

W. Charles Akins High School PTSA
Wednesday, September 7, 2022
Akins Library

MINUTES

In attendance: Trudy Richards (President), Ella Lutz-Carrillo (Membership Chair), Nathan Willis (Treasurer), Yvonne Valdez (Secretary), Meg Kozel (VP), Jeremy Striffler (AISD), Cecilia Gutierrez (teacher), Paula Hawn (parent), Skylar Hawn (student), Michael Herbin (Principal), Matthew Poodiack (parent), Melinda Van Horn (staff), Georgie Morell (teacher), Christopher Aguilar (teacher), plus a few additional parents and students who did not sign in

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m.

Topic: Yvonne Valdez presented the minutes from the May 2022 general meeting.

Action: Meg Kozel made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Ella Lutz-Carrillo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Topic: Trudy gave general PTSA updates and introduced the 2022-23 executive board.

She then introduced Jeremy Striffler, Director of Real Estate for AISD. He presented about the upcoming \$2.44 B bond and what the bond is addressing: safety and security, renovations, major infrastructure repairs, technology, and new buses.

As required by law, there will be 3 propositions: prop a - general purpose, prop b - technology, prop c - stadiums.

The proposed bond package would raise the debt service portion of the school tax rate by 1 cent per \$100 in value. However, since Austin ISD is reducing the maintenance and operations portion of the school tax rate by 6.5 cents per \$100 in value this year, property owners would still pay 5.5 cents less per \$100 in value than last year in school taxes if voters approve this package.

Unlike maintenance tax revenue, bond dollars are not subject to recapture by the state so every cent of every dollar raised would be invested in Austin ISD schools and facilities.

Akins would be allocated \$15.742 M toward: life safety system, security, heating and air conditioning, plumbing, etc.), school mental health center, football/soccer field upgrades

(artificial turf, lights and seating), secure entry vestibule, and CTE improvements.

Parent asked about baseball field at Austin High and was told that it is being paid for with funds raised by their baseball booster club there and is not part of the bond.

Meg Kozel asked how does the cte improvements work and Jeremy Striffler responded that a campus architectural team made up of staff, teachers, parents, and students would be created to determine how those funds would be used at Akins. There is no specified timeline on the project yet since the bond hasn't passed yet.

Melinda Van Horn asked if the school mental health center would be open to students AND community and Striffler said he wasn't aware of it being open to the community.

Principal Herbin said he was very involved with upgrades at Bedichek in the 2017 bond and that it was a good experience and once they knew where money was allocated they could adjust and had plenty of input. Richards noted that if the bond passes, there will be many projects and those at Akins will take time.

Richards explained that the PTSA had to formally vote on whether or not the organization wanted to support and advocate for the proposed AISD bond.

Action: Nathan Willis made a motion that the Akins PTSA support and advocate for the AISD bond. Ella Lutz-Carrillo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Topic: Meg Kozel spoke about a \$10,000 Austin Ed Fund grant that she received to support teacher wellness. With some of these funds, the teachers will get workroom upgrades which include zen den. PTSA is collaborating on this project and they're hoping for renovations for those spaces to be complete mid to end of October. There is an amazon wish list that parents can purchase from if desired:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1MW032NPTY159?ref=wl_share

Cecilia Gutierrez noted that students from engineering classes have helped with measurements for this renovation project.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Trudy Richards discussed 2022-23 priorities and goals.

Community building: more engagement opportunities for parents and students, including Principal Coffees, Blue & Gold Night, and other community events

Teacher Appreciation: monthly birthday celebrations, zen den, and regular appreciation events
Fundraising: membership goal of 200 (currently have 60), merchandise sales (need help with designs if anyone is artsy or crafty), and

Richards noted the more we raise, the more we can help our students, teachers, and staff.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Blue & Gold night will be held 10/26/22 with a rain date of 11/02/22. PTSA helps the academy coordinators with ticket sales and has a booth to sell spirit items. Richards asked that members sign up for 1.5 hour shifts for this event.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Ella Lutz-Carrillo reported that the Student Board of Financial Directors had received a request from the Rock Climbing Club for a student organization grant.

Action: Ella made a motion to support the club with a \$200 grant. Motion was seconded by Melinda Van Horn. Motion passed unanimously. Willis and Richards will make sure grant funds are paid to the club within one week.

Topic: Nathan Willis presented the treasurer's report as of August 31, 2022. Total funds available are \$3,806.82. The 2022-23 budget (approved in May 2022) includes expenditures of \$3,040.00

Action: None taken.

Topic: Michael Herbin provided the principal's report and said he is super excited to be at Akins. He is trying to bring back excitement that kids have missed in the last couple of years, including more pep rallies and events like Blue & Gold Night and Homecoming.

He mentioned that Back to School Night is 09/14/22 from 6-7:30 pm and the first Principal Coffee will be 09/15/22 from 9:30-10:30 am.

Mr. Herbin wants to increase communication, including weekly parent and staff newsletters and his door is always open to talk.

This week, he saw a student council meeting with 70 members and the FFA recently hosted Austin City Council member Ann Kitchen and the Austin PBR Gamblers rodeo crew.

Yvonne Valdez asked Herbin about marquee updates and getting PTSA, theater events, and other events posted on there for more publicity and Herbin said he would make that happen.

Action: None taken.

Topic: Academy Coordinator Georgie Morell provided academy updates:

New Tech just launched the Get Creative Club in partnership with E4 Youth, a local non-profit dedicated to helping bridge the gap between creative careers and students in high school. We also just wrapped up the application cycle for Code2College so we'll have students learning the ins and outs of the computer science world, working in a paid internship, and receiving a scholarship upon graduation!

AHA- Screen Printing Summer Camp was a success

- Roch Ensemble
- Collaboration on mural with MexicArte in Green Hall
- 4 Teachers partnering with Austin Symphony

STEM Biomedical students will participate in HOSA. They are working on two projects related to genetics and funded by DonorsChoose. One of the projects was funded by Bill Gates. TEA has recently approved the BACE (Biotechnician Assistant Credentialing Exam) certification as part of the industry certifications and it will be added to our program. The Engineering Scientific Research & Design students have already started building this year, bringing to life their eco-friendly energy source model designs.

ECHS students began their classes at ACC August 22nd. Students traveled to the ACC South Austin Campus, where they are taking a variety of college courses ranging from British Literature, to Sociology and Economics. Students in specific pathways (Real Estate and Teaching) will be working closely with Mr. Gomez soon on establishing Work Based Learning Opportunities. Here's a picture of the students having fun being college students!

Green Tech Academy: We're having a grooming day on Friday, September 9. On Thursday, August 25 the Austin Gamblers (Austin's own Professional Bull Riders) came to Akins for Austin Gambler's Day. Ann Kitchen shared a proclamation and our students got to meet them. They chose us because we have the largest FFA in the city of Austin. Our Floral design team will be making mums for homecoming. More info will be coming soon. Floral design will also be making seasonal arrangements for staff. Sign-up will come out soon. All of our GTA students started their practicums. Our Vet Tech students are all interning at local vet offices on B Days. Our floral design students will be interning at local floral shops. Austin River Watch will be coming to Guest Speak in our AVID classes and our Aquatic science classes. They are recruiting students for a paid afterschool program to test local water.

Topic: General announcements

Melinda Van Horn asked if the student council could give a report during the PTSA meeting and Trudy said of course! STUCO president Skylar Hawn said their first meeting had 97 attendees and they have 60+ active members. The STUCO would like to do a hot cocoa event, potentially in collaboration with the PTSA.

Trudy Richards announced that Ann Kitchens is not running for re-election, so the city council seat for District 5 representing Akins will have a new face after the November election. There is a candidate forum on 09/22/22 at 6 pm at the South Austin Senior Activity Center at 3911 Menchaca Rd.

Also, the AISD trustee race for District 6 that includes Akins has two candidates, the incumbent, Geronimo Rodriguez, and former teacher, Andrew Gonzales. Community members should familiarize themselves with both candidates before the November election.

Nathan Willis from A+FCU said that any student or staff member can open account and that A+FCU is offering \$50 each time you refer a new member who opens a Cash-Back Checking with a Membership Savings or Youth Membership Savings, plus up to \$50 for the new account holder as well. A+FCU is hiring 1 more paid internship at Akins, but the deadline is 09/12/22, so talk to him soon.

Cecilia Gutierrez, who facilitates the Ready Set Teach program at Akins wanted to let us know that her students are available for childcare for different events at school. If there is interest for events, just let her know.

Meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm.