

**Freedom Hill Elementary School PTA General Membership Meeting
April 28, 2020, Video Conference Call**

[Recording is here](#), Access Password: **3v#^5on@** (Length: 1 hr, 25 min)

Attendees:

Gina Song; Mike Jones; Christy Jones; Diana Hernandez; Pat Nguyen-Cao; Sara Haddad; Tori Draude; Theodore Nguyen-Cao; Nicole Camara; Monica Joyce; Rachel Shabica; Michelle Zahalsky; Whitney Kruckenberg; Nasser; akhjjc; Karl Frisch (School Board Member); Dr. Zapadka (FHES Principal), Mr. Kopacz (FHES Vice Principal); Mary Gutenson (FHES Head Start); Donna Hill (FHES Counselor); Elizabeth Halmon (School Psychiatrist); Velma Campbell (School Counselor); Tara Rice (School Social Worker); Deb Speert (PTA VP Corporate Fundraising); Liz Spinney (PTA VP); Kristin Drozdowski (PTA Treasurer); Sahar Javadi (PTA President)

Upcoming Event Dates:

April 30 Fogo to Go Family Dinner Out, make sure to mention FHES

May 4-8 - Teacher Appreciation Week

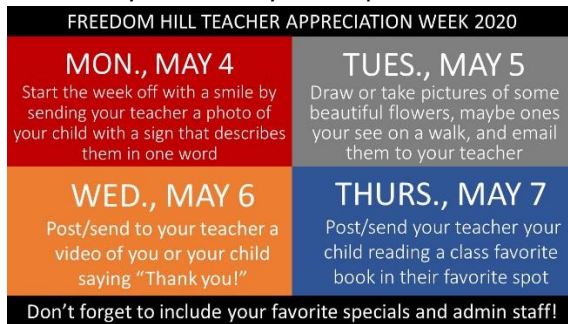
May 11 - Virtual brown bag with Dr. Z, 12:30

May 13 - Bike or Walk Around Day

Announcements:

- FCCPTA Survey – share your insight on thoughts **by Wed. @5pm**
<https://tinyurl.com/fccptasurvey>
- Check out recording of Dr. Brabrand’s Q&A Session with PTA Presidents
<https://tinyurl.com/fccptadrb> (It is about 50 minutes)
- Poll to see whether we should do virtual coffee with principal - several parents responded ‘yes’.
UPDATE: Designated time for May 11th at 12:30pm.
- We will designate a bike/walk around day in lieu of Bike to School day on May 13th.
- Fogo de Chao – Fogo to Go! This Thursday, 4/30. Mention Freedom Hill for 10% to PTA and 10% No Kid Hungry. Delivery or Curbside Pick-up for meals. Additional grocery type of items available. Located on ground floor of 1775 Tysons Blvd. office tower.

- Teacher Appreciation - May 4-8th. Thank you Tina Crawford for organizing! Teachers and staff will get: FHES computer sticker, coupon for a Papa John's Pizza and a surprise at school via social next Friday. We need your help!



Nomination Committee:

- **THANK YOU TO OUR NOMINATION COMMITTEE!**
Victoria "Tori" Draude, Whitney Kruckenberg and Jennifer Melendres
- Tori presented the – Officer Slate for 2020-21:
 - President – Sahar Javadi
 - Vice President – Elizabeth Spinney
 - Secretary – Gina Song
 - Treasurer – Kristin Drozdowski
 - VP of Membership – Kerrey Olden
 - VP of IT and Communication – Amber Halaka
 - VP of Business Development – Debra Speert
- Sahar will reach out to committee chairs to see about their plans next year. Any and all volunteers welcome.

Budget Update and Vote:

- Current income - \$50,471; Expected income - \$51,000
- Current expenses - \$31,492; Expected expenses - \$51,000
- (\$3K-\$5K may be incurred over the summer or carried into early next year)
- We're expected to break even. Financial reports will be posted to Freedom Hill PTA website. Email any questions to treasurer@freedomhillpta.org
- What to do about field day designated funds? Board recommends that we reallocate these funds to the teachers and room parents for additional grade-level funds. There was \$2,250 set aside for field day. We tracked the money set aside by each grade and all money will go back to the grade it came from. We will ask for a vote.
 - Sara Haddad motioned to go forward
 - Mike Jones seconded
 - Asked for anyone opposed - no response
 - Motion passed

FHES Mental Health Team Resources:

Concern over the new virus can make children and families anxious. Acknowledging the level of concern in any family member is appropriate. Introductions to FHES Mental Health team that's here to help!

Resources:

[Mental Health brochure here](#)

<https://tinyurl.com/fcpswellness>

Team: Elizabeth Halmon – emhalmon@fcps.edu, Donna Hill – dmhill1@fcps.edu

Velma Campbell – vecampbell@fcps.edu, Tara Rice – thrice@fcps.edu

Guest Speaker - Karl Frisch, School Board Member

- Thanked Sahar and the PTA.
- BIO: New Providence District Representative on the Fairfax County School Board. A former small business owner, Frisch worked with clients like the National Education Association, Rock the Vote, technology companies. Frisch previously served as staff for the Committee on Rules in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 2019, Frisch was elected to represent Providence District on the Fairfax County School board, ultimately garnering more votes than any candidate for school board in Providence District history. He is also the first openly LGBTQ+ local elected official in Fairfax County. On the School Board, Frisch will prioritize investing in student success and safety, inspiring future careers, promoting environmental sustainability, advancing equity and inclusion, providing responsible fiscal stewardship, maintaining high academic standards, and supporting teachers and staff with better pay and resources.
- New reality. When I was in High School, I was told everything we would do would be on a webcam. Now that is happening. Want to thank Dr. Z and also all the mental health professionals. Hopefully the budget process will provide funding there. Need enhanced and increased social support.
- Karl grew up in California and been in the area for 20 years. Partner an educator for about 15 years. Heard about friends leaving FCPS for better salaries or lower cost of living. So Karl got involved (e.g., meals tax advocacy, Providence bond committee).
- Day job is in Washington, DC in public policy. Was Executive Director of Allied Progress.
- Ran for school board only a year and a half ago. When Dalia Palchik decided not to run again for the seat, I decided to run for that, after much deliberation.
- 2/3 of the school board is now new. Usually the budget would be done by now, but still being updated based on new situation with the pandemic.
- I am grateful to be here with everyone.
- PTA solicited questions from the community. Karl will answer these questions and any others that come up before the end of the meeting.
- What are your priorities?
 - The have shifted a bit. When I started there was a better economic situation. I wanted to deal with the capacity issue (some schools at 120% capacity), making sure we continue to invest in our staff (but there are certain aspects that have been left behind). Want to focus specifically on support staff. Equity is really important. This is a really

- large umbrella to make sure all aspects of the community are getting what they need out of their schools, making sure schools with fewer resources have the same great programs, ensure that advanced academics is available at every school.
- But now it's about protecting the progress made in the past few years, but also prioritizing where there is money available.
 - In the middle of budget process and public health emergency at the same time.
 - What happened with the school closing?
 - 3/11 Loudoun County schools closed after decision made late night before
 - 3/12 Fairfax County had a closed meeting, needed to make sure procedures were in place in case someone tested positive for COVID-19; then press conference; midnight on 3/12 email to community about 3/13 closure
 - What people have not really put together is what happened after the Friday-Monday-Tuesday closure. A teacher did test positive. There were changes of plans. Can't talk about what is discussed in closed meetings.
 - School Board is a governing body, not a managing body. Superintendent gets his/her authority from the School Board. If School Board disagrees with Superintendent, they can press him/her to do something else. It's similar to a strong advisory committee, but the School Board is the boss. We do speak up (like we did with the technology). School board could reverse superintendent's position (or augment it). School board consensus is difficult though – there are often differences of opinion.
 - This is where we found ourselves in early March. We were going to take that day to learn more about distance learning. We thought that by the time distance learning was live, we'd be good. Blackboard was down. In advance of that happening, there were school board members raising questions about doing tests of the system. When we were trained in the beginning, we were told we weren't going to use Blackboard anymore. And we've heard that lots of teachers don't use it. Some use Google Classroom. Now many teachers use Google to teach kids.
 - Will there be more funding for online resources like Dreambox? Scott Brabrand said he'd put forth a proposal to get every elementary school student a device this fall this coming May 11th.
 - Original budget was thriving on a good economy. We've had to course correct since then. The new budget numbers are disappointing, but there is some hope there.
 - We thought we'd get more \$ from last year, but now there is much less more and I wouldn't be surprised if there is no more. We're growing 6% in population. Regardless, next year it'll be more expensive to serve and this adds up.
 - We were supposed to have \$89M and now will have \$7.3M; just glad to get something
 - At the state level, we were supposed to have \$69 million, but this has dropped to \$65 million.
 - At the federal level, we are getting a one-time funding of \$20M from the Cares Act.
 - In terms of how it will be used, we've handed out over 600,000 free meals. Also, 16,000 laptop devices and over 1,000 wireless hotspots have been distributed. And that's still not enough. One thing we did early was to approve an expenditure outside of the regular process, we promoted more technology for middle schools (FCPS On). Middle schools are now at a 1:1 ratio. We also put in parameters because we wanted to see it

used. Not only the technology, but also enrichment and more staff development. Will measure these things as well as application usage and screen time.

- Distance learning #s – today 300,000 attendees for 46,000 sessions. More than double what we had yesterday. We are benefiting by having more classroom flexibility and getting Blackboard up and running has been helpful. Superintendent is doing a survey to inform a working group to take into account all of the options for next fall. All things are being considered. Money in our current budget is being put aside. Need to invest in wireless hotspot devices. Helping with internet has been more challenging than giving out the laptops. But we can prioritize. I hope we can invest more money there.
- In terms of Dreambox. I think it would be easier for FCPS to pick up the licensing for this. Not sure whether there is \$ in this budget for that, but willing to explore adding Dreambox to the FCPS budget if and when there is room for it.
- Do the survey – it's important for us to know what is going on and what parents are feeling and thinking.
- Getting help for the technology. For example, there is a Superintendent Technology Council helping with this. They are offering their insight to navigate these waters. We should have had flexibility in the beginning. School Board has an oversight function which helps refine our approach. I supported the independent audit to launch distance learning from technical, leadership, and other perspectives. First phase will be complete in a few weeks. We need to do that for several reasons: 1) where were all the mistakes made to have accountability and 2) we can find ways to save money, and 3) we need to know exactly what problems there were specifically. When audit is complete, results will be publicly available.
- Some parents such as Safe Pac at Freedom Hill have been lobbying for construction of a security vestibules. This would be at Freedom Hill and other schools not in the renovation queue. How will this be impacted by budget cuts?
 - Dalia Pakchik was responsible for making sure there was a plan for what it would take to get this done. It was determined this would cost \$6.4M, but this plan did not have funding attached to it.
 - When you exclude schools that already have vestibule and those in renovation queue, there are 114 schools (73 elementary schools, 19 middle schools, 13 on non-traditional schools) that do not have a vestibule. But now all budget amendments have been removed from the table.
 - I would have been a supporter of this and it does remain a priority. Most likely it will need to be funded over a few years instead of all at once. Hope to start with elementary schools.
- Will the technology committee continue after this school year?
 - I hope it does. I also don't want it to stop there. Before we were even elected, we talked about a technology committee of our own. FCPS On is a fantastic program, but it needs more civilian oversight. We hadn't done it yet because we've been talking about how we use advisory committees. How do we make it collaborative with the school board.
- How are staffing decisions made for school and does the school board have any oversight? Also, more tech help might be needed.

- Dr. Z explained he is becoming more familiar with the process. In March and April all principals have a meeting with the people in charge of staffing. I get a piece of paper with all positions for next year. Driving factor is student enrollment. Also look at 5-year historical trends, 6th graders matriculating into middle school, etc. We find out how many kindergarten teachers we've been budgeted, then 1-3 teachers, then 4-6 teachers. Outside these three main pots, we have specialists, special ed, and others. There are possibilities for principals to make trades (but there are rules about who can and cannot be traded).
- To answer why FHES has 1 art teacher vs. 2 PE/2 music - (1) we really have 1.6 PE and 1.6 music and 1 art, (2) students receive 90 minutes of music and P.E. but 60 minutes of art.
- Great news! Based on numbers, will be able to hire an extra .2 art teacher next year (1 day per week)
- Special needs students – is there anything that the school board or FCPS can help oversee that special needs students get the attention they deserve and that there are parameters to prevent these issues from happening in the future?
 - In addition to being Providence Rep, I am also chair of governance committee where policies are created for school division. Abuse reporting policy was one thing I tackled right away. Need guarantee that abuse policies are taken seriously. We had one meeting February, but now with COVID-19 we aren't meeting. Starting in May, we'll go back to committee schedule. A complete, top-down audit is recommended for special education programs. Asked that review look at shortcoming with distance learning and special education. He School Board has approved the audit, now they need funding. More to come on this.
- Are big tech companies allowed to sponsor different aspects of FCPS?
 - Yes, many of them help through the FCPS Foundation.

Karl can come back in the fall, and he can also do one-on-one meetings. He has been having several in March and April and has 40 hours set aside for these meetings in May. Meetings start at 15 minutes, but they can go to 30 minutes (can choose Zoom or phone call). Links are on Karl's Facebook and Twitter accounts or you can sign up here: <https://calendly.com/karlfrischfcps/office-hours>

Email: Karl.Frisch@fcps.edu

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KarlFrischFCPS>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/KarlFrischFCPS>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com//KarlFrischFCPS>

Karl Frisch is having a Town Hall in May with Dalia Palchik - it is tentatively on May 9th but check social meeting accounts for more up-to-date information.

Sahar thanked everyone for coming and to Karl for answering everyone's questions.