

W. Charles Akins High School PTSA
Wednesday, May 1, 2024
Akins ECHS – Eagle's Nest

MINUTES

In attendance: Angelica Ancira (parent/president), Belynda Montgomery (parent), Lance Wilkinson (teachers), Trudy Richards (parent/secretary), Shekema Dunlap (teacher/staff), Meg Kozel (VP/staff), Michael Herbin (principal), Symi Valenzuela (student/incoming STUCO president), Thomas Loving (student/incoming STUCO VP), Manuel Garcia (associate principal/parent), Cecilia Gutierrez (teacher/parent), Ceci Vasquez (parent), Taylor Mena (A+FCU rep), Connie Miralrio (staff member/parent), Melinda Van Horn (staff), Luna Garcia (student)

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Topic: Ancira and Richards presented outgoing PTSA VP/interim treasurer Meg Kozel with a gift basket and their thanks for her service to the organization. Unfortunately, outgoing fundraising chair, Gessie Wilson, was unable to attend the meeting, but they thanked her for her service and will meet up with her to give her a basket.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Trudy Richards presented the minutes from the April 2024 general meeting.

Action: Meg Kozel made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Shekema Dunlap seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Topic: Kozel presented the treasurer's report for April and the financial report for FY24 as of 04.30.24 and provided commentary on income, expenses, and annual trends. Richards noted that the May report would include significant expenses for teacher appreciation week activities.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Ancira gave an update on the Phill the Box fundraiser. The bin is back in place through May 15 and ready for donations. The total raised thus far from the fundraiser in FY24 is \$390 and a large check is anticipated for April/May pick-ups.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Richards announced that the PTSA received three applicants for the 2024 scholarship. Those applications were redacted of all identifying names and details and provided to a panel of three independent teacher reviewers, who completed a holistic rubric. Kozel tallied the scores and will present the scholarship to the winner at the Senior Send-Off celebration on 05/03/24.

Richards noted that due to the cancellation of The Men's Wearhouse cashback program, money would not be readily available to fund a 2025 scholarship unless the PTSA were to seek out a replacement donation. She also said the PTSA Student Activity Committee (composed of approximately half seniors and half juniors) voted not to continue the scholarship program and to instead use any extra funds toward more student activities. The Executive Board has not chosen to include funding a scholarship in the draft budget for FY25.

Student Luna Garcia asked that the Executive Board reconsider, saying that students weren't adequately informed of the scholarship opportunity with enough time to complete it. Richards noted that although she understood Garcia's concerns, details of the scholarship were mentioned at all PTSA meetings, at all PTSA Student Activity Committee meetings, were provided to the CCC and Gear Up counselors, went out in a mass email to all seniors and parents of seniors, was listed in monthly PTSA newsletters that went out to all PTSA members (including all eligible seniors) as well as all parents and staff, 50 flyers were posted around the school, details ran on the TV announcements for two months, and Ms. Arellano reached out personally to all eligible students to have them complete the application. She noted that the eligible students who did not complete the application said that they didn't because of the community service hour requirement, not because they weren't aware of the opportunity. Richards said that students needed to begin keeping records of service hours regularly as freshmen so that they'd have them when needed in their senior year.

Cecilia Gutierrez suggested having advisory teachers check in with students on a monthly basis to remind them to add volunteer hours to their logs.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Ancira listed the plan for the celebration for Teacher Appreciation Week, including food offerings every day from admin, community partners, and/or PTSA. She mentioned that Richards would be stuffing goodie bags over the weekend and Richards said they'd go into teacher boxes Tuesday (05/07) morning. So far, the PTSA has received several items purchased from the Amazon wishlist for goodie bags plus \$265 in donated funds.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Richards said that she had received an Amazon wishlist for supplies to replenish the teacher workroom from Kasey Roebuck and that the PTSA was able to purchase all items on the wishlist. These will be placed in the workroom next week as part of the celebration for Teacher Appreciation Week.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Richards announced that PTSA currently has 108 members, six more than last year's total at end of year.

Action: None taken.

Topic: As there was no representative available for a fundraising update, no report was given for this topic, but Ancira did mention that since chair Wilson would be stepping down from this position at the end of the year, that is a vacancy on the Board that will need to be filled.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Herbin provided the principal's report. He gave an update on the ECHS graduation of 25 Akins' seniors and detailed upcoming events, including Trustee Awards May 2 and the Cinco de Mayo performance May 3.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Academy Coordinator Dr. Shekema Dunlap provided academy updates. She wished Herbin and Garcia a happy principal's day and talked about the ACC/ECHS graduation, noting that 3 ECHS seniors will graduate with a Dual Language Seal of Biliteracy.

FFA advanced to state for the first time in school history and vet tech interviewed 16 candidates for their senior practicum.

Diego Hernandez placed 2nd at regionals in UIL News Writing and is the first student in school history to advance to the UIL state meet and another student has been selected as a Gates Millennium Scholar.

Biomed took a field trip to ACC and competed in the UIL Science contests. Seven of twelve students who applied for the Infinion internship were hired.

Several seniors in the Social Services Academy participated in a signing day at AISD HQ to sign contracts to work as TAs or subs next year.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Incoming STUCO president Symi Valenzuela and VP Thomas Loving introduced themselves and thanked the PTSA for the support provided to fund and set up the candy bar at prom.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Kozel presented the proposed 2024-25 budget, noting that Richards has transitioned all financial recordkeeping to a new program, MoneyMinder, which will cost \$199 per year (plus a 0.4% fees on incoming transactions through CheddarUp) but will provide the PTSA a free CheddarUp team membership valued at \$360 annually.

Action: Belynda Montgomery made a motion to approve the proposed budget, Gutierrez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Topic: Ancira appointed Gessie Wilson, Natascha Barreto-Romero, and Rosa Cervantes to the Financial Reconciliation Committee, who will review all PTSA financials after the end of the fiscal year on July 31, 2024.

Action to be taken: Richards will provide the committee members with all required details and documentation in early August with an anticipated completion date of August 31.

Topic: Richards announced that Educación con Corazón: Una Plática Comunitaria/ Education with Heart: A Community Conversation was being held May 4 from 10 am to 4 pm at Mendez Middle School, with a breakfast reception before starting at 9 am. This event is a summit convened by Academia Cuauhtli to champion equitable access to transformative education by integrating bilingual education, cultural arts institutions, and indigenous epistemologies into public schools. All are welcome to attend

Richards announced that PTSA had been informed of several instances of racism and harassment at Akins and would be speaking on these issues in support of staff and students at the May 1 CAC meeting during public comment.

Montgomery announced that she had recently attended a fentanyl awareness event and reiterated the dangers of the drug and the need for increased awareness and vigilance.

A+FCU representative Taylor Mena told the group about new Akins' branch manager Esley Gomez. Taylor said that A+FCU is proud to honor 12 students at Akins with scholarships this year (the most at any local high school) and that they are still looking for students to work as interns next year. Any rising junior or senior can apply. The pay rate is at least \$15.50 per hour and students can work on off periods if they have them. See the A+ website under "Careers" for more info.

Action: None taken

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.