

2022–2023 Annual PSO Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2022

- I. Introduction: Marcy Finn
 - A. Quorum of 51% necessary
 - B. Following statements of intent to resign by all current officers, two *ex officio* Directors (viz., Marcy Finn and Amber Dyer) declare that all outgoing directors and officers are removed, leaving Marcy Finn and Amber Dyer as sole Directors.
 - C. Thank You, We're Grateful and Appreciative for Your Service
 - D. Nomination of Lower School Officers
 - 1. Nomination of Amy Mackenroth for Lower School President
 - 2. Nomination of Kat Blake for Lower School Vice President
- II. Introduction, cont.: Amber Dyer
 - A. Nomination of Upper School Officers
 - 1. Nomination of Paulina Moreno for President
 - 2. Nomination of Katie Cotter for Upper School Vice President
- III. Introduction, cont.: Marcy Finn
 - A. Nomination of Colin Holobowicz for PSO Treasurer
 - B. Changes to Events/Activities with PSO Involvement
 - 1. Fall Festival, Lower School Only, Smaller Scale, Meant for Community-Building Not Fundraising
 - C. Goal of Changes is for PSO to assist Upper and Lower Schools with what the teachers and students need, not to give you hours and hours of work and massive undertakings as if you're unpaid full time employees.
 - D. Headmasters are Directors.
 - E. All financial transactions must be approved by Headmasters
 - F. Goal is for PSO to be community building and support.
 - G. For fundraising, PSO's primary goal is to feed teachers for teacher luncheons. "Our teachers need to feel loved, and they feel that love through their bellies."
 - H. Spring Creek Spirit Night in Fall and Spring can be primary fundraisers.
 - I. Individual teacher luncheons are sponsored by grade levels.
 - J. Other Spirit Events should be community-building, not additional fundraising opportunities.

- K. Trying to limit the number of times that we're asking parents to "open up their pocketbooks."
- IV. Introduction, cont.: Amber Dyer
 - A. Upper and Lower Schools are on the same page about the vision for PSO moving forward.
 - B. PSO is about helping us "spread the good news" and assisting us with communicating with our community.
 - C. Another important pillar of PSO involvement at the Upper School is assisting with volunteer recruitment for certain events, grade level celebrations, such as Field Day and Texas History Celebration, etc.
 - D. "We depend on our PSO to get the word out" and help establish a "positive vibe" within the community surrounding events.
- V. Introduction, cont.: Marcy Finn
 - A. PSO will be two sets of officers. How to coordinate?
 - 1. Headmasters will coordinate weekly on dates to ensure that Upper and Lower School events and activities aren't competing with one another.
 - 2. Each school's PSO President will meet weekly with their respective Headmaster to ensure they are on the same page.
 - 3. Two PSO Presidents should meet with one another approximately monthly.
 - B. Being a PSO officer should not place outsized demands on your time, especially as many of our nominees for officer positions have full-time jobs.
- VI. Monthly Meetings
 - A. Paulina Moreno Question: Whether the monthly Board Meetings will continue.
 - B. Thomas Beyer Response: Monthly meetings are not required by the PSO Bylaws and that periodic meetings of the PSO Board may happen on an as-needed basis at the discretion of the Headmasters and Presidents. The requirement in the Bylaws is that any meetings of the Board must be pre-announced.
- VII. Communication
 - A. Michelle York Question: Hearing from Upper School parents, inquiring about the possibility of communicating with parents via text message.
 - B. Marcy Finn Response
 - 1. Trying to train parents to read the newsletters and consult the website.
 - 2. Texting presents challenges technologically.
 - C. Thomas Beyer Response:

1. Sharing analytics regarding email communications at Great Hearts Irving versus ConstantContact “industry standard” for schools and educational institutions.
- D. Paulina Moreno Suggestion
1. Using Morning Announcements to publicize upcoming events at the Upper School similar to how the Lower School publicized the Shakespeare Play.
- E. Amber Dyer Response:
1. April and May, Upper School hosted over 30 events.
 2. Events announced on boards located throughout the school.
 3. Our feedback is that the kids do know what’s going on. “My 7th grader is always asking me for \$20.”
 4. Not sure of technical facilities, sound system involved with gym, “definitely look into it.”
 5. Various State-required minutes limit the ability of the Upper School to implement daily Morning Announcements.
- F. Melody Zaragoza Comment on Communication
1. “I’ve kind of been stuck in the middle the past year.” I hear that the analytics are saying positive things, but I hear the parents saying they are dissatisfied. Many people may be opening an email so that the analytics are showing that they opened it, but they may be moving it directly to the trash and not actually reading it.
- G. Amber Dyer Response
1. Parent survey responses indicate that parents are satisfied with the level and quality of communication. Our survey results were some of the highest in the network.
 2. The feedback that we’re getting is in fact that parents would like us to be prudent with the quantity of communication.
 3. Our communications strategy and vision was crafted through long, careful collaboration between the Leadership Teams of both campuses and communications professionals at Great Hearts America.
- H. Nellie Macias Question: Does it show you how many times individual people are clicking?
- I. Thomas Beyer Clarification:
1. You can dig down that deep.
 2. Can verify, but the percentage clicked number is reflective of “the number of email addresses who clicked on at least one thing.”
- J. Amber Dyer Comment Clarifying Communications Vision:
1. Upper School readership is often in the 80th percentile.

2. We try to condense messages such that they are “one stop shops” with everything you need in one place so that it is not necessary to bombard parents with multiple emails on different topics.
- VIII. Parent Donations to Teacher’s Lounge and Recess
- A. Nelly Macias Question: School only needs us to feed the teachers? No help with supplies?
 - B. Marcy Finn Response: Supplies should come from EduKit; may occasionally ask for donations of household items; Teacher Lounge Goodies
 - C. Nelly Macias: Getting Spammed with Text Messages to donate to the Teacher’s Lounge from Becky Wilcox
 - D. Paulina Moreno: Items on Amazon Wish List
 - E. Marcy Finn, Amber Dyer, Thomas Beyer Response:
 1. Marcy Finn: That was not the vision. Individual item donations are perfectly fine as well.
 2. Thomas Beyer: Intention is that many hands make light work. Wish Lists will need to be recreated for the new school year.
 3. Amber Dyer: Monetary donations to a PayPal fund may be an additional option as well.
- IX. Nelly Macias Question: Kindergarten teachers asking for recess supplies?
- A. Marcy Finn and Thomas Beyer: This year, we began trying to consolidate requests for donations to help cover the cost of celebrations snacks, supplies, etc. That should be the primary ask moving forward year-to-year.
- X. Birthday Gift Cards for Teachers from PSO:
- A. Paulina Moreno Question: Birthday Gift Cards moving forward?
 - B. Marcy Finn Response: That’s a lovely gesture. If there’s money, that’s great. If the money’s not there,
- XI. Snowflake Fund:
- A. Keo Strull and Marcy Finn: Snowflake Fund being addressed by Great Hearts Texas as a possible district policy.
- XII. Mentoring Incoming Parents, Especially with an Upcoming Expansion:
- A. Michelle York Question: Is there a way that we can mentor incoming parents?
 - B. Marcy Finn: Last time we expanded, we spent a lot of time and energy on a comprehensive parent mentorship program. We found that it’s not so successful.
- XIII. Parent Education Initiative:
- A. Marcy Finn and Thomas Beyer: Parent Education Initiative is meant to address many of these concerns.
 - B. Amy Mackenroth Response: I think that’s fantastic. We have found that many parents have no idea what it means to be part of a classical school.

- C. Melody Zaragoza Response: Many families come to us from other kinds of schools and don't understand what it takes from parents to support the school and make this incredible education possible.

XIV. Parent Involvement:

- A. Marcy Finn and Amber Dyer: This is the goal. To cultivate one community on the same page through the partnership of the school and PSO. We are one of the highest achieving schools in the Metroplex, in the same league as Cistercian. And we form young people's souls to boot. We want to establish that "to make a withdrawal" from the school "you need to make a deposit."
- B. Kat Blake: It's possible that with our diverse family community we're misinterpreting their intention when it comes to lack of involvement. Moms I've spoken to from other cultures are intimidated by Western culture. Suggest we should have focus groups on how we can incorporate more of these families.
- C. Marcy Finn and Amber Dyer Response:
 - 1. Marcy Finn: This is how the Cricket Classic was born.
 - 2. Amber Dyer: We partner with specific parents to make sure that we're hearing the voices of all those within our family community.
- D. Parent Volunteers
 - 1. Nelly Macias: Can we invite grandparents
 - 2. Marcy Finn: "Parents" means anyone involved in the life of our students.
 - 3. Thomas Beyer: "Being a Great Hearts Irving Grandparent" page on the website?
 - 4. Amber Dyer: Hear from grandparents regularly who have subscribed to the newsletter.

XV. Virtues in the Upper School for New 6th Graders

- A. Nelly Macias: Will new 6th graders get oriented to the virtues?
- B. Mariel Mueller and Amber Dyer Response: This is what Culture Weeks are for. Each quarter we focus on one of the four Aristotelian Cardinal Virtues.
- C. Marcy Finn: Ongoing reinforcement is crucial to students' moral education.
- D. Mariel Mueller and Amber Dyer: There is also general orientation for new families. Our curriculum and our teachers embody the virtues; that's primarily how students acclimate to what moral virtue really means. Moral virtue permeates everything we do.
- E. Thomas Beyer: Not an explicit character education.
- F. Amber Dyer: This is really abstract. Let me give you a specific example. Mr. Weyrens: "What's in the box?"

- G. Michelle York Response: Students also acclimate to the culture by being exposed to the other students and daily life of the school.
- XVI. Account Statements: Terra McGhee
- A. Not Final End-of-Year Report, Some Things Outstanding
 - B. Veritex Bank account officially closed.
 - C. Start next fiscal year with at least \$5,000 in the bank.
 - D. Will get in touch with incoming Treasurer Colin Holobowicz about account statements and cash flow.
 - E. Fundraising achievements: Fall Festival, Spirit Events, Used Uniform Sale
 - F. Major Spending: Athletic Durable Goods; \$6,000 on *Love and Logic* Training; \$7,000 on Teacher Luncheons, Birthday Gifts, etc.; \$5,000 on Teacher Appreciation Week
 - G. Amber Dyer: Covering for Gym Floor?
 - H. Marcy Finn: Thank You Mrs. McGhee
- XVII. Election of Officers for the 2022–2023 School Year
- A. All officers nominated above elected for a term of one year by a unanimous voice vote of both current Directors, viz. Marcy Finn and Amber Dyer.