.

Following Dr. P's report, it was discussed and agreed that a small group would take the actual numbers to the School Board since we have had so much disagreement about the numbers being used or cited in decision-making that effects the school. The group will include Judith Meister, Patti Braun, Debbie Mulvaney, Rose Nelson, Elizabeth Stearns and Lynn Leavitt.

- Elizabeth thanked the group for initiating the PTSA Exec Bd Memorial Fund that is now in place.

4. Parent Group Leadership Report

- **AAPSSSG Update** – Phillip reported that on December 14, there will be a Xmas Potluck at 7 PM in the Cafeteria. He asked that each parent bring a dish. On February 4, the African-American Art event at 7 Pm at the Samohi Art Studio - 15% of art sold will go to BSU. March 9 will be Apollo Night with proceeds going to BSU. Finally, there will be a Rite of Passage event on June 6 from 3 – 6 PM. Everyone is invited to be there.

- **ELAC Update** – Consuelo thanked the Executive Board for continuing support. On September 29, ELAC had 65 parents at a College workshop where the process was explained – it was a very good Saturday morning. Yesterday, another meeting was held. Lauri Crane came to the meeting; they broke into groups and had two outreach counselors there. Estela Flores is still not here still to help seniors. Dr. P is– trying to set an emergency meeting up next Tuesday, October 27, with parents of seniors, so that they can come in and get information about financial aid and waivers for the ACT and SAT. Counselors will be present that night. Elizabeth reiterated how committed we are as an Executive Board to getting Estela or someone who speaks Spanish into the college counseling office. Dr P says they are working on it but in the meantime, that's the reason for the Tuesday meeting. Lauri Crane and Rochelle Fanali are working on this.

· **Revision of Samohi Bylaws** – Winnie Wechsler, our dedicated and diligent parliamentarian, who has been to a 33rd District parliamentarian meeting, reported on necessary changes to the bylaws. Winnie told us that bylaws are pretty similar across PTA's. Although ours were last updated in 2001 but still, very little has to be updated. The process is that we need to hear the proposed changes, vote and approve them, then submit them to the State PTSA. If they approve the changes, then they come back to us approved. All changes are supposed to be accompanied by the Articles of Incorporation which no one currently can find. The proposed changes, which Winnie dutifully read, include: a change in audit dates; a change in dues from \$7 to \$8; an audit must now occur three times a year rather than two, based on consultation; there are quorum changes. A motion to approve the proposed changes and submit them to the State PTSA was made by Lynn Leavitt and seconded by Stephen Saks. The vote was unanimous and we thanked Winnie for a great job bringing us into 21st century.

- **Auditor's Update** – Lauri Crane examined the books as of June 30, 2009.
- **Annual Giving Update** – Abby reported that a number of people stuffed envelopes last Friday for annual giving. They will go out next week. This year, 2000 envelopes were delivered unsealed because that was way they were supposed to be last year, which turned out not to be the case this year. Caroline and ASB are sealing the envelopes. Phone-a-thon dates will be forthcoming.
- **Transportation Update** – Richard McKinnon reported on Bike It! Day – which is happening tomorrow. There are many bike racks outside and we are expecting 1/3 of the kids to be out of their cars for tomorrow in a bus or on a bike. The Superintendent, the assistant superintendent, Dr. P, Elizabeth and others will be riding around at lunch. Many many thanks to Richard for an incredible effort making this happen. Thanks to Mojoy for taking care of the food. Thanks to Stephen for the tour de Samo. There will be a Noon ride at the Pico gate !

6. New Business

School Events – Deb Love:

1. Saturday is the choir event, **Supper Serenade**, in the Cafeteria at 6:30. Go to samohichoir.org to bid on auction items. E-mail Deb for proxy bidding.
2. **“The Crucible”** will be performed for two weekends 6 shows. Get your tickets for November 5 – 14 shows at samohitheatre.org.
3. **Baseball Poker Night** will be held on November 10, thanks to our gung ho new baseball coach. Attendees must be 21+ and this event is not for kids. McSteamv will be

be a Silent auction and a \$150 poker buy-in to play with celebrities. For further info, go to santamonicadiamondclub.org.

4. **Ed Live** – “When Cirque Comes to Town” is first in a Speaker Series, and will be presented on November 16.

7. **Special Guest** – School Board Member Ben Allen spoke. He gave us a heads up that he will be giving a prize for whoever can name the top 3 colleges that Samohi students went to in 2009. Ben shared several updates from Board: 1) Equity fund will be an important discussion item at the beginning of next year as the District addresses whether it is really addressing its goals; it will also be considering the juxtaposition between District-wide and school-wide programs. For example, one of our schools gets \$1000 and can’t do much with that. Another question involves the debate about middle school and high school programs – and the need to address elementary programs. 2) The budget looms over everything – the State has recalibrated Prop 98. There are three different formulae within Prop 98 that determine how much money schools get. Because of the budget crisis, what we’re hearing is that our District will be getting 18% less than we were supposed to get. We have healthy reserves, but they will be paid down quickly. We have questions about whether there will be more money coming from federal or state. There are a lot of “known unknowns,” to quote Donald Rumsfeld. 3) A Parcel Tax Feasibility Committee has been appointed. The Board is looking at other revenue measures and is anxious for this not just to be a cut-based discussion. The Financial Oversight Committee is looking at ideas, such as increasing attendance – but we have a 95% attendance rate already so there is a limited amount to be gained. 4) The Education Foundation is selling tickets for Cirque du Soleil’s October 30 show as a fundraiser. 5) Samohi showed test score gains, of which we should be proud, though there is lots of room for improvement. The Board had a robust discussion about this. 6) The State of our Schools events will take place on Nov 17, 18 (in Malibu and Santa Monica, respectively). There will be an interesting program coming together including alums, etc., where we explain our challenges and our successes. This is a great opportunity for us to showcase ourselves. 7) Finally, members of the Executive Board raised the issue regarding enrollment numbers with Ben, sharing with him that fully recognizing the challenges that led to the loss of a House last year, we want to bring to the Board the issue that the numbers on which they based their decision were incorrect. We want to express our frustration with the fact that the estimates about Samohi that are used to make decisions virtually underestimate enrollment at Samohi.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Lieberman

Recording Secretary

IMPORTANT DATES:

- Bike It! Day – Wednesday, October 21
- Coffee with the Principal – Tuesday, October 27, 8:30 am, Roberts Art Gallery
- ELAC Meeting – Monday, November 16, 7:00 pm, Cafeteria
- AAPSSSG Meeting – Monday, November 23, 7:00 pm, Cafeteria
- November PTSA Meeting – Tuesday, November 10, 7:00 pm, Math Department Night
- Veteran's Day – NO SCHOOL – Wednesday, November 11
- Thanksgiving Holiday – NO SCHOOL – Wednesday and Thursday, November 26 & 27