

Cantiague PTA

PTA MEETING 11/03/22

3 November 2022 / 7:00PM / In Auditorium and streamed on Facebook Live

ATTENDEES

PTA Executive Committee, Dr.Sapienza, Central Office and Board of Education members, parents

AGENDA

PTA Updates- Jennifer Cohen

- Welcomed all in attendance
- Fall Festival this past weekend was a gigantic success. Everything was inside this year and we had hundreds of people in the building. It of course has been a while since that has been allowed to happen.Special Thank you to the Executive Committee who worked around the clock for 2 weeks leading up to the event to pull it off.Thank you to all the parents volunteers and high school volunteers who came out that day.
- Reminded attendees of the important role of the PTA and how it is important that they raise money to provide give backs to the community such as the Welcome Back Picnic and Picnic Around the World (which will be the end of the year event this year.) We need to make sure we have enough money to pay for those free events and this year we are trying to raise enough money to get our teachers a color poster board printer.
- November 22nd and 23rd will be the Holiday Boutique.
- Book Fair December 12-16.
- All this month SEPTA is running a Guac Shop fundraiser. Mention SEPTA when ordering online and you will get 10% off and SEPTA will get 10% of proceeds all month.
- The Joint Council of PTAs is collecting Gift Cards for students at a school in Florida hit hard by the recent hurricane. Usually the teachers purchase these gift cards for the kids but this year many fell on hard times due to the hurricane. For many of these students, this is the only gift they receive over the holidays. Please see the flyer sent out for

more details. Boxes to collect gift cards are in every school and a monetary donation can be made on the Joint Council PTA Memberhub website.

- Square1Art Fundraiser information will go out shortly. If you upload a picture of your child's artwork to the Square1Art site you can purchase items with that art on it and possibly get your order in time for the holidays.
- Reflections art entries are due next week.
- 5th Grade is having a pie sale. Pies can be ordered on Memberhub and be picked up or delivered.

Principal Updates- Dr. Sapienza

- Welcomed everyone
- As the weather starts to get cooler, please dress your children appropriately and pack an extra layer in their backpack. If you are missing a jacket or sweatshirt, the lost and found bins are filling up. Please check them if your child is missing something.

Linn Weisman- representative of the Jericho Educational Foundation

- Shared information about JEF and the Champions For Charity Fundraiser at the Americana Manhasset and select Wheatley Plaza stores. Please register and get a number to mention when making your purchases and they will get a check for 25% of all full-price, pre-tax purchases made that weekend, December 1-3, 2022.

Guest Speakers- Members of the Board of Education: Sam Perlman, Chris Foresto, Divya Balachandar, and Jill Citron

- Jenn Cohen introduced the Board members and questions were submitted from the community and given to the Board Members to preview. Questions will also be taken from the audience.

Each member gave a brief introduction of themselves

- What characteristics make you a good Board Member? If someone wanted to run for a position on the Board what should they have?
 - Jill: Someone who wants what's best for our schools and the district. Being congenial and willing to work together with administration, members of the board, the community. We are not

required to go to every PTA meeting or concert but we all appreciate it and go to as much as we can. We have a monthly meeting usually the 3rd Thursday of every month. There is a whole Board package that comes out that is at least 300 pages which includes policies. Our main job is to make policies for the district. We update them, usually a few policies every month and we make new policies as needed. We go over contracts, financials, budgets. Administration is very helpful and answers any questions they may have. It's a very big time commitment and you have to have your heart in the right place.

- Chris: It's a job for people that really care. Whether you are an active member of the PTA, volunteer at the Fall Festival, are a room representative, take time to come out to a pta meeting, we are all invested in wanting the Jericho School District to be the best it can be.
- What's the difference between a working session and an executive session? Explain some of the terminology
 - Sam: By law we are required to have one Board Meeting a month. Although they are public we also have an executive session which covers personnel matters, disciplinary matters, legislation, and contracts that may be of a sensitive matter. Working sessions are times for public discussion and getting information from presentations from faculty members or administrators. Technically we can take votes there but in practice we try not to.
 - Jill: Most Board meetings follow an agenda, there are presentations, the Superintendent report, people have the opportunity to ask questions. A Board meeting is technically just a meeting between the 5 Board members but we want people to feel welcome, to ask questions. We make them more open than they are required to be so people feel comfortable to ask questions and get all the information they may want. Work sessions are more about a specific topic. If there is anything you may be interested in, or you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the Board via email.
 - Sam: Executive Sessions are scheduled around public sessions as needed if subjects come up for example a personnel issue, a safety issue. Work sessions are scheduled, not every month like the

Executive session and public meeting. Reiterated that Board meetings will have an agenda, be formal, go over contracts, whereas a work session can be more informal and cover a specific topic.

- What keeps you up at night?
 - Sam: Safety. Making sure kids get to school safely, are safe in school, get home safely.
 - Chris: Safety. This district has tremendous resources in place to make sure the kids are safe.
 - Divya: Safety without a doubt. We are Jericho but you wake up and read about mass shootings and they happen in towns that thought the same thing.
- During your term, what is the thing you are most proud of:
 - Jill: The thing I am most proud of is that we adopted a DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) policy. We want our kids to be meaningful, critical thinkers and successful in the world and not just in the Jericho bubble but out in the world. We are very fortunate to have community members on the DEI committee that have professional experience with DEI.
 - Divya: Also proud of that accomplishment but also very proud of how as a district we handled the pandemic. She works with children in her profession from all over Long Island and she can say there is not another district that took care of its kids as well as Jericho. No other that got them safely back to school as quickly and early as we did while addressing everyone's needs whether it was learning differences or emotional growth. She is really proud of what was done.
 - Chris: new to the board only 4 months but also very proud of adopting the DEI policy and how we got through Covid but also very proud of the accomplishments of our students and the accomplishments of our faculty and staff.
 - Sam: As someone with a business background, he pointed out there are key points in the budget that needed to be worked on and by working with the administration they figured out a way to have a 0% increase in the budget. By working with Dr. Cuifo, over the past several months we also put in policies regarding recertifying residency. While we are bound to educate every child living in the

district we want to make sure we are only educating children that do in fact still live in the district.

- As we get more children in the district and classes are starting to go larger to pre-pandemic numbers, how are we ensuring teachers and resources are added where needed?
 - Jill: Shared some stats on current class sizes at each elementary school. Shared that the administration knows the Board of Education will be supportive to hire more teachers, aides, etc. as numbers may increase in enrollment as time goes on.
 - Mr. Grishman: Confirmed this support in sharing that never has the administration put in a request for additional teachers or aides and heard anything back except, “Do what you need to do, hire who you need to hire to support our kids.” This is a universal compliment to this Board and all our prior Boards.
- Residency requirements and discussion of the process:
 - Ben Ciuffo: The most important piece of the process is when they register to start school. When there is a case brought up involving a problem with a family not living in Jericho but the kids attend the Jericho schools, these cases are thoroughly investigated. If anyone has any information of a family not living in Jericho but the children attending Jericho schools, advised everyone they can call his office or email him and an investigation will take place. Another issue he shared is of multiple families living at one residence. As a school district, they need to verify if the family is living in the school district and they are obligated to educate any child living in that home.
- What renovations will be done at Cantiague and how is it decided what renovations occur?
 - Jill: There is an architect that goes through all the buildings about every 5 years and checks the quality and status of everything.
 - Sam: As part of the budgeting process, a list is made of all the possible projects that can be done if they had unlimited funds and then each year the Administration recommends to the Board what projects should be prioritized for that year.
 - Mr. Manual: Shared that over the last 10 years we’ve done over 16 million dollars of renovations all through capital reserves which we are proud to say our district is debt-free. When these projects

started 7-8 years ago there were a lot of priority 1 or Have To Do projects. Right now all the buildings are good and yes there are some priority items but not as many as there were several years ago. Not to say a boiler might not suddenly break, but we are in good shape. This past year we did the technology wing in the high school. We are looking at projects like that such as upgrading facilities to provide education in these times as to buildings that were built 50 years ago. Cantiague bathrooms are on the list.

- Question from the audience: Does the Board have any involvement in the decision making of hiring new teachers or staff in general?
 - Jill: We approve the schedules of the hiring but are not involved in the process.
 - Divya: We are involved in the hiring of administrators.
 - Sam: The only person we are directly involved with hiring is the Superintendent.
- What is the difference between governance and operations and what authority does the Board have on different things?
 - Jill: We are not educators so for most of the decisions that are in the education realm we differ to the administrators. We gather information to make an informed decision, we don't just say yes to whatever they want. We ask a lot of questions.
 - Sam: We have a responsibility to the community and they can reach out anytime with questions and concerns.
 - Chris: There is some level of ultimate responsibility.
- What are the hot topics at the next Board of Education meeting?
 - Sam: Chain of Communication. If you as a parent have a question or concern about the curriculum, how do you go about getting it resolved.
 - Chris: School Safety will be talked about. We recently attended a school board meeting up in Syracuse and it is our responsibility to bring back things we talked about and learned there to make our district better.
 - Divya: Commissioner Reiner coming will certainly be informative at the next Board meeting. We will also be discussing the issues around grades and weighting and how it relates to student stress. Student stress is certainly high on the list of concerns.
 - Sam: Weighting is certainly not an elementary issue, its a high school issue, to be clear.

- Jill: The budget process will be starting soon. There will be budget workshops that feature presentations that go over the steps involved in the budget process.

Jenn Cohen gave closing remarks and thanked the Board for their time and coming out to speak with us.