

**PLEASE NOTE:**  
**THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING.**  
**OFFICIAL MINUTES WILL BE POSTED ONCE APPROVED**  
**BY THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP AT THE NEXT MEETING.**

MIAMI PALMETTO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL PTSA  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
AUGUST 22, 2007

The meeting was called to order by President Andrea Shosfy at 9:08 a.m. She welcomed everyone and introduced herself. This school year being the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Miami Palmetto Senior High School, the PTSA will be making an extra effort to include PSHS alumni in planned events. Ms. Shosfy stated that the PTSA is here to assist students, assist parents, and encourage parental and public involvement in our school.

Principal's Report: Principal Howard Weiner was pleased with the large turn out for the first general meeting and stated that we have the most outstanding PTSA in the district. He is a very proud and active PTSA member and supports all its efforts. He introduced members of his administrative team and then presented an update on the ongoing Phase 1 renovations at the school. The auditorium has been completely refurbished including 700+ new seats, interior painting, new acoustical tiles on the side walls, new flooring, and stage. There are future plans to clean or replace the stage curtains. The exterior of buildings 1 and 2 have been painted and drain basins have been installed between the main building and building 2 to alleviate flooding problems in these areas. Four boys and girls bathrooms in the 100 and 200 buildings have been completely renovated and are ADA compliant. A new water tower has been constructed on the west side of the school and new air conditioning and electrical panel upgrades are finished. It is anticipated that Phase 2 of the renovations will commence in March 2008 and he will give us more information about this later.

Mr. Weiner is disappointed that we lost our "A" School Grade under the Florida Department of Education's School Accountability Report. He explained that in order to earn an "A" under the A+ Plan for Education, several criteria must be met. Although PSHS earned 529 grade points (525 points or more needed to gain "A" status), we were given a School Grade of "B" because at least 50% of our lowest 25% of students in both reading and math must show adequate learning progress for the year. In math, 65% of those students showed a gain. In reading, 45% showed adequate progress, less than the 50% required. Since we did not meet the 50% minimum in reading, although we scored 529 points, we received a School Grade of "B." In science, 56% of last year's 11<sup>th</sup> graders scored at Level 3 or above. That was the highest score in Miami-Dade. While the Governor's A+ Plan says that because we did not meet the 50% adequate progress minimum in reading, you automatically lose a letter grade, he is confident that PSHS will be an "A" school again next year. He provided parents with copies of the FLDOE Grade Level Details explaining our test scores and grade.

He also reviewed the Electronic Device Policy contained in the 07-08 Student Handbook. MDPS's Code of Student Conduct says that the use of cell phones or other electronic devices can be considered disruptive to classroom learning. Last year, students were allowed to use such devices at lunch, between classes, and before and after school. Apparently, kids did not understand the rules and used them during class. They would receive phone calls from parents, call friends in the middle of class, or send text messages. Those activities are disruptive and effect instruction. A second issue was the high number of thefts of electronic devices (phones, i-pods, etc.). As a student safety issue, students were asked not to display the items but many devices were still stolen. If you need to get in touch with your child during the school day, contact the main office, the guidance counselors, or his secretary, Hope Longest, and leave a message for your child.

If your child needs to get in touch with you, teachers have been instructed to issue a yellow hall pass to the student to go to the main office to place a phone call to his or her parents. We are not standing in the way of communication. New attendance rules are posted on our

website. The District is changing its philosophy on attendance. Credits may be withheld due to excessive student absences (this information is also in the School Handbook). Our overall enrollment is down from last year.

Last year, we had 3,450 students (153% of capacity). Our current enrollment is 3,207 students but we anticipate more will register throughout the school year. Over the summer, one side of the cafeteria was renovated and expanded to include additional seating in the air conditioned space. Twenty-five new staff members have been hired this year; and, in two weeks, Mr. Weiner anticipates the new school website will be online.

The Student Parking Policy has been changed and is described in the 07-08 Student Handbook. If you have questions, contact AP Clint Bales. Four hundred and sixty parking spots are available, which will probably satisfy all Tier I Senior student parking requests. Thirty-eight Tier II Juniors (Car Pool Option) have made requests along with Tier III Juniors.

During the question and answer period, a parent asked why cell phones cannot be used during the student's lunch break. Mr. Weiner explained students might call or send text messages to friends who are still in class or relay information on tests already taken. Once a device is confiscated, the student's parent has 24 hours to schedule an appointment with him to arrange for return of the device. If the parents are not told of the confiscation by the child, the student can schedule an appointment with him after five days. Mr. Weiner will maintain a data base to keep track of multiple infractions. He has seen students talking on cell phones or listening to i-pods during fire drills. They do not hear instructions and are oblivious as to whether or not it is a fire drill or a real fire or a "Code Red" situation. We have a responsibility to keep the students safe.

A parent inquired about fights during lunch and security issues. Mr. Weiner advised that the reality of the situation is that we have 3,200 kids packed together in this school. Some will be in conflict and have disagreements with others. A number of students can peaceably resolve issues, but some kids only know how to solve disputes with their fists. Please tell your children that when there is a fight "over there," they should go in the other direction away from the fight. Unfortunately, many kids consider a fight "free entertainment" so they try to get closer to see it and some throw food and water bottles. We have 3,200 kids, 10 security monitors, 5 administrators, and 4 administrative assistants. Crowd control is difficult.

For example, last school year, two boys got into a fight after school. At least 700 kids were standing around trying to get a view. Pinecrest police, Mr. Bales, Mr. Weiner, and our security detail were there but they could not get the kids to move out of the way and disburse. Talk to your kids about dangerous situations and what they should do. We have not had a knife, gun, or other weapons issue here in the past two years, but we need to be prepared. Mr. Weiner has found that when he goes out to the scene with a video camera, the kids flee. Altercations do happen, but not daily or even weekly.

Contact Trish Maggio, Student Service Secretary, or your child's counselor to get the number to access the Electronic Gradebook. A parent expressed concerns about the school being dirty and the dress code not being enforced. Mr. Weiner invited parents to come by during lunchtime to understand the challenge of keeping the school grounds clean. One of the toughest jobs is to maintain the building. Six hundred kids leave an area and they leave a huge amount of trash behind. A lot of time is spent picking up after kids. The district number to call to report a dirty bathroom or one lacking supplies is 305-995-2400. At PSHS every period, custodians go into the bathrooms to refresh them. If 305-995-2400 is called, an e-mail will be sent to Mr. Weiner about it. He would prefer that an AP, Administrative Assistant, or security monitor be contacted about it.

If a student wishes to request a class schedule change, they must fill out the pink form in the Main Office and drop it into the appropriate box. A meeting will be scheduled with their counselor. Senior requests are given priority. Ninth graders have only two weeks to request a schedule change. Changes are not always granted. It depends on what is available and class loads. A child might not get a change for an elective class. A preference is given for errors made by PSHS, i.e. Algebra I vs. Geometry. Back to School Night is September 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

Student Report: Normally, Student Council representatives share information on upcoming events with the membership at this time. Today, PSHS Student Activities Director, Angela Felipe-

Lima, addressed our group. She is trying to increase student involvement at least 10% per organization. Studies show a link between involvement and academic success.

She prepares the weekly "Panther Update" which goes into the teacher's box to share with kids on Monday. Information about what is happening with clubs and sports will be available on the new school website. As a result of changes to the Electronic Device Policy, meeting schedules have been created for all clubs. In the next two weeks, the meeting dates must be confirmed. A minimum of 48 hours prior notice must be given in order to change a meeting date.

The Club Fair is planned during lunch period in September. Tonight in the Media Center at 7 p.m., a Booster Club Meeting is scheduled and is geared for parents who are officers in booster clubs to review guide lines and necessary forms. Coaches and teacher-sponsors have been asked to attend.

This year, Homecoming Dance will be held on a Friday night at a new location: The Radisson on Biscayne Bay. The larger ballroom is not available for Saturday night and we did not want to limit the number of students attending (1,000 vs. 700), so a change was made to Friday night. Therefore, the Prowl will be on Wednesday night and the game held on Thursday. Contact her at ext. 2267 or [aflima@dadeschools.net](mailto:aflima@dadeschools.net) if you have questions.

Treasurer's Report: Isabel McBrayer had two items to report. She thanked the Audit Committee, Cheri Ball, Cecilia Prah, and Roxy Lancell, for their work over the summer. They found no discrepancies and made a few recommendations. A copy of the Audit Report is available for any member to review. A motion was made by Karen Kett to approve the Audit Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Nancy Harter. The motion was approved.

The next item for consideration is approval of the proposed 07/01/07-06/30/08 PTSA budget. The Treasurer reviewed the budget including new items: General Donation program, Senior Class Contribution, PTA Feeder Pattern, and Adopt-A-PTA (the latter two chaired by Cheri Ball). After a question about clarifying a line item and discussion, it was decided that the Expense item entitled "DCC PTA Functions & Feeder Pattern" would be amended to "PTA Functions & Feeder Pattern." A motion was made by Nancy Harter to accept the proposed 07-08 Budget as amended. The motion was seconded by Sima Miska. The motion was approved.

Introduction of Board: President Shosfy introduced the members of the PTSA Executive Board to the members.

#### Committee Reports:

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Nancy Harter described her position as being in charge of the committees on organization. She encouraged everyone to take home the 2007-2008 PTSA Directory which contains contact information for all the committee members, the board, EESAC, etc., and emphasized the importance of attending PTSA meetings because of all the information and support you will receive. Norma Miller, Hospitality Chair, would like volunteers to help her with setting up refreshments and food prior to the General Meetings. She can be contacted at 305-252-4292 or [normaimiller@aol.com](mailto:normaimiller@aol.com).

The Staff Breakfast, chaired by Michelle Softness, held the Friday before school started came out great. Attendance was higher than in prior years and the teachers appreciated it. The PTSA will provide you with more information about the Holiday Luncheon and End of Year Luncheon as the year progresses.

Newsletter co-chair, Jill Bloom, thanked everyone who helped fold, seal, and label the newsletter this past summer. She and Bonnie Gaebe are in their last year at PSHS and Kim Foster is planning to take over for them. They will need help with the newsletters planned for December 2007, March 2008, and May 2008. If you would like to volunteer, contact her at [bloomsie@gmail.com](mailto:bloomsie@gmail.com).

E-mail Chair, Lynne Schaefer, recommended all members sign up with the PTSA for e-mail notifications. PTSA contact keeps you informed and involved. Mary Steele, Volunteers Chair, said volunteers are the heart of this organization. If you cannot come to school, there are still many things you can help with (donating food, baking at home, volunteering for special projects or evening events, etc.). So the PTSA and school can receive appropriate recognitions,

she also asks that members keep track of their hours, including meeting attendance, baking, volunteering at the school, etc.

1<sup>st</sup> VP Harter reviewed the School Volunteer Program Registration Form which must be completed by all volunteers. If you were issued a Volunteer ID # from a prior Miami-Dade public school, be sure and include it on the form. She also stated that assistance is needed in the Main Office and that the Guidance Department needs help with student traffic, managing forms, etc. If you volunteer on a regular basis at the school, you need to be issued an ID. Student IDs are being issued over the next two weeks. Mr. Weiner will be sending out an e-mail about how to obtain an ID. At the September general meeting, he plans to have the equipment here to issue IDs to volunteers.

Finally, please note that the north parking lot (#1) off 74<sup>th</sup> Avenue is the Visitor Parking Lot. On PTSA meeting days, the basket ball court is opened to allow parents to park there and enter directly into the Media Center.

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Cheri Ball handles the Committees on Education. Attendance co-chairs, Lynne Schaefer and Debbie Bochnovich, need volunteers in the school's Attendance Office on a regular basis 1 to 4 hours a week to assist with parent pick ups. Nancy Harter chairs Community Outreach. Guidance Chair, Ellen Genet, schedules helpers on an "as needed" basis in the school's Guidance Office to do filing, paperwork, etc. Lynne Schaefer notified PTSA members from last year via e-mail about today's meeting. If you did not receive her e-mail, check with her to make sure she has your correct e-mail address ([phsptsa@bellsouth.net](mailto:phsptsa@bellsouth.net)). We also recommend you add this address to your Address Book.

Sima Miska, Health Programs, said an interactive panel discussion is planned for the November meeting. Items talked about will be the prevention of teen alcohol and drug abuse. Studies indicate that drugs are being used less, but kids are starting to drink alcohol at 9, 10, and 11 years old. Panel members will include a prosecutor, the head of the Addiction Treatment Program at South Miami Hospital, a DUI officer, and a Miami Children's Hospital physician to discuss the effect of drugs and alcohol on the developing brain. We all have wonderful kids who need to be informed. The college party scene places a lot of pressure and stress on our children. Let's help them handle it.

Parents, students, alumni and all community members are invited. Please pass the word so we have a big turnout in the auditorium on November 14<sup>th</sup>. We will have a brief PTSA meeting at 7 p.m. and the program should start by 7:15 p.m. If you would like to assist her in organizing the event, she can be contacted at [shmiska@aol.com](mailto:shmiska@aol.com).

Debbie Rosenthal and Barbara Davis, co-chair Public Relations. Ms. Davis stated that lots of kids and teachers do noteworthy things that are not necessarily recognized. This year, they are trying to let the community know what other groups and kids at PSHS have done outstanding and important things – not just sports-related activities. They plan to utilize the school website, "School Scene" in the *Neighbors* section of the *Herald* newspaper, and *The Panther* newsletter to enlighten the public. They welcome input from parents, clubs, staff, etc.

Legislative co-chairs, Cheri Ball and Jennifer Wollman, would like members to start thinking about attending the Florida State PTSA Convention held in November in Daytona Beach. Our PTSA representatives can go and learn about the legislative platform and meet new people with common goals to support education in Florida.

3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President: Becky Hergert explained the Committees on Ways & Means as fundraising. One of our PTSA's biggest fundraisers is the required reading Book Sale. It is a service provided to parents to alleviate having to go from store to store to try and purchase required reading books. It is a one-week only sale from September 17<sup>th</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup>. Volunteers are needed to interact with teachers, cover a shift during the school day (2 shifts per day), and bring lunch for other volunteer parents.

This year, PSHS PTSA is launching a new donation plan that has proved successful at other schools – our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Direct Donation Program. We are requesting direct donations to accomplish more of our programs, especially in light of anticipated budget cuts by the Legislature. PSHS is used all day and night (community night school). Karen Kett, Chairperson for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Direct Donation Program, invited parents and alumni to read

the program form. It spells out exactly what the PTSA spends money on and how it benefits the students (computers, furnishings, student awards, etc.). By today, the third day of school, we have received \$1,500. General donations can also be made on the PTSA membership envelope.

Mercedes Sorensen, Membership co-chair, came to PSHS with great ideas on how to increase membership. In honor of the school's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, she along with co-chair, Donna Kupper, want our PTSA to be the largest in the State, not just Miami-Dade County. PTSA Membership is open to the entire community and is not an exclusive club. We have a lot of clout with the State due to our size. The Legislature is more inclined to listen to the concerns of a large group trying to influence policies and programs that benefit our kids and the children of the entire State.

Three dollars of each member's dues goes to the State PTSA. Our PTSA keeps the balance. Since we want to enroll more students this year, we have decided to donate \$1 of each student membership to their senior year activities fund. Each year, juniors fundraise for their senior year activities. The PTSA donation helps them out and helps "support the pride." As of today, we have 200 members. Seventy-nine staff members have already joined. Last year, 90% of the PSHS staff joined the PTSA. Last year's membership was over 1,000. We have 3,200 students enrolled at PSHS. If both kids and parents joined, we can easily meet our goal. We have a great opportunity for growth.

The EESAC Committee met very briefly yesterday. The next meeting is September 18<sup>th</sup> at 2:40 p.m. in Room 1005. All parents are welcome to attend EESAC meetings. We will have a meeting report next month.

District 5 School Board Representative Evelyn Greer's liaison, Riva Steinman, was recognized. She confirmed that Ms. Greer plans to attend the October PTSA meeting and speak.

Old Business: We were given an update on a couple of items approved in last year's budget, to wit: Athletic Director Yvette McKinney is ordering floor mats to protect and cover the gym floor (for example, during the College Fair) and the Media Center has purchased and received its new sofas. A parent at the school, Mark Smith, is developing our new PTSA website. Its temporary home is <http://palmettopsta.org>.

New Business: Media Specialists, Dian Adjamah and Lorelee Manheiner, introduced themselves and expressed their appreciation of all the support our PTSA gives to the school and the Media Center. They are happy to see us every month. They want members to know the Media Center has set up a "Parent Area" on the side wall next to the "Careers and College" reference area. It contains a lot of college catalogs and other parenting materials. Parents can check anything out of the Media Center just like the students.

Also, they have established a 'reading center' for the kids next to the free paperback books. Students can borrow these donated paperbacks. More books are always welcome. Please take the Media Center handout which tells you all about the services and programs available to students and parents at PSHS. Finally, a sizeable fish tank and stand was previously donated to the Media Center. Unfortunately, it is too large and if our members know anyone who might want it, please contact Ms. Adjamah. "If they can haul it, they can have it."

Announcements: Our next general meeting is September 19, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. in the Media Center. Senior Parent Night is September 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium. The required reading Book Sale is September 17<sup>th</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup> and the next EESAC meeting is September 18<sup>th</sup>, at 2:40 p.m. in Room 1005. Kaplan Test Prep services will again offer PSHS students a couple of practice SAT exams sometime in December 2007. Cost per student is \$5. Claudia Glasson will have more information at our next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by  
Roxy Lancelli,  
Recording Secretary

PHSPTSA 08 22 07