

MIAMI PALMETTO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL PTSA
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - SEPTEMBER 19, 2007

The meeting was called to order by President Andrea Shosfy at 9:10 a.m. in the Media Center.

Principal's Report: Mr. Weiner was happy to report that the Open House was a big success. He hopes parents enjoyed the kids' statements about the new Electronic Device policy. It was recorded the first week of school when the kids were really upset. Our kids are resilient and understand why we made a move in this direction. The first week of school, an average of 25 devices per day were confiscated, but that is down to 8 per day. Ninety-nine percent of the parents that have come in to get the phones back appreciate the policy.

The first phase of the construction is just about completed. There is talk of redoing the football field and installing a state of the art track. Regarding the possibility of removing the trailers on the field, he explained that one is for the construction crew and must stay. The others hold supplies, custodial materials, athletic equipment, etc., and must be kept because we do not have storage space available in the school. Original storage rooms are now used as classrooms.

Our average class size is at 24.82, beneath the 25 student requirement. This is the last year we are being required to use an average. Next year, the numbers must be exact. There are certain things that cannot be controlled, i.e. the # of kids and the # of classrooms available. We can get teachers from the District to reduce the class size, but we cannot get more classrooms. He wanted everyone to know that the machine at the main entrance by the security desk is now working. An electrical line to it was cut and a temporary line was run last night.

Mr. Weiner explained the new attendance policy. During an annual course, only 10 unexcused absences are allowed before a child risks final grades being withheld. Once 10 unexcused absences have been accumulated, the District computer is programmed to withhold credit. AP Robert O'Connor will be in touch with parents if a child is getting close to the limit. The school can override the withhold of credit if proper documentation is supplied to the attendance review committee. To correct attendance errors, go to the Attendance Office and get a corrective paper to show to the teacher. If this doesn't resolve the issue, send him an email, and he will sort it out.

If pre-approved by the administration, a school field trip or educational excursion will go in as a special note not an absence. Spread the word that if documentation is presented to him or AP O'Connor for prior approval and the outing is in fact approved, it will not count as an absence.

Program on School Services:

Bonnie Hannemann, Chairperson, Student Service Department:

This department manages personal, social, and educational issues that students confront. Ninth grade students all have a single counselor. After 9th grade, counselors are assigned alphabetically. Students have the same counselor for the next 3 years. At the end of 9th or 10th grade, it is advisable to have the student sit down with their counselor and work out an academic plan to steer them in the direction they want to go.

Sally Coords, College Assistance Program: Her main job is to help your child do everything they can do to get in to the right place. She helps them find a good match, seek financial aid, write essays, or anything to do with the college process. Students are given a very comprehensive college guide book and she recommends you go to YourClassPage.com through the school's website and look under "Coords" to access the college information and scholarship pages. The scholarship page is updated weekly and the nomination process is handled through CAP. College information is presented to the kids during expanded lunchtime presentations, the College Fair, Junior Night, Senior Night, the Junior College Assembly, Bright Futures and financial aid presentations.

Robin Tassler, TRUST Specialist: Ms. Tassler works with all students. She is not an academic counselor, but handles problems students face with their family, alcohol or drug abuse, grief counseling, relationship issues, etc. She takes a 3-prong approach, working with individual students, families, and support groups. Referrals are usually made to her by the guidance department, self-referral, or referral through a friend or teacher. It is a confidential process, including the families involved. Life-threatening situations, however, must be reported.

Susie Overholt, School Nurse: Ms. Overholt is employed by Jackson South Community Hospital but her services are donated by Jackson to our school. Her job is to help your children during the day with medical emergencies. She is not allowed to administer any medications unless they are preauthorized by a physician. If your child has a serious medical condition, let her or their guidance counselor know. School nurses are not allowed to give out any over-the-counter medications, including condoms.

Student Report: There was no student council report today.

PTSA Website: Mark Smith of Cruz Web Design (www.cruzwebdesign.com) has set up the PTSA website (www.palmettoptsa.org) and the school website (<http://mpsh.dadeschools.net>).

Treasurer's Report: Isabel McBrayer briefly reviewed the budget through September 12th.

Board/Committee Reports:

Book Sale: The Book Sale is ongoing and parents can purchase books in Room 307 after the meeting. Students can also purchase books during the school day. There are links on the PTSA web site to find out what books are required. The sale ends Friday.

Membership/Business: Our membership goal to have the largest PTSA in the State. We currently have 900 members. A video directed to students to increase membership will be shown to them soon. Membership is open to anyone in the community including businesses.

Donations/Special Projects: A committee will prepare a uniform procedure to request funds from the PTSA. After receiving approval from Mr. Weiner and department heads, proposals must be submitted to EESAC and then, the PTSA. We have approximately 180 teachers and 107 have joined PTSA to date. The Treasurer advised we have over \$1,000 in staff appreciation donations and \$8,000 in general donations. Vending machine revenues are used to support teacher events and sports programs. Vending machine revenues are down and we expect the school to ask us for help in making up the difference.

Legislative/Convention: A PTSA training was held on September 9th at Howard Drive Elementary. A more extensive training will be held at Coral Gables Senior High School on September 29th with comprehensive workshops. Contact Ms. Shosfy for more information or to register. The Florida PTSA convention is being held at the Hilton Hotel in Daytona Beach from November 3rd through 5th. We have money set aside in the PTSA budget to pay for the conference. Talk to Ms. Shosfy, Ms. Ball, or Jennifer Wollmann if you are interested in going.

PTSA's focus is not just on education, but on the whole child. Pending Legislative issues can have an effect on students (Kidcare extension, proposed property tax amendment, etc.). Stay informed so you are prepared to make a knowledgeable decision. Legislative co-chair, Ms. Wollmann, told us that the Florida Legislature may go into special session on October 3rd to decide how to cut 1.7 billion dollars from the State's 71 billion dollar budget.

E-Mail Distribution: If you have not been receiving notices from us, check your spam folder and be sure to add phsptsa@bellsouth.net to your address book.

EESAC: The EESAC committee met yesterday and approved \$3,000 for the library, \$1,500 for professional development, and \$1,000 to allow the Math Department to purchase the "Dynamath" subscription. So far, EESAC has allocated \$5,500 of the \$38,000 in its budget.

Old Business:

SAT Testing: Kaplan Test Prep is offering practice SAT testing on December 8th. Registration information will be available on the PTSA website. Kids need a calculator and two No. 2 pencils.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the August 22, 2007, General Membership Meeting were presented. A motion was made by Nancy Harter to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Norma Miller and approved without corrections.

Announcements: The Drama Club production of "The Diary of Anne Frank" will be at 7 p.m. on September 27th and 28th in the auditorium. To raise money, they are selling discount cards for \$10 and a Garage Sale is planned for November 10th. Progress Reports will be issued on September 20th and the College Fair is set for October 9th beginning at 7 p.m. in the gym. The Panther Prowl is scheduled for October 10th, the Homecoming Game for October 11th, and the Homecoming Dance for October 12th. Our next general meeting is October 17th at 9:00 a.m. in the Media Center featuring guest speaker, District 9 School Board Member, Evelyn Greer.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Roxy Lancellata, Recording Secretary

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