November 2026 Horace Mann PTA Meeting Agenda
November 4, 2026 (In Person - HMS Library)
6:00-7:00pm

Agenda Item:	Notes	Who:	Time:
Welcome and Introductions ☐ Call Meeting to Order. Welcome and introductions ☐ Approve last meeting's minutes: linked here ☐ Upcoming meetings: (All meetings in HMS Library) ☐ Wednesday, February 3, 2027 ☐ Wednesday, May 12, 2027	All attendees introduce themselves.	Katie	6 pm 5 min
Election of co-Treasurer to fill vacancy ☐ Nomination of Co-Treasurer candidates ☐ Election of Co-Treasurer	Bethany Hyde is nominated for co-treasurer. Bethany is elected by a voice vote. Bethany was one of the two recorders. Now that she is transitioning to co-treasurer, the PTA would like to identify another recorder.	All	5 min
Band Program Spotlight with HMS Band Instructor, Bella Marek	Our band program is the biggest in the district. We even get first dibs on instruments. We have used almost our entire instrument inventory. We have 28 fifth graders and 49 fourth graders. We don't have enough chairs in the music room, so we need to pull chairs from other places to accommodate all the students. On Mondays, band teacher Bella does pull-out lessons during the day. Band is also a huge part of EDL after school Mondays and Wednesdays. Band is an opportunity to learn things in a different context from the	Bella Marek	10 min

	rest of school. We want to promote responsibility, like remembering to bring instruments, taking initiative, and practicing collaboration and teamwork. They're working with 49 peers all at once. **Parent question**: what's the most popular instrument? Answer from Bella: Sax or trumpet. This year, trumpet is most popular right now. **Parent question**: How do kids express interest? Answer from Bella: Bella hosts an instrument show-and-tell for all fourth graders at the beginning of the school year. Kids fill out a sheet to express interest and they list the two instruments they're interested in. Then they get to try the instruments to see what they like. Bella also offers private lessons. **Parent question**: How does transition to middle school work? Answer: It depends on the middle school. A lot of Horace Mann students who went on to Highland for middle school were able to jump into intermediate band because they had that foundation. **PTA question**: does band need more funding for instrument repair? Answer from Bella: Not right now, but it's likely to be a need in the future. **Parent question**: Do you have everything you need for reeds, etc.? Answer from Bella: The district covers reeds, valve oil, etc. Students don't have to pay for anything. **Ms. Korteum**: Many thanks to Bella for her work! It takes a special person to take this job. It's special that we have Bella, who is entering the teaching profession and has stayed for a second year. She always keeps what's best for students at the forefront of what she does.		
Treasurer's Report	Give to the Max and Read-a-Thon are two major fundraisers for Horace Mann. Both are happening this month. Please check to see if your employer offers a match. **Revenue**: we are wrapping up the school supply pilot. We brought in a little over $19k and it cost just over $20k, so we came in very close. We budgeted $0 for the pilot to be conservative in the first year. I expect that next year we'll have more of a formal line item in	Sam	10 min

	the budget. We are spending on some other items like field trips. We are in the process of filing our tax return over the next couple weeks. Not much other spending this month. The bank balance has $147,493 but the book balance, net of some money we owe, is at $127,940. Bethany and Sam met about the co-treasurer position. They're finding ways to share the work.		
Principal's Forum ☐ (1) How has the first quarter gone? Successes? Challenges? ☐ (2) How could we improve the ways we highlight what makes our school special to keep strong enrollment? ☐ (3) How well do we help families choose the best options for your child's unique needs?	Mr. Litwin is going through a process of understanding what makes our school work well. Using the MN Principals Association School of Excellence process. Later this year, he'll be sending out a comprehensive survey. Before that, he's asking a few questions at these PTA meetings. The three questions are shown in the first column of this table. Parents discussed amongst themselves. **Discussion** ● Whatever you're doing on the tour seems to be working well– said a parent who chose Horace Mann from a different neighborhood. Another parent remembered hearing about a lot of "extras," like the band program. ● The tour focuses on kindergarten since most parents are incoming kindergarten families. ● Fifth graders send letters to visiting families (if they share their address or email). ● DC is a nice plus that Horace Mann offers. ● The school choice fair downtown left one parent feeling confused. It would be nice if we could somehow clarify how people can get into Horace Mann. ● Another parent appreciated being able to have a helpful phone call with Mr. Litwin. This school was able to differentiate instruction for students learning at different levels in different subjects. Also, this school has a different sense of community than other schools. ● The community sense is very strong–a parent shares how	Principal Litwin	10min

	their kids want to spend time at school even when they don't have to. ● The PTA offers very strong support, which is unique within a public school. ● Parents are very committed and involved. ● Mr. Litwin: so many people hear that it's hard to get in that they don't even apply. The reality is that people can get in–right now we have 6-7 openings.		
Teacher updates	We're getting ready for conferences. For 5th grade, we just finished our Bdote field trip, which helps kids understand cultures in our region. Students brought clipboards and took notes on the field trip. They're now working on posters that should be up for conferences. Read-a-thon is underway.	Mr. Lindskoog/ Ms. Kortuem	5 min
PTA volunteer open position updates	**Auction**: Emily attended the auction meeting on Monday. The meeting was well-attended with 17 people. The auction is our biggest fundraiser. It's in March. We were without auction chairs, but things are coming together. Cara, now the auction chair, is slotting people into roles. **Free family fun nights group**: the current volunteers are done after this year. **Carnival**: Molly handling this, it's early to get started. We have a lot of committees and a lot of needs, so we try to always look ahead to try to keep them filled. We also have to manage knowledge transfer.	Annie and Emily	3 min
Committee updates	**Read-a-thon** (Jill): This kicked off on Sunday (Nov 1). The theme is mystery. The mystery is "who is Mr Bookman?" **Parent question**: Are fundraising numbers shared? **Answer**: No, the focus is on minutes read, not money (money is not discussed at school at all). It is definitely a fundraiser, but we don't want to pressure kids on fundraising. **How to donate**: You can use Give to the Max as a way to make your	Katie	2 min

	Read-a-Thon donation. There are some incentives to donate on that day (they do drawings on the hour). The GiveButter platform is most favorable because it doesn't charge a platform fee (GTTM does have a fee). Timing of donation for an employer match doesn't matter–it's fine if it comes in later in the year. We can have employers match the Read-a-Thon donation! **Make it Take it**: Thurs Dec 3, 5:30-7:30. You can RSVP or volunteer via Perspectives. Everything is free, this is a really well-run event! **Art Adventure**: all classrooms have volunteers. Working with teachers to get field trips scheduled. All classes go to MIA. **Family volunteer service committee** has wrapped up gathering resources–will be delivering to our sister school, the Heights within a week. The general idea is to facilitate sharing from a school with a lot of resources to another school. This partnership started during Operation Metro Surge. We were partnered as part of a coordinated effort by school social workers. They are so grateful to our community and happy with the partnership, as are we. We hope we can do more with them, hopefully going beyond giving them things. This committee can also always use more help.		
Open Forum/Action Items:	Where does the PTA keep all our documents? There's a Google Drive for all the PTA emails. It's not really well maintained. This could be a future project.		open
Adjourn			7pm

Committee Updates:

Make It, Take It Craft Night

All Horace Mann families are invited to join us for our annual free family craft night on **Thursday, December 3rd from 5:30pm-7:30pm** in Holleran Hall, sponsored by our PTA. Check Perspectives starting this week to RSVP, sign up for volunteer shifts, or donate food & drinks. Contact Sarah Haley at girard312@gmail.com or Allison Deep at alli.deep@gmail.com with any questions.

Art Adventure

All our classrooms are covered with volunteers for February presentations and we are working with teachers to get dates for field trips down.

Read-a-thon

The Horace Mann Read-A-Thon is designed to create and reinforce strong reading habits in our students while raising funds to support various school-wide activities such as field trips, the library, and Art Adventure. (Fundraising is an optional part of participating in the Read-A-Thon.)
We had a great kickoff to the Read-A-Thon on Monday with Ms. Witt and Detective Bookman (aka Ms Kortuem) getting the students excited for The Great Horace Mann Read-A-Thon Mystery: The Case of the Missing Celebration!
Students will help solve the mystery by tracking their reading minutes and unlocking clues. Aim for 15–30 minutes of reading at home each day! Students will spend and track additional reading time in class.

- Information packets went home with your student on 10/26 and the RAT officially starts Sunday, Nov 1.
- Donations can be made throughout the month by mailing a check to the school or online via GiveButter.
- The closing ceremony will take place on Friday, December 18 at 8am in Holleran Hall.
- Celebrations for top reading classes the week of December 21st!

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: Molly Mons, president@hms-pta.org
Treasurer: Sam Smith, treasurer@hms-pta.org
Recorders: Sarah Liuzzi (sarah.humpage@gmail.com) 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