

CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts - Parents, Friends and Alumni (PFAA)  
Minutes - September 18, 2018

**Rachel Martin, Interim Executive Director, Sheff Movement Coalition** gave a presentation on the Robinson v. Wentzel lawsuit being filed by the Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF). The Sheff Movement supports integrated education. PLF is representing parents that are challenging the Connecticut State Department of Education's race-based enrollment quotas and lottery for the Hartford's magnet schools. Rachel explained that the magnet schools would lose funding. She encourages parents to have dialogue on the topic, support their schools, write letters to media and legislators and attend hearings. The first hearing is Oct 16th at 915 Lafayette Blvd in Bridgeport. Her email address is [rgary@sheffmovement.org](mailto:rgary@sheffmovement.org).

**1)Present:** Bryan DeLaCruz, Terry Darr, Tina Knowlton, Nick Chanese, Reagan Bishop

**2)Welcome Remarks**

- Bryan DeLaCruz introduced himself as President, Terry Darr as Secretary and Tina Knowlton as Fundraising Chairperson. Tammy Joseph, who was not present is the Co-President.
- Evelyn DeLaCruz has stepped down as the Treasurer. Tom Kannam volunteered for the treasurer position. Vote will take place next meeting.

**3) PFAA Update**

- Bryan explained that the PFAA became a non-profit last year. The goal of the PFAA is to foster a better relationship between parents, students and the school. He gave a brief overview of the annual report. There will be an Advisory Board to help steer the PFAA potentially made up of Nick Chanese, Reagan Bishop, Kim Stroud, Jim Keller, an Academic Teacher, an Arts Teacher, and a Student.
- Bryan recapped that the End of Summer Jam was a success. Approximately 40 parents and students attended. There was a DJ, firetrucks, pizza and snacks and resource materials.
- He encourages parents to sign up for the Round Up App to donate spare change. The PFAA is listed as "Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Parents, Friends, & Alumni Association". There is also a "GroupMe" App with a group chat of interested parents under "PFAA". On Instagram, the PFAA can be found as "pfaaghaa". There was discussion about using the SignUpGenius App to organize volunteers. Bryan may add a new Facebook page as well.

Bryan has recruited 4 interns from Goodwin College that will assist the PFAA while earning credit toward their Human Service studies. His goal is to lighten the parent load.

**4) Principal's Report**

- Nick Chanese reported that the first week of school went much more smoothly this year thanks to holding auditions over the summer instead of the first week of school. Classes started on Day two. He said all the schedules are now updated in Powerschool. Upcoming performance: Six Plays in Six Days on Saturday 9/22. The Choreographer's Showcase will be on 10/27. The Visual Arts Exhibit starts with a Reception on 10/25 and runs until 11/12. The 9th grade students participated in a Ropes Course in Newington. There will be a SAT/PSAT Day in school in October. He sent a letter home to parents requesting they have conversations with their children on responsible use of social media. During September, enrollment varies until October 1st "State Attendance Day" which is when the formal student count is locked in for budgets.

The lottery reopens 11/1 for the 2019-2020 school year. We discussed the importance of communicating to parents whose half day students wish to go full day that they have to list GHAA as the home school to change the pathway used in the lottery which makes a difference in their odds of getting approval.

## 5) Student Report - N/A

## 6) Parent Senate Report

- Bryan DeLaCruz is the Hartford Rep, Tammy Joseph is the Suburban Rep.
- Advisory committee to the Magnet School's Superintendent
- Looking for feedback on a new brochure
- Have a \$10k budget
- Working on by-laws
- Meet on 2nd Monday of the month
- All the magnet schools except one meet the 25/75 integration rule
- Discussed making community service a requirement at all magnet schools
- Officers to be elected at the Nov meeting
- Looking at process of selecting the valedictorian
- Proposal to change school start times failed
- Want to have a Parent Family Engagement Specialist at every school
- Proposal to have mandatory 30 minute recess through Grade 8 failed
- Proposal for Grade 4 and 5 to switch classrooms failed

## 7) Committee's Reports

**Advisory:** No report.

- **Fundraising:** Tina Knowlton will be kicking off a Lyman Orchards Pie fundraiser. Pies will be delivered the week before Thanksgiving. She is also making arrangements for a holiday wreath and garland fundraiser with a local farm. Other ideas are "Savers Day", World Vision Distribution Center and Planet Aid Bins. Reagan Bishop explained that the PFAA's largest fundraiser is the Director's Reception Gala. It happens right

before the Spring Musical. There's a silent auction that the PFAA collects donations for all year. Normally the food is donated.

#### **8) Upcoming Events/ New Committees / Fundraising Ideas**

- Bryan introduced the idea of "Create Change" as a program for students to work concessions as a learning opportunity.
- PFAA needs more committees
- Contest for PFAA Logo- PFAA will send Raegan details for contest to inform students
- Looking for unique fundraising ideas especially because 7 arts depts each already do their own fundraising. One of the advisors will let us know what other fundraisers are happening.
- Have a dance as a way to raise funds for a specific cause
- Microsoft Gaming Fortnite Competition - could be opened up to all CREC schools. Microsoft brings everything in for free. Bryan will follow up with microsoft on details and PFAA will vote to start planning of event.
- Mike Rosenbush proposed the following fundraising ideas: partnerships at supermarkets, coupon books and GHAA t-shirts for family members. Tina found out later that we already had one with Stop and Shop: Code is 07756. She also signed up at Price Chopper and that code is 56543.
- The idea of a brewery night maybe with a student DJ was suggested.
- Picture Day 10/2 and 10/3
- Next Meeting will be Tuesday October 9th at 6PM at The Learning Corridor



