

Minutes
May 21, 2012
PTO Board Meeting
ROE Cafeteria – 6 p.m.

The Board of Directors of the River Oaks Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization (the "PTO") met in General Meeting on the 21st day of May, 2012, at 6:00 p.m., in the Cafeteria of River Oaks Elementary School. The following officers and members of the Board of Directors were present, thus constituting a quorum:

Paul Heyburn - President
Liz Palmer – First VP
Charles Koerth - VP Finance
Ryan Dolobois - VP Development
Meredith Maierson - VP Internal Relations
Kef Wilson - VP Public Relations
Kara Richardson - Secretary
Holly Shilstone - Past-President
Stephanie Moll - Volunteer Coordinator
Jennifer Farnell – Volunteer Coordinator
Teri Gerber - Teacher Appreciation
Jennifer McCormick – Teacher Appreciation
Maria Onufrow - 5th grade Representative
Sandy Shaw – 5th grade Representative
Tina Salem - 4th grade Representative
Kathryn Hensey – 4th grade Representative
Case Knowles - 3rd grade Representative
Judy French – 3rd grade Representative
Sean Patterson-2nd grade Representative
Tiffany Hawkins – 1st grade Representative
Jacqualin Seely – 1st grade Representative
Ways and Means Director – Christine Rodriguez
Ruth Beery - Faculty Representative
Whitney Hill – Faculty Representative
Becca Pfeifer – Faculty Representative
Dr. Keri Fovargue-Head of School-Ex-Officio Member

Various members of the PTO including parents/guardians of ROE students, ROE faculty and ROE staff (“PTO Members”) were also present for the meeting along with various members of the public.

Call to Order

The President of the Board, Paul Heyburn, called the meeting to order.

Meeting Overview, PTO Structure, By-Laws

As the first order of business, Paul Heyburn gave a brief overview of the organizational structure of the PTO along with a brief explanation of the process by which the Board members are selected. In connection therewith, he noted that issues arose with regard to the election of certain Grade Representatives to serve on the 2012-2013 PTO Board because the PTO Bylaws require that candidates be elected by a majority vote of the PTO Members. He explained that this wording requires that a candidate receive votes from at least half of the total number of PTO Members in order to be elected to office and that voter turnout was such that no candidate received sufficient votes to be elected to office.

Paul stated the candidates for the Grade Representative positions agreed to acknowledge as elected the two (2) candidates who received the highest number of votes, but suggested that the Bylaws should be revised to prevent this issue from arising in the future. He next introduced Kara Richardson as the new Secretary of the Board, and stated that she will be chairing a committee tasked with reviewing and recommending changes to the current Bylaws, and he encouraged any PTO members interested in serving on the committee to contact Kara.

Finance and Budget

Liz Palmer, First VP, next reported that, during the 2011-2012 school year, the PTO raised \$130,000 net of expenses through its various fundraising efforts including book fairs, ad sales, school pictures, ROE Fun Run, boxtop collections, etc., and that approximately \$55,000 was raised from the Wish List and Raise the Paddle (“RTP”) campaigns. She noted that the PTO historically raised a significant amount of money from the operation of the ROE After School Program but that the program is now operated by ROE so those funds are no longer available to the PTO. Liz next gave an approximate breakdown of the use of PTO funds during the 2011-2012 school year which included expenditures to fund direct classroom support needs, staff training/development, field trip expenses, police officer patrol, instructional materials, teacher appreciation events, IB fees, technology upgrades, First in Math curriculum, and Nature Center expenses.

Liz next addressed concerns raised by various PTO Members relative to the transparency of the PTO with regard to certain financial matters, and she stated that the PTO Board is actively thinking of ways to make its financial information more accessible to its members. Paul Heyburn noted that, while the budget is not posted on the PTO website, the Board will provide a copy of the budget to any PTO Member upon request. Several PTO Members requested that the PTO Members be given more input with regard to budget approval and also suggested that the Board prepare a more detailed breakdown of expenditures for distribution to the PTO Members.

A discussion next followed regarding the use of the funds generated from the RTP fundraiser. Liz stated that a portion of the money was used to fund IB expenses including

costs associated with sending 5 ROE staff members to an IB conference with Dr. Fovargue, and that a portion of the funds remain unspent. Various PTO Members expressed skepticism with regard to the necessity of the expenditure claiming that the primary focus of the conference was not IB training, but rather networking. Other members expressed concern that the expenditure was approved given that it was held out of the country. Mr. Sam Sarabia, the elementary school chief officer of HISD, joined in the discussion and stated that the trip was approved by HISD because Dr. Fovargue is on the Texas IB Board and, accordingly, it was determined that the conference would be a good way to share ideas regarding IB with other educators.

Several members next pointed out that, historically, funds generated from RTP were used to purchase specific items such as iTouches and ELMOs that were placed into immediate classroom use which directly impacted student learning, and that many parents liked to donate to RTP because they could directly see the impact of their donation. They requested that, in the future, the PTO use RTP funds to purchase designated items and/or fund specific projects rather designating such funds for general categories of curriculum such as IB. Other members expressed concerns that they were left in the dark regarding the use of RTP funds. Meredith Maierson, VP Internal Relations, stated that RTP expenditures were presented and approved at the November PTO meeting.

A question was next raised regarding the planned use of the \$190,000 grant received by ROE from HISD. Dr. Fovargue stated that the funds were surplus bond funds of HISD that will be used to fund the following projects: carpool canopies, covered walkway from 1st-2nd grade wing to blacktop, cafeteria floor repairs, lighting for front of school, emergency lighting repairs, laptop light repairs, HVAC system servicing, irrigation system repairs, and other faculty improvements.

PTO Meetings (Agenda, Minutes, Discussion)

As the next order of business, Paul Heyburn discussed the preparation and distribution of minutes and agendas and the format of meetings. In that regard, he stated that all agendas will be emailed to the PTO Members in advance of meetings and that all minutes will be posted on the PTO website after they are approved by the PTO Board. Paul solicited volunteers to help with the website postings, and Jenny Johnson and Christine Rodriguez agreed to volunteer in that capacity.

Prospect of K-8

A discussion next followed regarding the prospect of expanding ROE through 8th grade. Paul Heyburn noted that the idea was initiated years ago by the PTO, and that the idea has resurfaced in recent years due to the shortage of available Vanguard openings at the middle school level. He stated that HISD is now exploring the idea for possible inclusion in HISD's proposed November bond election, but that it is premature to speculate as to the details and logistics of the proposed expansion since the idea is still in the exploratory stage. Several PTO Members and members of the public expressed concerns regarding the potential for increased traffic, expanded attendance zones,

increased student population, curriculum requirements, testing requirements, and disparate ages of students on campus. Other PTO Members suggested that there is not a shortage in middle school Vanguard openings, and that any bond money received by ROE should be spent on improvements to the existing K-5 facility.

Several PTO Members expressed support for the proposed expansion and suggested that the idea deserves a thorough evaluation before being dismissed by those opposed to the project. In that regard, those PTO Members encouraged the PTO to move forward with discussions with HISD to better define the details of the project since it appeared that much of the opposition appears to be driven by lack of information regarding the project.

Kef Wilson, VP Public Relations, noted that there are a lot of unknowns at this point and suggested that the PTO schedule a special forum with HISD to discuss the proposed expansion so that more information could be gathered from HISD.

Dr. Fovargue addresses questions and concerns

Dr. Fovargue next entertained various questions from members of the PTO regarding electives, the IB/Vanguard program, curriculum concerns, school rules, information dissemination, and anti-bullying programs.

With regard to questions concerning electives, Dr. Fovargue stated that ROE will offer electives for the 2012-2013 school year, but noted that the schedule might change based on enrollment needs.

There was a next a discussion regarding the implementation of various anti-bullying programs at ROE, and Dr. Fovargue stated that ROE is considering several options for implementation next year.

Other Business

There was no additional business to discuss, and the meeting was adjourned.