

Atholton High School (AHS) Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)
Monthly Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2011

Ellen Makar called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. in the AHS Media Center.

The following were in attendance: Mary Acker, Amy Bagley, Susan Bottomley, Lisa Bader, Judy Bruce, Joan Brittingham, Sue Cabot, Jennifer Clements, Debbie Clutts, Kathy Faber, Pam Johnson, Ellen Makar, Mindy Myers, Cindy Ochs, Laurie Remer, Michelle RhodesBrown, Kayle Simon, Sherri Tatum, and Lisa Walker.

Ellen distributed the agenda (Attachment A).

Judy Bruce read the “Objects of the PTA.”

There were no changes to the minutes from the Monthly Meeting held on August 22, 2011.

President’s Report (Ellen Makar)

- Michelle RhodesBrown and Shari Underwood have volunteered to chair the After Prom Party Committee. The After Prom Party will be held at Lifetime Fitness. The first planning meeting will likely be held toward the end of October.
- The PTSA submitted letters to the Board of Education (BOE) Study Commission and presented testimony to the BOE expressing opposition to proposed legislation changing the BOE structure to include two appointees. Thank you to Caryn Lasser for her help with these efforts.
- Laura McDonald, a student intern with Student Services, is preparing a survey for parents regarding how Student Services is meeting the parents’ needs.
- The Academic Life Skills (ALS) classes are always willing to help with activities that involve mailing, assembling, and counting.
- Thank you to all who helped with Back to School Night.

Administrator’s Report (Jen Clements)

- Parents having trouble with the Family Portal should call the school for assistance. Beth DeFrances is the point of contact. Teachers will use the Family Portal for online grading and TeacherWeb for information and homework. Teachers are required by the county to update their grades at least every three weeks, but some will post them more often. There is some confusion over the name of the system – the teachers refer to it as Aspen. Paper interims and report cards will be generated from the Family Portal. Interims will be distributed on October 4.
- On September 28, the Active Minds Club will make presentations to the homerooms about suicide prevention.
- The renovation will start in April of 2012 and is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2015. The project planning phase is almost completed. Up to 21 portable classrooms housed in portable buildings will be used during the renovation. After

Spring Break, only seniors will be able to park at the school. For the 2012-13 school year, only seniors will be allowed to park at the school.

- AHS will have the same last day of school as the rest of the county, which is currently June 11. The last day of school for seniors has not been announced. It is usually the Friday before Memorial Day.
- There are two new math teachers, and there will be a long-term substitute (certified teacher) for a science teacher who will be out on maternity leave.
- Thank you to the PTSA for Back to School Night and for the “Flavors of Fall” Staff Appreciation event held today.

Treasurer’s Report (Mary Acker)

- Mary distributed the budget report.
- Thank you to Amy Bagley and Moira Monk for doing the audit.
- The Student Activities and Student Support Requests are usually reviewed in October. Mary will look for the form the school groups need to submit and will forward it to Mrs. Clements.
- Mary will look for the forms the teachers need to submit to be reimbursed from the Teacher Support budget. Amy suggested having forms available at a Staff Appreciation event.
- The insurance has been paid.

PTA Council of Howard County (PTACHC) Delegates’ Report (Kathy Faber and Carol Zimmerman)

- Carol attended the first meeting and e-mailed the minutes to the Executive Board.
- Kathy will attend the next meeting on Monday, October 3.
- We need to elect Carol. Debbie Clutts will draft a notice to the AHS community about the election.

Corresponding Secretary (Sherri Tatum)

- The PTSA received a thank you note from Ms. Dear who won one of the gift cards in the staff Membership raffle.
- We need an HC Drug Free liaison.
- Options for HC Drug Free programs were discussed. The date for the program will likely be November 29 or March 15 as those dates are reserved for Community Connections events.

Student Government Association (SGA) Report

None.

Unfinished Business

- The implementation of the Lunch Money Fund was discussed. The basic idea is that the PTSA will donate money to purchase food that can be distributed by the Front Office to students who forget their lunches. Mrs. Clements and Sherri will continue to look into how this will work.

New Business

None.

Committee/Liaison Reports

- Pam Johnson and Judy reported that **Snack Shop** is busy and is making about \$100 a day, which is normal for the fall. A few prices were raised – chocolate bars are very expensive. Volunteers are in place, and new volunteers are being trained. Pam reported that some students have used Raider REACH coupons to buy Snack Shop items, but only Snack Shop gift cards and cash are accepted. Mrs. Clements will look into this. Gift cards will be available for sale at “Pizza with the Principal.”
- Michelle reported that the **After Prom Party** Committee will be meeting soon.
- The link for parents to enter online **Directory** information is now working.
- Lisa Bader reported that the surveys from the **New Student Orientation** were mostly positive. The logistics for the breakout sessions did not work out that well – grouping the parents by their students’ homerooms did not add value. Kayle Simon reported that she had heard about a transfer student who felt the activities were more for freshmen coming in to the school. Suggestions for reaching out to transfer students included having someone from the administration make contact with transfer students, providing transfer students with information specific to them, having the PTSA send them a welcome letter, connecting new families with current AHS families, and following up with the transfer students after school starts. Student Services seems the logical place to start. **Traditions Night** got mixed reviews.
- Joan Brittingham reported on the **Grocery Receipts** programs. So far 201 families are enrolled with Giant and 108 with Harris Teeter. These numbers are bit behind last year’s enrollment.
- We need a **Publicity** chair to update the Bulletin Board at Giant. Sue Cabot agreed to post things on the bulletin board if people will send her what they would like to post.
- Mindy Myers reported for **Membership**. Blank forms are available for Executive Board members who have not yet joined. National PTA membership increased by fifty cents, so we may want to look at dues for next year
- Kayle reported on the **Newsletter** which is available online. Ellen often receives requests from groups wishing to advertise on the PTSA’s web site. The participants discussed whether or not to accept money for ads. A committee to look into the issues associated with advertising on the web site was formed. Lisa Walker, Kathy, and Kayle volunteered.
- Sue reported that **Parents on Patrol (POPS)** has a lot of volunteers, but she would like to get a list of new AHS families if possible. Debbie has an updated list of new volunteers. Volunteers sign up online, and the system accommodates last minute sign-ups.
- A chairperson is still needed for the **Reflections** Committee.
- Laurie Remer reported for **SAT Preparation**. Wilde Lake High School asked AHS to publicize their practice test on the 15th, and we will ask them to publicize ours. There will be a Parent Information session on the 7th or 8th. Laurie needs help putting up fliers before the October 22nd practice SAT, and she needs help checking in the students. Kathy volunteered to help.
- Susan Bottomley reported that the **Staff Appreciation** Committee held the “Flavors of Fall” event today. Next on the schedule will be Halloween treat bags for the staff.

- Debbie reported for **Volunteers**. The data is being entered. Early reports were given to Staff Appreciation, POPS, and Student Services. A good number of parents signed up to help sell tickets for Homecoming and other school events.
- The **Community Advisory Council (CAC)** participated in the BOE Study Commission process. The BOE Study Commission recommended that the County Executive be given the power to appoint two of the seven BOE members.
- Cindy Ochs reported for **Music Boosters**. The Marching Band is participating in competitions. The spring trip to Disney is being planned, and the students held a car wash and raised about \$900. Other fundraisers that contribute directly to students' accounts include fruit and coffee sales and Giant gift cards. Mrs. Clements gave the band new music stands. The Music Boosters could use help with sewing bleacher seat cushions for the Marching Band members. The Flute Choir played at the opening of the Robinson Nature Center.
- The **Sports Boosters** are preparing for Homecoming.
- The **Technology Boosters** will raise funds selling LED light bulbs outside the Giant the weekend of October 1.

Adjournment

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, September 25, at 7:00 p.m.. Ellen adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

E-mailed Committee/Liaison Reports

- **Webmaster** (Kayle Simon): I've been updating the sites and creating PayPal buttons and a reg. form for SAT practice tests.
- **Hospitality** (Tina Burgan): New Student Orientation: held on 8/25, went very well. We ordered 1,500 donut holes, 200 bottles of water and 100 juice bottles. The remaining donut holes were donated to the Teacher's Lounge and JROTC. Lessons learned: we could order less donut holes and offer more beverages next year. Total cost of the event was \$304.20, which I submitted for reimbursement, but haven't received the check yet. (Mary, please let me know if I need to resend the reimb. request again.)

The next two events are:

> Pizza with the Principal: scheduled for Wednesday, 10/5. I'll be meeting with Debbie Clutts for guidance this week.

> Community Connections: scheduled for Tuesday, 11/1.

I want to thank you for sending me the list of volunteers for Hospitality and will be sure to reach out to folks for the upcoming events.

- **Staff Appreciation** (Susan Bottomley): Staff appreciation is treating the staff to "Flavors of Fall" tomorrow in the staff lounge: apples, nuts, sweet breads, cookies and cider.
- **Membership** (Sue Bell, Irene Halkias, Mindy Myers, Robyn Siegel): The PTSA membership drive is going quite well - we have a total of 590 members. There are

129 from Pay Pal and 461 through the membership form. Of the 461 there were 70 staff memberships. On September 14th there was a teacher/staff raffle and we had the following winners :

Natalie Kelly and Illene Rosenblum (\$10 Home Depot Gift Cards)

Mary Coates and Donna Elshafei (\$10 Target Gift Cards)

Peg Dear and Judy Smith (\$10 Staples Gift Cards)

Courtney Gika (\$10 Giant Gift Card)

Katie Clark, Lorena Sehgal, and Stephan Hise (\$10 Subway Gift Cards)

Nancy Sach and Barbara Lokitis (\$10 Chipotle Gift Cards)

Liela Razik (\$15 Starbuck's Gift Card)

Stephanie Johnson (AMC Movies - two tickets)

Robert Fradkin, Jonathan Dupsk, and Kathy Koehnlein (The Meadows - four free cones)

Membership plans to attend the PTSA meeting on Tuesday. We will bring membership forms and the PTSA Cards for anyone that still needs to join.

We are off to a great start and plan to put membership drive information in the Newsletter and Daily Emails throughout September and October.

- **POPS** (Sue Cabot): POPS is now an on-line calendar for signing up!!! POPS had about 20 sign ups for September besides myself filling in when I could. For this week we have 2 slots open today, Sept. 27th, 1 slot for the 30th. We have at this time roughly 264 volunteer names on invite and about 150 days of school left. My goal will be to try to reach the 1st time new student families.
- **SAT/ACT Preparation** (Laurie Remer): **College Essay Writing** - Kaplan held its class on College Essay Writing last week. It was well attended. It received mixed reviews regarding content; may be too basic for seniors but better for juniors. Consider offering this in the spring rather than fall next year with deeper content. Feedback was shared with our vendor. **SAT (10/22) and ACT (11/5) full length practice tests** - This year registration is online with an option to send a check. Register at our PTSA website. (Thanks to Kayle—who is so patient with me J) **Need your help to get the word out**—attached are the fliers. **PLEASE post around the school, at the Giant, on our website, etc.** Will ask Ms. Clemons to send out announcement in email over the next few weeks. **Upcoming events:** *The Answer Parent SAT Info Night - Monday, November 7th @ Atholton High School ~ Media Center - 7:00 pm* **The Answer Prep classes** - One session is in progress, more sessions scheduled. See attached dates. **Kaplan SAT and Act Prep** --- dates are attached; start in 2012 for spring tests
- **New Student Orientation** (Caryn Lasser and Lisa Bader): AHS was packed on August 25 with new students and their families. Hospitality provided yummy breakfast treats and an info table in the lobby had traffic all morning. Breakout sessions went well. Many thanks to Amy Levitt for coordinating all of the planning and preparation with Adrienne Nasir and to Lisa Bader for preparing group leader information packets. Lisa will share the feedback survey results we received from the breakout sessions. Thanks also to membership, POPS, Snack Shop, and everyone else who stopped by and helped meet and greet parents and students that morning.

A big thanks again to all our volunteers who lead the parent breakout groups! Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from the new parents, who all seemed to get some value from the smaller groups. Diane Freedman had her graduate daughter, Emily, participate with her in one of the groups, and one group (accidentally) had a teacher in the room. The feedback from both of those groups indicated that they were very grateful for the input and perspective from both a graduated student and a 9th grade teacher. So that will be something to consider in future years. From a logistical and confusion standpoint, we may also want to re-evaluate the value of grouping parents by their student's homeroom assignments.

- **Traditions Night** (Caryn Lasser): Many thanks to Amy Levitt and Sue Cabot who greeted freshmen families with snacks and drinks during the August 25 Traditions Night!
- **School Improvement Team** (Caryn Lasser): The SIT met on September 22 to develop this year's School Improvement Plan. I was not able to attend the meeting but want to share that SIT members will focus efforts in subcommittees under Goal 1 and Goal 2 for the HCPSS.
- **Capital Budget Testimony** (Caryn Lasser): The AHS PTSA submitted testimony supporting the FY13-FY15 capital budget funding for the major renovation at AHS. The project spans several years so continued, supportive, positive advocacy is important. Our approach continues to be well-received by board members.
- **Driver's Ed** (Lisa Bader): We successfully completed our three summer sessions, bringing in \$3,575 for the PTSA (65 students). We have yet to clear up the issue of the room charges from the county for the summer sessions. There continue to be discrepancies, and I am working on clearing that up so we can pay the bill. The first classes for the school year started last week. We are in the second week of the two five week sessions that run concurrently (M/W and Tu/Th). Everything continues to run smoothly.