

## DeBakey HSHP PTO – Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020

**Location:** Zoom

**Attendance:** 78 participants (participant list attached)

President Gulab Singh called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

President's Report – Welcomes parents to the new school year. Encouraged parents to join PTO – it's free to join! Children of involved parents statistically do much better. Introduction of Board members followed. Introduced parents to class liaisons:

Nichole Ake – 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> grade – [9thliaison@debakey.org](mailto:9thliaison@debakey.org)

Cindy Forgey – 11<sup>th</sup> grade – [11thliaison@debakey.org](mailto:11thliaison@debakey.org)

Nellie Naidoo & Irma Aguilar – 12<sup>th</sup> grade – [12thliaison@debakey.org](mailto:12thliaison@debakey.org)

Principal's Report – Ms. Perry welcomed parents back to school. Acknowledged this year will be particularly challenging given the on-going pandemic. Parents are encouraged to visit the school website regularly, at least once a week for important announcements and updates.

Asst. Principal Goudeau sends weekly “Call Outs,” providing important information for the week ahead.

HISD as well as DeBakey counselors use Naviance (an American college and career readiness software provider) to disseminate important college information to the students. Juniors have been instructed to set up accounts. Parents also need to establish a Naviance account.

DeBakey recently hired a Music teacher. Three music courses being offered this school year: Music Theory, Music Media and Orchestra. Space is still available for students interested in Music Theory and Orchestra. Deadline for sign up is this Friday, September 18th, at noon! Students are to use the Google form (on the Hub) to complete any schedule changes and sign ups.

Parents are urged to discuss course workload with your students, particularly for those taking AP courses. Reemphasized that schedule changes must be completed by the end of the second week of school – which is this Friday!

Ms. Perry introduced Ms. Sandra Rodriguez, Instructional Technologist, who shared information regarding an app to receive updates to the school website. Blackboard account enables parents to receive updates from the school website via email. HISD is trying to simplify access to information. Ms. Rodriguez then shared details regarding various virtual platforms being used by the district. Microsoft Teams has been working fairly well so far. Some issues with system overloading are being addressed. The Hub has been quite stable. HISD has a vendor working with the schools to resolve technological issues (usually within 15-20 minutes). District is also

working to increase the bandwidth/server capacity. Confident that glitches will diminish as the semester progresses. For students who are experiencing computer glitches, the following “work around” is suggested: take the laptop to a nearby school – on the grounds, not inside the building. It shouldn’t take more than about 5 minutes for the laptop to “synch up” with the school wi-fi, which should reboot the laptop system. All HISD laptops have access to Microsoft Suite and Office 365.

Teaching and Testing Approaches – various tools are being used to assess student’s progress. College Board has yet to announce how student assessments will be measured this year. Ms. Perry strongly recommends use of the Hub and Teams for instructional delivery. Teachers may also use additional apps.

HISD will be sending several forms (electronically) in the next few days. It is imperative that parents complete all of the forms and return them promptly! Among the forms to be sent are Home Language; Student Assistance and Student Change of Address. DeBakey is a Title 1 school, determination of which is contingent upon completion of the demographic forms. DeBakey uses Title 1 money to fund its tutorial program. Dean Sharkey provided additional information regarding the Title 1 program.

Teachers will return to campus October 12 to prepare for student return on October 19. Still awaiting final numbers of students who plan to return F2F.

Ms. Perry will attend a Principal’s meeting tomorrow – will likely have updates to share following that meeting; however, status quo is expected to continue, at least until early 2021.

Treasurer’s Report – Cindy Forgey. PTO fundraising is more challenging this year due to limited uniform sales (because of Covid and virtual learning – uniforms are not mandatory). Parent donations are more critical than ever. With all donations, please make certain to specify if the donation is for a particular project (for example, Teacher Appreciation, College Night etc.). Parents are encouraged to sign up for PTO today – it’s free! Parents are also encouraged to consider company/donor matches. PTO also participates in Amazon Smiles – once you sign up, PTO earns a contribution based on your Amazon purchases.

VP of Fundraising – Trinh Nguyen and Ziba Mehra, reporting. DeBakey PTO is creating a Benefactor Wall to raise money for the PTO. Parents, community members and DeBakey alums are being asked to contribute to this fundraising effort. Trinh Nguyen showed parents the picture of the Benefactor Wall – it will include donor plaques that can be purchased to support PTO. PTO Board will announce shortly the various giving levels in order to purchase a plaque. Discussion followed regarding purpose and additional PTO fundraising strategies. Ms. Perry advised the PTO that DeBakey will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Fall 2022. This celebration is separate from the current Benefactor Wall fundraising effort; however, it’s not too soon for PTO to begin thinking about planning for the coming milestone.

VP for Communications – Andrea Simon. PTO Communications helps to reinforce school messages. PTO wants to have all parents on the distribution list. Please take advantage of FREE PTO registration! PTO website provides multiple methods for receiving DeBaKey information. Be certain to sign up at [Communications@debakeyptto.org](mailto:Communications@debakeyptto.org).

Announcements: Parents, if your child needs transportation in order to participate in HISD magnet programs, it is imperative that you make request to HISD immediately (this week).

For students returning to classrooms in October, parents should be aware there will be social distancing; masks will be required; elevators will be limited to 2-3 passengers; sanitizing stations will be in each classroom as well as in the hallways; custodians will regularly wipe down surfaces including bannisters.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.