



SEPTEMBER 2025 PTO MEETING AGENDA

Samuel Staples
Elementary
Helen Keller
Middle School

Date and Time: Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 7:30pm

Location: Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3727851356?pwd=eEFqTnUxQUJmV2dsQzVRbE9MVVZYZz09>

Meeting ID: 372 785 1356

Passcode: 4464042

Call to Order

Called to Order by Danielle Brooks at 7:31pm

Attendance -

Eileen Azzara
Danielle Brooks
Clara Bell Conklin
Leah Dechavanne
~~Nikki Kaldawy~~
Carrie Maisano
Jenn Trudo
Jessica Yauger
Kim Fox Santora
Dr. Steven Clapp
Sarah Scrofan
11 other members of the school community

Principals' Report - SSES KFS reflected on the recent Back to School night. Wondered if there needed to be a Whole School assembly. Had expected overflow attendance and there were some seats unfilled. A Back to School night survey went out to parents and those with students in Special Ed program were pleased with presentations. Some criticism that the event started too early. Banning cell phones/smart watches seems to be resonating with students and parents as there has only been one incident of a student bringing in a smartwatch. . Two new staff members have been hired since August: an additional math paraeducator and a cafeteria supervisor. Nursing assistant has resigned. Announced an upcoming presentation of Screenagers, in conjunction with HKMS, which dovetails nicely with both school initiatives for education surrounding the effects of technology and device usage on student populations.

Principals' Report - HKMS Dr. Clapp had attended Crisis Training and stressed the importance of how the district responds to events but also the prevention. Related how social media exposure is one of the top risks for mental health. Felt Screenagers showing will be vital in helping spread the message to student guardians. Spoke of the importance of play and even boredom. Dr. Clapp mentioned that top companies now cite that they are looking for leaders and employees with "soft skills" such as empathy. Screens and social media usage seem to work against the building of soft skills. Dr. Clapp thanked Stoppa Landscaping for the planters outside of school.

Special Guest - Sarah Scrofan, Assistant Superintendent for Finance, Operations, and Technology Spoke about how the district uses educational tech tools and going back to school with technology. Chromebooks are used in K-* and they provided a great opportunity for personal learning. Google Classrooms allow teachers to streamline workflow into one space all students can access. Students are automatically enrolled for ease of use. Parents should be encouraged to ask their student to show them their Google Classroom for each subject. It is important that students realize tech isn't just for entertainment but it is an important tool. Mentioned that teachers implement GoGuardian, which directs students only to the sites and resources approved by the teacher. Teachers can also see what students are working on. A number of web resources were shared including a site for Digital Wellness, Digital Citizenship and Commonsense Media. Also spoke about how AI effects education and stressed the importance of teachers and parents modeling how to use AI as a tool to complement learning, not replace learning. Finds asking students "Is this replacing or enhancing my learning" to be a vital framework to build the best usage practices. Dr. Clapp mentioned how the 8th grade capstone project does allow the use of AI for some components. A google doc form was provided if any attendees had any further questions.

Co-Presidents' Reports

SSES	Back to School Night - Back to School Survey link is still live for anyone that still wants to provide feedback.
	Room Parents - Requests have been sent out to all PTO parents. There is a deadline of 9/19/25 and room parents will be notified the following week. A room parent orientation will be held on 10/1/25.
	Upcoming Events - 9/19 - Spirit Rally (shirts still available to order) - 9/ 26 - Class Pictures Group class pictures are returning. No retakes for group pictures. - 9/30 - Deadline to order Grade Level Shirts. Orders delivered mid-October. - 9/27 & 10/4 PTO Photography Fundraiser dates. There has been a good response. - Boost Fundraiser is upcoming and the theme this year will be Space. - 10/22 Screenagers showing - 10/30 First School Store. Stores will be held quarterly. - 10/31 Halloween Parade and PTO bake sale.
	Other Items - A showing of Screenagers will be jointly presented by SSES & HKMS on October 22nd at 6:30pm at SSES. This film looks at family life and the struggles with children over social media, video games, and academics.
HKMS	Monthly Principal Coffees - Will begin on 10/1, hoping to encourage parent attendance.
	Upcoming Events - 9/28 Picture Day - 10/1 Monthly Principal Coffee

	- 10/8 Fifth Annual Walk to School event. There will be a drop-off location at Ridgefield Rd. and parking at Jessie Lee Church is approved. - 10/22 Screenagers showing in conjunction with SSES Other Items - HMKS PTO is doing one fundraiser this year with a goal of \$6K. \$2K of that goal has been met. There is a school-wide competition for the grade with the most participation in the fundraiser. Runs through 9/26.
	Membership Report - Leah Dechavanne presented. At the moment we have 205 families/327 students/44 teachers. Parents can share with their teachers that teachers in the PTO can apply for teacher grants.
	Treasurer & Fundraising Report Jenn Trudo presented. There is fundraising goal of \$47K. Also reminded parents that the 2025-2026 budget is completed and available on the PTO website.
	Public Comment Clarification for the location of Screenagers showing-will be presented at SSES.
	Adjourn Danielle Brooks thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:24pm.

We're here to help! Contact us with any questions
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