

September 2026 Horace Mann PTA Meeting Minutes
 September 30, 2026 (In Person - HMS Library)
 6:00-7:00pm

Agenda Item:	Who:	Time:
Welcome and Introductions • Call Meeting to Order. Welcome and introductions • Approval of last meeting's minutes: linked here • <i>Approved</i> • Upcoming meetings: (All meetings in HMS Library) • Wednesday, November 4, 2026 • Wednesday, February 3, 2027 • Wednesday, May 12, 2027	Katie	6 pm 5 min
Election of Vice President to Fill Vacancy • Nomination of Vice President candidates <i>Molly Mons was nominated and elected as vice president through a voice vote.</i>	All	5 min
Band Program Spotlight with HMS Band Instructor, Bella Marek <i>Bella is out sick today; we will reschedule this for the November meeting.</i>	Bella Marek	5 min
Treasurer's Report and Approval of the 2026-27 Budget <i>The proposed budget for FY27 (this school year) is posted here on the PTA website. We typically budget conservatively and often bring in more income than expected in the budget. The budget is broken into three categories: total income, "cost of goods sold" (fundraisers' expenses), and expenses.</i> • <i>Sources of income</i> ○ <i>Silent auction is the PTA's biggest fundraiser. This happens in the spring. Last year we brought in \$80,000.</i> ○ <i>Read-a-thon (RAT) takes place in November. Students log minutes of reading and raise money. Last year we brought in \$17,000 but budgeted \$10,000.</i> ○ <i>Give-to-the-Max happens around the same time as Read-a-thon.</i> ○ <i>Others: cash donations, membership dues.</i> • <i>Cost of goods sold</i> ○ <i>This is where the budget shows the estimated costs to run each of the fundraisers.</i> • <i>Expenses (things PTA funds)</i> ○ <i>Classroom funds: every teacher and specialist gets \$1,000 per year to pay for anything they need, including bookshelves, lights, etc.</i> ○ <i>Field trips. PTA covers buses, access to field trips.</i> ○ <i>Artist (or other) residencies.</i> ○ <i>Rollerskating (renting rollerskates)</i>	Sam (PTA treasurer)	10 min

○ Art Adventure ○ Others ○ New items: organized school supply pilot. PTA bought all the school supplies on behalf of the students. We had a lot of teacher input. The goal was to promote equity (all kids have supplies on day one), drive cost savings (purchasing power and tax exempt status). We budgeted no income for this because it was a test case. The estimated cost was \$23,000. The actual cost was \$20,800. We've had a great reception. So far, we've raised \$18,900. We consider this a success given that we're still building awareness of the program. Discussion ● Jim Litwin: we receive money from the district to pay for some supplies; this is budgeted per pupil. By allowing the PTA to support those expenses, the school has been able to use more of its fungible budget to preserve more staff positions (e.g. TAs). ● Sam: we're coming into the year with \$146,000 in our bank account. ● Katie: we try to promote equity with the PTA resources. Our support allows field trips to be free, and yearbooks. This is why we do ongoing fundraising. ● Question 1: does the school provide forms to serve as documentation for employers for employer matches? We provide a receipt. Give to the Max also does. ● Question 2: is the link still live for school supplies? Yes (though we are not tracking this). Budget is approved with no opposition.		
Principal's Forum Mr. Litwin is working on a five-year plan for the school and is following the School of Excellence Program (from MN Principals Group?), examining the school through a different lens, asking new questions. In PTA meetings, Mr. Litwin will report out less and ask more questions of parents. Parents are encouraged to share any information with Mr. Litwin in person at arrival or dismissal, or at the principal's conversations over coffee. Discussion questions include: ● How did the school year start? Successes? Challenges? ● Where would you like to see the school improve or grow in the next five years? ● How well is the school community working to value diverse people, ideas, perspectives, and experiences? Discussion ● Successes: the gnome being restored, school supply pilot ● Challenges: Dropoff is more chaotic because the field is fenced off. ● The school has many resources online, but in many places. It would be nice to have an online hub for information. ● A parent suggests more parent events like the National African-American Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID) ● Heritage nights to celebrate various cultures within Horace Mann (there are non-religious cultural events that can be observed) ● Parent gatherings by grade level—ideally events that would bridge	Principal Litwin	10min

<i>the long gap between the August playground events and the Great Gathering events in the spring.</i> • <i>It would be nice if the directory came out sooner to facilitate connection. It would also be good to have more visibility for kindergarten families to know to sign up. Can parents opt into the directory when they register for the school?</i>		
Teacher updates • <i>The school supply pilot went really well from the teacher perspective. It saved work on meet-the-teacher night. We'll only need a couple tweaks to the list for next year. Getting ready for Read-a-thon. Overall, a smooth start for 5th grade.</i> • <i>Teachers express gratitude for the school supply effort and the broad support from the PTA.</i>	Mr. Lindskoog/ Ms. Kortuem	5 min
Parent Organization Intentional Technology St. Paul • <i>Chandra represents a district-wide organization of parents who are interested in promoting discussion and awareness of how technology is used in SPPS schools.</i> • <i>Parents in the group have been surprised to learn how much their kids have used iPads, provoking more conversation at the school and district levels.</i> • <i>The parent group has started having conversations with the district, which have contributed to the district's recent moves to limit access to email and YouTube.</i> • <i>The group presented to the school board and the board has adopted a governance goal, and is doing an assessment of iPad use throughout the district.</i> • <i>The group is not anti-technology, just focused on intentional, evidence-based use of technology.</i> • <i>The group encourages engagement in the conversation about technology and encourages parents to present at school board meetings (less intimidating than it sounds, just 2-3-minute slots).</i> • <i>The group wants to help get evidence into the district's hands.</i> • <i>Teachers appreciate getting rid of YouTube!</i> • <i>The group will be meeting October 7th at the MLK Rec Center, 7-8:30pm. Several school board candidates will attend. Candidates have been invited to respond to a survey about technology use in schools.</i>	Chandra Kilgriff	5 min
PTA School Supply Purchasing Program Update • <i>The final cost was \$50.83 per kid, very close to the \$50 estimate. We've had 90% reimbursement and the PTA will happily cover the rest.</i> • <i>Next year, we may be able to dial in the supply lists. We had an overage of some materials this year, which will be stored for next year. We expect to keep the \$50 number the same even if the cost comes down a bit, given that it's a "pay what you want" model.</i>	Katie	3 min

• All feedback has been positive! • Some people wanted a receipt so they could look back and confirm that they had paid – we want to add this. • It was tricky to get messaging out to new families. We will do more next year for new families. • We would like to form a committee of about 4 people to run it for next year. • Next year we will also prepare some extra packs for new students.		
PTA volunteer open position updates • Annie Mach and Emily Phelps are the volunteer coordinators. There's a form in the Perspectives to indicate interest in volunteering. There are all kinds of volunteer opportunities and we encourage everyone with any interest to fill it out! • The biggest need has been to support the auction, though we've received a lot of volunteers recently. Cara Gustafson is the chair.	Annie and Emily	3 min
Committee updates: RAT, yard signs • Read-a-thon (RAT) committee chair Jill Kramer has shared that packets will go home Oct 26. • Sam and Jesse Mischke re-ordered yard signs. Suggested donation of \$15 per sign to help cover the cost (but they are available for free!). Signs will be available for pick-up at the Boo Bash and other events.	Katie	2 min
Open Forum/Action Items: • Sarah Haley: Make-it-take-it will be the first Thursday of December. There will be communication coming out asking for volunteers. • Molly Mons: We will need help with the carnival in the spring. The long-time organizer has moved on. There are two organizers but they're looking for a third. It's usually the first week in June. • Volunteer opportunities: supporting Boo Bash day of the event (Thursday before Halloween), supporting Make-it-take-it. • Free Family Fun Nights are also happening again; not planned yet.		open
Adjourn		7pm

HM PTA website: www.hms-pta.org If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions please email web-admin@hms-pta.org

Employer match: We also encourage families to check with their employers as many offer a company match to the cash donations made by their employees

Current Board Members:

President: Katie Bliss, president@hms-pta.org

Vice President: VACANT, president@hms-pta.org

Treasurer: Sam Smith, treasurer@hms-pta.org

Recorders: Sarah Liuzzi and Bethany Hyde, recorder@hms-pta.org

Volunteer coordinators: Emily Phelps and Annie Mach, volunteer.coordinator@hms-pta.org

Communications: Amanda Prutzman, communications@hms-pta.org

Teacher Representatives: Amy Kortuem and Mark Lindskoog, teacher-rep@hms-pta.org