

UNIS PTA Meeting Agenda

September 11, 2007 Conference Room 8:30am-9:30am

8:30-8:38 Welcome and Opening Remarks: Sarah Garner - PTA co-chair ECC/ES

Introduction of PTA Executives:

Susanne Gromotka (Co-Chair MS/HS), Robin Hendra (Vice-Chair), Anh Quan (Secretary) & Annie Hirabayashi (Treasurer)

Introduction of UNIS Board of Directors PTA Representative:

Jackie Kearns

Introduction of UNIS Administration:

Alun Cooper (Head of School), Conal Atkins (Elementary Principal), Lesley Peacock (MS/HS Principal), David Porter (EC Assistant Principal), Chris Vincent (MS/HS Assistant Principal)

8:38-8:48 Community Relations Officer Remarks:

Julian Carey – Communications Manager

- **Publications - Handbooks: A different approach this year. Parent and Student Handbook received by all families. ECC/ES families receive Grade Level Guide, and MS/HS family the Curriculum Guide. Would like to have feedback from families on this possibly by email.**
- **Publications weekly newsletter - Tin Tuc: This year's Tin Tuc accessible electronically. Hard copy summaries sent home with students. Hard copy summaries to continue due to parent agreement.**
- **Photo days: last year's parent feed back: not enough purchasing options and want group/class photos. Individual pictures not good quality. This year proposal - 2 class pictures, one for each semester as class composition changes. Parents said they want the individual photos even if not good quality. Parent suggestions: 1. choose pictures digitally on web instead of printing out proofs. 2. should be free of charge 3. download off website so can be free. School will consider options.**
- **Directory: parents to be emailed this week for feedback on format. Difficulty because mother's name/surname usually known, but child's surname may be different from the mother's. Need different/new approach. Parents need to update Emergency Contact information; forms due last Friday 7/9/07; updating contact info, emergency info to be forwarded to the admissions office: admissions@unishanoi.org.**
- **ID cards: to be discussed next meeting.**

8:48-8:50 PTA Secretary's Report: Anh Quan

Minutes available on UNIS website: www.unishanoi.org, click on PTA link on left-hand side under "community", once on PTA page, on right-hand side are the minutes organized by the school year and month.

8:50:8:52 PTA Treasurer's Report: Annie Hirabayashi

Statement update.

Responsible for approving purchases and spending.

Current remaining balance 16,977USD

Copy of details of incoming/outgoing funds for the last year was past around for review.

8:52-9:06 Review of PTA Committees:

1. Boutique (Mayumi Kobayashi)
Purpose is to promote school spirit by making available for purchase UNIS logo items – backpacks, caps, mugs, calendars, etc. Available in the communications office.
2. Class Parents (Sarah Garner)
New committee. Parent representative for your children’s class. Serve as a contact point for parents, teachers, and school. Facilitate communications for parents in class. MS/HS class parents role different. Serve as contact points for upcoming social and events for MS/HS.
3. Events (Book & Bake Sale (Nov 16), UN Day (Oct 26), Spring Fair (April 19))
Book & Bake Sale – (Ronnie Suozzi) – need 5-6 volunteers. Need donations from all – used/new books, magazines, DVDs, etc. from all languages, and bake goods. Competition for top donation from Discovery to 8th grade. Winning grade to receive pizza lunch.
4. Food Services (Susanne Gromotka)
Meetings with Aden and within committee. Important because the Canteen is for our children. If sign-up for the committee, please show up to meetings. It’s a lot of work.
5. Funds (Hilda Pillay Cajon)
Funds allocation. 30% goes to charity organizations - lead by Liz Druit. Recently funded was common room for MS/HS – painted and furnished. Problems – incorrect process of requests made by teachers; need to inform teachers of proper procedure. Parent feedback welcomed on how funds should be spent this year.
6. Snack Sale (Mika Ishii)
**Monthly event. 9 sales total for the school year. Each class contribute only once per year. If parents of more than one child, and class turn coincide, supply snacks for one class only. Fun for the children. Time starts after assembly on Friday. For Discovery class, basket of variety of snacks brought to their classroom before assembly for them to choose. Each snack costs 5000vnd. Parent to provide peanut-free snacks only. Calculation: average 2 snacks/student, total of 403 students (44 families), 806 portions of snacks needed, therefore need 24 portions from each student.
Snacks only 5000vnd because content worth.
Baked goods preferred over commercially purchased ones to contribute to “healthy snacks”. Parent to buy 100% fruit juice boxes if baking is not feasible.**

Problems from last year: Usually upper classes (4th & 5th grade) tend to have lower contribution. Possibly because lost of interest, less parents involvement, or reminders lost. New approach with success: teachers to remind parents, flyers, and communications through class parent(s).

No more purchases from Metro for back up supplies. Snacks to be solely from parents – establishment of stronger interest from parents.

7. Social (Autumn Social (Sept 28), Staff/Teacher Appreciation, Winter Social (Feb 1)) (Sarah Garner)

Purpose is for parents and teachers and staff – to get together.

Autumn PTA social coming up Friday 28th September, at Jafa's restaurant.

8. Welcome (Julie Rogers)

Julian Carey spoke on behalf of Julie – Tea/coffee mornings to welcome new parents. Parents get together and talk. Date to be announced, in couple of weeks. Class parents are notified of new students coming into their class.

9:06-9:08 Formalization of PTA (Articles of Association): Robin Hendra

In progress. Ideas and suggestions most welcomed, especially if you have prior PTA experience. Please email PTA@unishanoi.org.

9:08-9:10 Special Topics for PTA for Future Consideration: Robin Hendra

(e.g. Admissions Policy & Execution, Funding Guidelines, other hot topics)

Blocks of time will be set aside during PTA meetings, or possibly different times, for discussion of special topics.

9:10-9:30 Open Discussion and Questions for UNIS Administration

Discussion #1: the UNIS recruitment process.

Parent Email Question: Teaching staff provides proof of their professional qualifications and references. However, does the school perform background and police checks on all school employees? If so, I would like to understand a little more about the process and whether it takes place prior to someone commencing their employment. It is important to establish if the check applies to all UNIS staff, teaching and non-teaching, as well as any sub-contractors (e.g. cleaners and gardeners) who work at the school.

HOS: There are 2 groups- teaching staff and local staff recruitment.

Teaching staff/overseas staff is recruited through established agency – CIS and recruitment fair. The names of approved candidates are posted online; therefore the reference searches have already been done, but UNIS does its own as well. The process is very robust. For local hire staff, references are requested, but in Vietnam, references are hard to get. However, that's changing and more and more, references are obtainable and backgrounds can be checked.

Parent: What about locally hired expats?

HOS: Reference check is easy. But police check is not. Sometimes possible to go back to host country to check records. Will try to use best informed source at all times.

Parent: It is important that background check is standard because of direct contact with young and vulnerable people.

HOS: We certainly need to check on past actions/records that are considered unsafe to work with children, particularly on the issue of pedophilia.

Parent: Are current, already employed Vietnamese staff “checked”

HOS: The Vietnamese law changed to allow police checks, but was not intended for retroactive use. There is no mechanism for checking staff hired before date of law change.

Discussion #2:

Parent email question re: UNIS' risk assessment procedure in the following areas:

a) On site building work.

The current building project in the Elementary playground appears to be inadequately cordoned off with merely plastic sheeting wrapped around the base of the structure. On Saturday the 8th of September, work was being carried out on the structure, which coincided with Saturday Soccer. The school field was full of children, parents and younger siblings, many of whom were using the play equipment next to the construction site. In the two hours I spent at Saturday Soccer, I did not see one member of UNIS staff supervising the work being carried out. All the fields surrounding the construction were being fully utilized, with balls often straying onto the worksite.

HOS: Different places around the world have different appropriate levels of safety. Will try to accommodate. Will contact Liam Eaton, Facilities Manager, re: the issue.

Parent: When will construction be finished?

HOS: Unknown due to rain. Will have estimation if and when there's 24hour period without rain.

Parent: Why wasn't this accomplished over the summer?

HOS: Delayed due to rain.

Parent: But summer was relatively dry with very few rainy days. And construction did not start until 4 weeks before the start of school.

Addition to minutes: HOS provided the following information following the meeting: The PO was signed on 29/6/07, confirmation of intent was sent on 3/7/07, terms was agreed on 4/7/07, deposit check paid on 06/07/07. HTM (the contractor) began work on 9/07/07, 6 weeks prior to start of new school year. Heavy rain in August caused delays twice. Current finish date given by HTM is 16/9/07.

b) School trips.

How does the school assesses the safety and suitability of a trip? Are teachers allowed the time to visit the proposed site prior the trip taking place? What is the minimum adult/child ratio, as it would be hoped this would be higher for activities taking place outside of school. If the ratio falls beneath the minimum, are trips postponed?

HOS: Teachers do scope areas before trips. If there are doubts in certain areas, WHO or other agencies to supplement data on safety. Trips are always covered by SOS. They are forwarded list of participants. In case of emergency, SOS to be notified by cell phone. Appropriate number of adults to student ratio, especially for younger students. However, this is becoming more difficult due to growth of school – teachers from different areas must be utilized.

Discussion #3: Bus Concerns

Parent: Her child in PK has come home exhausted from waiting to get on bus and sitting in sun for more than 20 minutes. Bus commuters are taken out of classroom 10 minutes prior to dismissal, then sit and wait for more than 20 minutes, then loaded on un-air-conditioned buses, for about 10 minutes before departing school. Child comes home dehydrated.

ES Principal: At 3:12, students are escorted to bus site. 1st bus leaves at 3:18, last bus leaves at 3:26. Students wait in ES covered area until escorted to bus.

Parent: The process is unmonitored.

ES Principal: monitored by Mr. Atkins and Mr. Porter everyday.

Parent-: Bus monitors have limited understanding of English. One incident when there was a traffic accident, the bus was 1 hour overdue, could not contact monitor and bus was not trackable.

Sarah, PTA: Bus committee is not currently active. If parent wishes to reactivate it, she is welcome to do so. Individual concerns can be addressed at a separate meeting with admin.

HOS: last year survey, indicators from parents, and at bus meetings penalty clause for bus company implemented. UNIS prepared to do that for students and parents. Monitoring process of loading bus very thorough by principals and assistant principals. However, improvements are continuous process.

Annie from PTA: Suggested to email Mr. Cooper on what other schools are doing with bus commuting.

Parent Question re: Climate survey.

HOS: Board will receive tonight, and will disseminate within next day or so.

Announcements: Chemical Dependency workshop – Wednesday 19/9/07.
Speaker to speak with students first, then parents.

Parent Question regarding who are the Teacher Representatives.

MS/HS Principal: There are 4 candidates who have applied. Traditionally, one per school, however, two would be preferred.

Parent Question regarding what is UN Day.

HOS: UN Day is UN Birthday. Meeting at 3:30pm 11/9/07. Start recruiting process. Celebration on 26th of October. Formal assembly in the morning. Collapse day – meaning format of operation different from normal school days. Theme is “The Earth”. Invited UN guest to speak at assembly. Shared lunch facility. Last year very successful. This year’s goal to make even better than last. Needs lots of help from parents.

Reminder of Upcoming PTA Events

September 18: PTA Newcomers Shopping Trip (sign up through ComEd)

September 28: Fall PTA Social

September 14: Elementary School Snack Sale (PK-RC, 1W, 2H)

October 9: PTA meeting

October 12: Elementary Snack Sale (3D, 5W)

October 26: UN Day

UNIS website: www.unishanoi.org PTA email: pta@unishanoi.org