**Commack PTA Council Meeting Minutes**

**September 12, 2022**

Call to Order 7:05pm and Pledge

**President’s Welcome (Debbie Vilardi)** - Good evening. Welcome back to a full year of in-person meetings. I’m Debbie Vilardi. Since I’ve only seen some of you on Zoom and we haven’t had a chance to get to know each other, let me tell you a little about me. My youngest is graduating this spring. My oldest graduated in 2019. I am a long past president of SEPTA and haven’t been on a PTA board since 2017. I want to keep this moving so I’m going to let my officers introduce themselves as they give reports.

**Superintendent Report (Dr. Cox) -** Start of school has been a success. 3 days of superintendent’s conferences were a huge success.

“The single greatest influence in student learning is the teacher in the classroom”-Dr. Jordan Cox

Make sure staff realizes the impact they have on students and connect with each one. Summer camps were successful. All the students were looking forward to seeing their friends back at school. Website was updated and is more user friendly. There is a FAQ under the Students and Families tab. It is compiled of most commonly asked questions. District is trying to enhance positive presence on social media. 10/11 Community Heroes-Soccer Under the Stars soccer game beginning at 5:30. Strategic Planning Commission started before Covid is going to start up again.

**BOE (Kim Vigier) -** The theme of Superintendent’s Conference Day that will be echoed throughout the year:

“The single greatest influence in student learning is the teacher in the classroom”-Dr. Jordan Cox

* The district website was updated. It is more user friendly. Daily events are shown. Under the “Students and Family” tab there is a “FAQ” section that will be updated as needed
* New software will be coming to the district soon. It is called “Clever”. All applications will be in one place. Students will have a single sign in. It will enable the district to add online textbooks. It will be student specific.
* Soccer Under the Stars will be held on 10/11 at the high school. It is a tribute to the heroes in our community. The women’s game will commence at 5:30 followed by the men at 7:45. All are welcome to attend.
* The deadline to submit the survey indicating you are interested in joining the Multicultural Committee is 9/16. The survey can be found on the district website.
* The deadline to submit the survey indicating you are interested in joining the Legislative Advocacy Committee is also 9/16 and may also be found on the district website.
* The 9/11 remembrance ceremony is to be held on Sunday, 9/11 at the high school at 6 pm.

**(Justin Varughese) -** Board worked on developing goals over the summer. High value placed on increased engagement and communication between the board and the community.

**Community Relations (Deb Virga) -** CSISP-approximately 1 month notice to put it on the website-date, number of students needed, times, etc. –15 hours of community service for 9, 10,11th grade and 20 hours for seniors. Thank you for 9/11. It looked different this year but it needs to be sustainable and this will be. Debbie will be contacting presidents to make arrangements to attend October meetings.

SCPD started Community Ambassador Program. Issues affecting quality of life will be brought to light. There will be a ceremony this month. Every precinct will have 4 ambassadors. The others for the 4th Pct. are Rabbi Mendel Teldon, Christopher Crean, and Mathew Boals. For the 2nd Pct. they are Martine MacDonald, Kevin Thorbourne, Erol Akyurek, and Ken Patrick Johnson. Commack Coalition of Caring was working on getting a handle on overdoses. The committee will be starting up. Recovery Walk 9/24 at Hecksher. Middle School is doing Career Day in November.

**Recording Secretary (Heather Gordon) -** motion to approve both May 2022 minutes and September minutes will be made at the next meeting.

**Treasurer (Lisa Streim)**

General Fund:

Checking: $ 48,167.88

Savings: $ 72,377.04

Total: $120,544.92

-A link was provided to the projected budget for the current school year ending June 30,

2023.

- We started the year with total cash of $121,039.47.

- Proof of enrollment was submitted and $1,000 checks were written this month to 5 out

of 7 of the council scholarship recipients from last year. We are waiting for proof from 2

more and the AIE recipient to write the remainder.

- We are projecting to end the year with $119,990.31

Motion to approve this year’s budget made by Nicole Pérez and Toni Newman.

-Commack PTA Council form 990 was filed and accepted by the IRS.

Some reminders for all units (an email will also be sent to presidents and treasurers)

- Please make sure to send in your $50 dues per unit written to Commack Council

of PTA

- Please send me your approved budgets once you have them approved at first

PTA meeting

- Please send me proof of your audits from the previous year ending June 30,

2022.

- Please file form 990 with the IRS on or before November 15th.

**Corresponding Secretary (Anita Vazquez) -** nothing to report

**Vice Presidents (Jenn Fein and Lisa Monte) -** hello and welcome back

**President’s Report (Debbie) -** Make sure all officers and chairs are members of PTA. Make sure member hub and websites are up to date with officer information, bylaws, minutes, etc. Only members may vote on issues.

Please let us know who is new on your site-based committee so we can make sure they are set up for training. Also, please make sure your websites are updated with your current officer information, including executive board contacts, forms with current dates, By laws, minutes etc. It can also be helpful to have your committee chairs listed. And make sure we have the name of your council delegate and any alternates for your unit. Each unit gets two votes as part of council, one from a president and one from a rep. (Even if you are co-presidents, you get one vote together.) We are missing names for council reps/delegates for Rolling Hills, Wood Park, CMS, and SEPTA. Please let us know when you’ve filled these positions. And some news, there is new guidance from NYSPTA on alcohol. We’re no longer allowed to put it in raffle baskets and it may not be served where children are present nor can it be included in a ticket price. It’s okay to have a cash bar or for people to order individual drinks at your end of year dinners or other adult only events. The money can’t cross our budget lines. My email address and phone number are on the council page of the district website, so do reach out if you have questions. Lastly, Important dates: Sept 15 IH and CHS Open Houses, Sept 19 NR and MSIS open houses, Sept 20 BIS open house, Sept 21 CMS 6th grade open house, Sept 22 RH open house, Sept 26-27 School is closed. Happy Rosh Hashana to those celebrating. Sept 28 WP open house, Sept 29 CMS 7 and 8 grade open house, Oct 3 Next Council meeting 7pm, Nov 4-6 NYS PTA Convention in Albany. Registration opens shortly. Good luck at your first meetings: have your proposed budgets ready.

**Arts In Ed (Jenn F) -** Arts In Ed is back bringing in programs for the entire year with programs that support and enhance the curriculum. Sept. has a brain challenge program coming in for Family Fun night. Wood Park is having a character education program “Cultivate Kindness,” Middle School bringing in an author to inspire about reading.

**Blood Drive (Linda Cornell) -**Last blood drive in June resulted in 24 viable donations. Next drive 11/9 at Burr.

**Budget**- No report

**District Action Awareness** **(Madhu Dutta)**

ARP-ESSER FUNDS UPDATE

The U.S. Department of Education released a Back to School Checklist for Parents outlining how states

and school districts can use the $130 billion that were distributed under the American Rescue Plan. Many

school districts are still creating programs using the ARP ESSER funds and the Department of Education

is encouraging parents to be informed and advocate for student needs.

On its new website the Commack School District has shared information on how it plans to use the $1.5

million it received via an ARP ESSER Grant: https://www.commackschools.org/ARP-Esser.aspx

Recommendation:

 Encourage PTA units to share the checklist and checklist link with members so they are

cognizant of programs that fall within the use of these funds

 In the interest of transparency, the Commack School District should provide periodic updates

on the status and use of these funds to demonstrate how they are supporting students with

government funds

PTA AWARD OPPORTUNITIES

School of Excellence Award

The National PTA School of Excellence program, encourages local PTAs to make a year-long

commitment to strengthening family-school partnerships. With feedback from the school community and

in partnership with school administration, a local PTA can establish an Excellence Team to identify and

implement an action plan for school improvement based on the National Standards for Family-School

Partnerships and Four Principles for Transformative Family Engagement practices.

The School of Excellence Program aims to:

 Provide a step-by-step framework to support PTAs in identifying and implementing best practices

in family engagement.

 Build inclusive and welcoming school communities to enrich the educational experience and

overall well-being for all students.

 Help attract new, action-oriented PTA members who want to focus on the issues that affect our

children the most.

By enrolling assessing your PTA in 6 different categories, your PTA unit can highlight programs designed to

support the following six categories and be recognized as a School of Excellence

6 Categories:

I. Welcoming all families into the school community

II. Communicating Effectively

III. Supporting Student Success

IV. Speaking Up for Every Child

V. Sharing Power

VI. Collaborating with Community

Recommendation:

 Interested PTA units should enroll in the program at School of Excellence  and perform the

assessments. Here is a sample enrolment form https://www.pta.org/docs/default-

source/files/programs/school-of-excellence/2022-2023/sample-soe-enrollment-form\_22-23.pdf

 Once a PTA Unit is enrolled, they will receive School of Excellence emails and be eligible to win

the National PTA Phoebe Apperson Hearst Outstanding Family-School Partnership Award for

the 2022-23 program cycle

 Awardees receive national recognition and a $2000 grant for their school. Additionally Merit

Awardees receive $500 grans for their schools. Here are some awardees from 2022

 This is a great way to get working parents and child advocates involved in promoting your PTA

unit – we can even encourage units to tap the PTA Council grant committee to assist

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Award

On May 23, 2022, the NYS PTA announced the inaugural unit-level winner of the newly created NYS PTA

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion award. This award honors NYS PTA Units, Councils or Regions that

demonstrate a leadership commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through recruitment, training and

retention efforts including multicultural, gender-diverse and special needs appropriate programming or

events, inclusive outreach activities, or other initiatives. The 2022 winner was Searingtown Elementary

School PTA in Nassau Region. This PTA unit brought their school a variety of books from an array of

different cultures through their monthly SearReads program and further hosted a culturally diverse

bookfair for National Book Reading month. They also invited two diverse children’s authors for a virtual

visit and greatly supported DEI initiatives in their school and community.

Recommendation:

 Identify DEI initiatives in each unit for inclusion in the next award cycle ending March 2023

 Awardee receives a plaque, one voucher per award toward registration for a NYS PTA event

valued up to $150 and recognition at NYS PTA Convention or Summer Leadership Conference

CYBERSECURITY

Los Angeles Unified School District, or LAUSD — the second largest district in the U.S. with more than

1,000 schools and 6,000 students — confirmed this week that it was hit by a cyberattack over the Labor Day

weekend, disrupting access to its IT systems.

Details about the incident, described as “criminal in nature” and later confirmed to be ransomware, remain

vague. It’s not yet known whether data was stolen, and while LAUSD resumed classes as planned on

Tuesday following the long Labor Day weekend, the impact on schools is currently unclear. LAUSD’s chief

communications officer Shannon Haber has not responded to multiple requests for comment.

Vice Society, a Russian-speaking ransomware group and known for targeting the education sector, claimed

responsibility for the LAUSD ransomware attack.

Vice Society is a double-extortion ransomware group, meaning it typically exfiltrates a victim’s sensitive data

as well as encrypting it. The group is known to break into its victims’ networks by exploiting the Windows

vulnerability.

A review of Vice Society’s leak site does not yet list LAUSD, but a number of other U.S. school districts are

currently listed on the site, including Wisconsin’s Elmbrook Schools and the Moon Area School District in

Allegheny County.

The claim by Vice Society came days after the FBI and CISA warned that the ransomware group, which has

been active since 2021, is “disproportionately targeting the education sector with ransomware attacks.”

A joint government advisory this week warned that K-12 education institutions, like LAUSD, have been

frequent targets of attacks, which have led to restricted access to networks and data, delayed exams,

canceled school days and the theft of personal information belonging to students and staff.

LAUSD is the fiftieth education sector entity to be hit with ransomware this year alone.

Discussion Topic:

Wanted to bring this to PTA Council’s attention to spur discussion about cybersecurity initiatives in the

district. Dr. Cox mentioned that there will be a cybersecurity forum/discussion in the coming months to

educate on good cybersecurity practices.

**Founder’s Day -** nothing to report

**Grant Search and Writing (Dana Wisselman Schultz) –** nothing to report-currently researching

**Nutrition (Lisa Streim) -** first meeting in October

**Photography (Toni) -**Sawmill and NR made changes to the calendar. No preordering this year for K-5-there will be proofs. 3 days for each building to come in and take pictures. Meet with principals and presidents and submit dates. Each building will decide if they want the drone picture or the roof picture from EAP.

**Reach CYA (Heather)**

Our summer was filled with 28 field trips, character education programs and community service activities. They were very well attended by Commack students!  
We have had a little staff turnover and are in the process of hiring but will have additional programs up and running soon.  
In the meantime:  
         - We are scheduling character ed presentations in the FACS (Family and Consumer Science) classes in the middle school  
        - Students can earn community service credit by participating in the Independent Community Service projects listed on our website - [www.reachcya.org](http://www.reachcya.org/)  
        - REACH continues to make donations to the Commack Community Pantry at the Suffolk Y  
  
Community Service projects continue to be extremely popular and will be starting soon!

**Reflections (Nicole)** Show Your Voice-deadline is November 11 for Council. Entries submitted via email only.

**SBMT-**no report

**Scholarship (Nicole)** 1st program will be K-8 summer STEAM camp scholarship. Applications go out in November due sometime in January**.**

**SEPTA (Denise Shani)** Fundraisers to give back to the schools and have events. Fall and Holiday Photoshoots for families. 2 sessions 10/15 & 19. 15 minutes and you get 8 edited photos $150, $50 to SEPTA. Boo Bags with Halloween themed candy and toys. Life skills classes may be working on assembling the bags. Givebacks app. Dine and Donate where people will partner with a restaurant and SEPTA gets a % back-Panera some time in October. Bowling event district wide on Veterans Day. Commack Superstars Bowling League is resuming 10/12 on Wednesdays. Support Groups will be monthly in person at Panera. First is 9/23. There is also a FB group.

**Teacher Rep (Mr. Ciani)** Excited to be back**.** Start of school year has been amazing. New leadership has created an excitement to know that there is going to be a renewed enthusiasm. CTA involvement in Breast Cancer Walk. CTA has launched a Facebook and Instagram. Resource for good practices-study skills, homework tips, etc. Membership drive for PTA.

**Website (Brenda Lentsch)** The new app should be approved shortly. It is more user friendly and functional. PTA is allowed to send 1 community-wide e-mail per month. Community Events page on website. Teacher websites are gone as they are moving to google. Anything posted has to be ADA compliant. It is a federal requirement. Send text to 67587 put a “Y” to opt in for text messaging. There is an app through school messenger. There is a community connect email notification system as well.

New Business: Dossier Committee for Council- Council, Anita Vazquez. Burr Toni Newman IH-n/a NR-Dana Schultz RH-n/a WP- Sawmill-n/a CMS-Alyssa Papesca High School-Lisa Streim Septa-Denise

Tim Russo-Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. Commack Day 9/24-not run by Commack Schools at Hoyt Farms.

Meeting Adjourned. 8:40pm