



Issaquah High PTSA 2.6.45
General Membership Meeting
Via Zoom

November 13, 2020
9:30 am

Our PTSA Mission

To expand educational opportunities and enhance the learning and social environment at IHS through programs, volunteers, advocacy, and financial support.

Call to Order Kim Wilkinson called the meeting to order at 9:31am. Proper notice of the meeting was given and a quorum was present. In attendance: Kim Wilkinson, Birgit Aarrestad, Alisa George, Tara Moe, Wendy Maruchek, Satnam Purewal, Blyth Claeyes, Wendy Cummins, Sathya Kannan, Heidi Fuhs, Kristen Allen-Bentsen, Carla Geraci, Shamitha Sridharan, Julie Gamble, Karissa Mobilia, Heather Bratton, Betzy Jones, Amy Korb, and Cynthia Lydum.

President's Report (*Kim Wilkinson, Birgit Aarrestad*)

Kim Wilkinson reported the following information:

- Thanks to our October volunteers:
 - *Angel Program Coat Distribution* – Angel co-Chairs Julie Gamble and Karissa Mobilia
 - *Staff Appreciation Cookie Drop Off* – Hospitality Co-Chairs Rachel Stoner and Laura Schmidt
 - *Ask an Academic Advisor Night* – IHS Counselors Jennifer Schwartz, Christian McKone, and Alan Waite; co-Chairs Puja Taunk and Tianquig Liu; and translators Marisa Garcia Struck, Ana Limon Garcia, Dania Xiang, and Tianqing Liu
 - *Virtual ACT/SAT Practice Tests* – Chair Tracie Kinsley and Rebecca Davidson/Huntington Learning Center
 - *New Family Ambassadors Virtual Coffee with the Principal* – Co-Chairs Cathy Habib and Lisa Hill and Principal Andrea McCormick
- Social media “Spotlight” series featuring teachers, staff, students, and recent alumni is helping people get to know the IHS community. Thanks to many referrals, we’ve got a great backlog of students to spotlight in the coming months. We’re now looking for alumni to spotlight. Please email suggestions to the co-Presidents
- Our Nominating Committee to find next year’s officers will be forming in January. Let Kim Wilkinson know if you are interested in serving on the committee
- Washington State PTA is offering two competitions - Game Development and Essay Contest; entries are due on March 1, 2020; more information is available at www.wastatepta.org
- No grants were requested in the first cycle. Requests for cycle #2 are due Jan. 15
- Thanks to our speakers this month: IHS Principal Andrea McCormick and Swedish Teen Health Counselor for ISD Sara Torelli.
- Check issaquahhighptsa.org for the most current information about upcoming events

Secretary's Report (*Alisa George*)

The October 13, 2020, minutes were reviewed and filed as corrected.

Treasurer's Report (*Tara Moe*)

Tara presented the October 2020 Financial Report. Our tax return for the last fiscal year has been filed. Insurance coverage has been renewed with same levels of coverage. AIM is not reducing any premiums for this year. Bank statements will be reviewed by a non-signer (Bhavna Patel).

Activity highlights:

- Income
 - \$690 in Memberships
 - \$200 in Pass The Hat, getting us close to goal of \$20K
 - \$375 in Angel Program donations
- Expenses
 - \$2,880 in Membership fees
 - \$315 in PTSA Council fees (SurveyMonkey and Parent Ed)
 - \$615 in AIM Insurance Premiums

Committee Reports

Outreach (*Blyth Claeys*)

Angel Closet

Karissa Mobilia and Julie Gamble reported that 22 families were enrolled in the Angel Program at the time of the coat distribution event on Oct. 28; clothing and toiletries were distributed to 10 students; the enrollment number is low—last year 93 families were enrolled; enrollment is now up to 29 families; IHS staff has been extremely responsive and helpful; next event in December will be some sort of replacement for Lunch for the Break, which the Food Bank isn't doing this year; the Committee is currently planning a January "jeans and hoodies" event; students can access the Angel closet any time if they notify the school

New Family Ambassadors

Next event is the "Virtual Visit to the College & Career Center," on Nov. 17 from 6:00-7:30pm; normally this event would be for new families only but this year it's open to all families

Parent Education

Heidi Fuhs reported on two upcoming presentations that are geared for high school parents:

- "How to Raise Successful Kids Without Overparenting" by Julie Lythcott-Haims, Nov. 18 @ 7:00pm
- "Beyond Behavior: Understand and Solve Your Students' Behavioral Challenges" by Mona Delahooke, Dec. 9 @ 7:00pm

Register at www.parentwiser.org

Membership (*Kim Wilkinson for Nicole Garcia*)

782 members, 26 staff (but some staff have purchased family memberships). Goal is 800 members.

Programs (*Wendy Cummins and Sathya Kannan*)

College and Career Planning

Virtual ACT/SAT Practice Tests are in motion. 43 students took the Nov. 7 test (ACT) and 70 are registered for the Nov. 14 test (SAT). The scoreback session will be on Nov. 18.

Reflections

17 entries were received. The committee is almost done with scoring and will let the students know this weekend who is moving forward. There won't be a Zoom celebration because student response to that idea was negative. Thank you to judges Mark Morin, Angie Warren, Liz St. Andre, Ann Marie Petry.

Community Service

The Community Service award recognizes students who volunteer 100+ hours during high school. Hours can be logged on our website at any time. Seniors who already have reached 100 hours received an acknowledgment from Chair Nicole Garcia last week.

Speaker

The first speaker, IHS Principal Andrea McCormick, was introduced.

Principal McCormick reported that the District plan for bringing back in person sports and clubs has been readied, and was discussed at the school board meeting last night, but in light of our numbers and the prediction that cases will go up during late Fall/Winter, it's been put on hold. We are far from the threshold that would permit the plan to be implemented under the Washington State Department of Health COVID-19 decision tree. The cases were in the 200s

yesterday (number of cases per 100,000 people over a 14-day period), and they would need to be at 75 or less for sports and clubs to return. It's unclear when we'll get to the "moderate risk" target numbers. Our LRC-2 students are in school four days a week, and there have been no issues. Next events where students will come to the school are photo pickup and second materials distribution. Staff is working on two projects to improve online learning: (1) a campaign to encourage students to turn on their video screens on during Zoom classes, and (2) a plan to allow teachers to observe colleagues who are handling Zoom classes really well in hopes of improving their own presentations. The District is doing a survey about the bell schedule and IHS will review the results to see what can be improved.

Question: would the length of the school day or class periods change based on the results of the survey?

Principal McCormick acknowledged that the amount of screen time is a lot for kids, but OSPI requires a certain amount of instructional minutes, and IHS has to be in compliance with those rules.

Question: does the resolution adopted by the school board last night have any impact on a return to in-person learning?

Principal McCormick noted that the resolution applies only to early learners returning to in-person learning before the District hits the decision tree target numbers. The resolution directs the ISD to bring back grades K-1, then 2-3, as close as possible to the beginning of the second trimester. The text of the resolution is available on the ISD website.

Question: is it true, as some students have heard, that the Skyline High School cross country and football teams have started practices?

Principal McCormick believes this is a misunderstanding or miscommunication among students because the District has not authorized any sports practices at this time. She noted that sports are a weird grey area because coaches often are affiliated with private sports leagues in which student athletes participate. It blurs the line between what is and isn't a school-sanctioned activity. She also is aware that some activities are being run by Boosters outside the schools. IHS is not renting its sports fields to outside groups at this time, and the ISD is looking at this issue generally.

Question: is it school policy that assignments given on Monday are due no earlier than Wednesday, and those given on Tuesday are due no earlier than Thursday?

Teachers have been asked to move their assignment deadlines, but this is not an enforceable rule because it hasn't been negotiated with the teachers' union. Other high schools (e.g., Liberty) may have more uniform compliance with this guideline than IHS does. Principal McCormick said she understands that students feel pressure because they have all their classes on Mondays and Tuesdays and it's difficult to also get assignments done, and she's happy to pass along this feedback to IHS teachers that students are feeling this way. Similarly, teachers are encouraged not to assign homework over the Thanksgiving and Winter breaks, but this can't be enforced because it's not in the teachers' contract.

Question: will there be any changes to IHS's grading policy this semester (similar to Bellevue's announcement that it will not report first quarter grades for students in grades 6-12)?

This is a District decision and Principal McCormick doesn't know if any changes will happen. Letter grades are being discussed all around King County, as are options such as giving incompletes instead of Fs, and giving students the option for pass/fail grading. Some students are working to improve their GPAs so they want letter grades. IHS also is concerned about on-time graduation.

Committee Reports (continued)

Events (*Heidi Fuhs and Kristen Allen-Bentsen*)

Senior Events

Betsy Jones and Cynthia Lydum are co-Chairs for all senior events. We still need a chair for the Senior Farewell, and would love to have a Junior parent shadow. The Committee is making alternate plans for in-person and virtual celebrations so we will be prepared for either outcome. There likely will be one more committee meeting before First Winter Break.

Communications (*Wendy Maruchek*)

Social Media

We have increased our followers on all social media channels:

- 651 Facebook

- 463 Instagram
- 73 Twitter

Family and Community Engagement (FACE)

IHPTSA has a Mandarin Chinese WeChat group, and a Spanish WhatsApp group. Email ihptsaface@gmail.com to be added to either group. Also, the District is setting up a Korean-language group (not specific to high school) on KakaoTalk.

Advocacy (*Kim Wilkinson for Carla Geraci*)

Sathya Kannan, Wendy Maruchek, and Kim Wilkinson attended Legislative Assembly for us this month. On even-numbered years, a new platform is voted on by PTSA members at the Legislative Assembly. The top five issues become the WSPTA's short-term platform and inform its advocacy throughout the year. The legislative priorities for 2020-2021 are:

1. Increase Access to Nursing, Mental Health, and Social Emotional Learning Staff
2. Support Students and Preserve Education Funding
3. Increasing Educational Equity by Closing the Digital Divide
4. Supports and Funding for Students with Disabilities and Their Families
5. Prevent and Reduce Gun Violence and Suicide

Speaker

The second speaker, Swedish Teen Counselor for IHS, Sara Torelli, was introduced.

There is one mental health counselor assigned to each high school and middle school. The elementary schools share counselors. Counselors have been providing telehealth services since COVID-19 closed the schools. This has brought some changes. Normally, students over age 13 can access services without parental consent, but for telehealth services at least one parent must sign a form to give consent. The counselors see students with a variety of concerns, including anxiety, depression, organizational problems, grief, and trauma. Anxiety is quite high currently. Also normally, students reach out to the mental health counselors, or school counselors refer them, but now the mental health counselors are advertising through the schools' websites and getting emails from parents and students. The services are meant to be short-term, but often are extended depending on the needs of the student. A counselor typically meets with a student on a weekly basis to start, and then tapers off as the student progresses. Counselors use screening tools such as the PHQ-9 and GAD-7 questionnaires to assess how students are being impacted, for example, looking at eating habits, sleep patterns, etc.

In a survey by Harris in May 2020, 61% of students reported an increase in feelings of loneliness, 43% reported depression, 55% reported feeling anxiety, and 70% have experienced mental health struggles in general during the pandemic. COVID-19 has exacerbated the problems, but the problems are not new. Our area (Eastside) has high expectations and correspondingly high rates of anxiety. Parents are noticing more because students are home more. The mental health challenges are being reflected in lower grades, lack of motivation, etc.

Signs to watch for in your students include: sleep and appetite changes, thoughts of self-harm, student's affect and lack of motivation, mood problems, changes in academic performance, substance use/abuse, crying, and irritability. You should check in with your students on a regular basis, especially with males because they tend to hide problems so parents need to ask directly.

Question: how can parents best support their teens' mental health right now?

Sara said that the high school mental health counselors will be making a presentation on "Supporting Your Teen During COVID-19," on Nov. 17 @ 7:00pm. The Zoom link is available on the ISD website.

Parents can email Sara at either TorelliS@issaquah.wednet.edu or sara.torelli@swedish.org and let her know if they are interested in her services and she will send the consent paperwork and set up a time to meet with their student. She can meet on Wednesdays or in the evenings so the student doesn't have to miss class. She also likes to Zoom with parents because it helps her to get a more well-rounded view of the student's situation. Sara noted the inequity of IHS (2,500 students) having the same .8 counselor as Gibson Ek (180 students), but says she doesn't turn students away due to lack of capacity.

Adjourned 11:00 AM

Next Meeting: Friday, January 15, 2021 at 9:30am

Respectfully submitted,

Alisa E. George, Secretary