

Phoebe A Hearst Elementary School
Parent Teacher Organization

PTO Meeting (Closed)
February 11, 2026
PHE Multipurpose Room - 6 pm



Our Organizations Agreements: Individuals agree to be respectful of others, engage in collaboration and communication, and listen to who is speaking without interrupting. Because this meeting will be short and focused, please keep dialogue on topic and brief.

Attendance:

Present:

President: Erica Clayton

Treasurer: Anastasia Dolotov

Co Treasurer: Denae Pruner

Secretary: Nichole St. Germain

Principal: Brooke Fahey

Communications: Amanda Panton

Special Events Coordinator: Kerry Sokol

Parliamentarian: Isaac Gonzalez

Hospitality: Kearsten Shepherd

Membership Coordinator - Jen Almaguer

Garden Chair: Melissa Miller

Fundraising Coordinator - Fonda Trimble

Kristen Henderson

Members at Large: Rachel Connor, Jason Hechtkopf, Carolyn Chu, and Mina Tahai.

Call to Order - President called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

- **Approval of Draft Agenda** - Anastasia motioned. Melissa seconded. Ayes carried the vote.
- **Approval of January 14th Minutes** - Jeanne motioned. Carolyn seconded. Ayes carried the vote.
- **President Report:** Erica Clayton -
 - Welcome & Reflection

- General Updates
 - Emphasized the importance of using the draft calendar to plan events collaboratively. If you need help navigating the calendar, I can send the link again. Using the calendar helps us work together and schedule appropriately.
 - Skate Night has been moved to April 21st. This still gives us 9 days open in April. If we wanted to do Science Night that same month, that is a possibility. Member question: Is Science Night not happening on the current, chosen date? Answer: No, it is not. The committee will discuss and choose a new date for the event.
 - Encouraged committee members to recruit additional volunteers, as our board is shifting and changing and people will be aging out of our school and/or moving on from roles. We need people to take on these roles and we need to be recruiting. We talk about painting fences white with a lot of enthusiasm, this really draws people in. Please tell how valuable, meaningful, and important volunteering is for our community and kids. Everyone has a niche to share or fill. Connect with and reach out within our community and help build the bridge and paint that fence with excitement.
 - Upcoming Election: The Election is scheduled for our meeting on May 13th. We need someone to take over the role previously held by Serra. We need someone to help make the election process and voting process more streamlined and user friendly. We need to be more prepared so we can make the process better this year. Member question: Last year, was there a QR code that needed to be scanned and information filled in before you could vote? Answer: We discussed making it easier by voting remotely. If this is something you can take on, please let us know. We need to be planning and building that committee.
 - Denea and Anastasia will discuss major topics in the upcoming agenda.
- **Principal Report:** Brooke Fahey -
 - We started 3 kinder dance residencies with AMS funds. We have the chance to add another residency, each kinder class will have a dance teacher. We aim to have equitable access for all classes for art as well, with 21 residencies through NorCal Arts.

- We are planning a library revamp. We have kids that love to read and our library is not supporting the community in the ways that we need. We have over 1,000 books that have not been checked out in over a year or more. We have plans to replenish books, add social-emotional books, have this be a resource for teachers to utilize for research, and create a supportive, safe space for reading. Ideally, we would like to make the library available during lunch for quiet activities, reading, drawing, and playing games.
- The First-ever Kindness Challenge was successful; all classes participated in Heart Awareness activities. It was a wonderful experience on campus and we received feedback from parents that it had a positive effect on their student's personal lives as well. Door decorating was a success, Ms. Dighero's class won a pizza party.
- Students in grades 3–6 participated in surveys; results highlight the need for social-emotional support. We need a social-emotional component to our school. Next year, we would like to implement a full, school-wide program, with the first 15 minutes of the day dedicated to social-emotional learning. Teachers will have the autonomy to build on this foundation within their own classrooms, which is exciting.
- 6th graders are working hard, they proposed a clean water awareness campaign inspired by a novel they read.
- The School Site Council is up and running. We encourage everyone to attend the meetings. Meeting dates and times will be announced 72 hours in advance.
- We are seeking someone to help as a yard duty for 1 1/2 hours per day, we need additional support in this area. If anyone is interested, please let us know. We will also need support for campus beautification, the district is not mowing lawns and we will need help from the community.
- Coffee with the Principal sessions will be scheduled at different times—during morning drop-off, closer to pick-up, and later for families who are working. I want to hear your voices and speak directly with our parents and families so I can serve as a liaison for our school community.
- Kinder tours were successful. Amanda came to every kinder tour and was the lifeline. It was nice to talk about all the things that make our school so special.
- **Teacher Report:** Jeanne Chasko -

- Rachel did such a great job with the Spelling Bee! The kids loved all the awards.
- Thank you to Mrs. Fahey for all her hard work, and to the additional parent helpers — we truly couldn't do it without you. The kids can't wait for next year!
- Thank you to everyone for having your children participate, and to the teachers who were involved. We'll be there in March and will keep you all updated on the outcome.
- When I ask teachers what they'd like me to share, they always say the same thing: field trips are a huge deal, and they are so grateful that the PTO makes them possible. Thank you for everything you do and for all the hard work you put in. We hear it, the kids care, and we truly appreciate all that you do.
- **Treasurer Report:** Anastasia Dolotov/Denae Pruner -
- Kindness Week was recognized, with a focus on students setting goals to be kind. Student notes were received in the PTO box and shared as a meaningful and positive reflection of the week.
- PTO Budget Update: The PTO did not spend time reviewing the budget at this meeting due to the focus on Proposition 28/AMS funding issues. The PTO budget will be posted online. The PTO received the Phoebe Hearst Grant \$15,000. The district issued a check for Sly Park in the amount of \$4,500.
- VAPA / AMS Funding Update: The VAPA Coordinator meeting took place today. Appreciation was expressed to Mrs. Fahey for coordinating the meeting. After ongoing communication since August, the district provided funding numbers for the first time, referring to the funding as AMS (Arts, Music, and School-Based) funding rather than Proposition 28. Funding applies to program years 1, 2, and 3. The 2023–2024 school year (Year 1) is the most concerning. The funding breakdown is 80% staffing and 20% support. The district confirmed that Year 1 funds allocated were spent at another school site. Funds were used for residencies at other schools and pulled without notification. Denae reached out to the Department of Education to confirm that AMS funds may not be spent at another site.
 - Year 1 allocation: \$81,322 (80% staffing \$65,057 & 20% support \$16,264)
 - 80% staffing did not rollover

at all times. Clara does not offer standalone visual arts; other providers offer broader specialties.

- **Motion and Vote:** A motion was made by Anastasia to approve funding for 13 additional residencies, bringing the total to 21 residencies, including additional supplies, at a total cost of \$31,200. Discussion included whether to approve a fixed amount or a range. It was agreed that approving the number of residencies was appropriate to ensure equitable access to arts education across campus for this school year. Anastasia motioned: Approve 13 additional residencies (total of 21). Jen seconded. Ayes carried the vote unanimously.
- Appreciation was expressed to Anastasia and Denea for their work researching and advocating on behalf of students.
- **Future Implications and Concerns:** The Uniform Complaint Procedure (UCP) for misuse of funds was discussed, noting the district is legally required to respond within 60 days. Concerns were raised about potential state involvement and impacts on future funding. Misuse of funds is reportedly under investigation statewide. High schools are less affected due to staffing structures. The board acknowledged that this will be an ongoing issue and committed to continuing advocacy to ensure appropriate arts funding for students. There is cautious optimism that moving staffing funds to support could improve access in future years.
- **Contingency Planning (Plan C):** If residencies cannot proceed, alternative one-time programs were discussed, including Dragon Dance and single-session art classes. An art studio (Seed) could provide monthly workshops (e.g., pottery) at approximately \$15 per student per class. Teachers would remain in classrooms; fingerprinting would not be required under those conditions.
- **Additional Budget Considerations:** The importance of equitable spending across all students was emphasized. One-time expenses such as PE equipment and STEM support were discussed. Mrs. Dewald expressed a need for STEM resources as a potential fundraising focus. A proposed budget will be prepared and shared.
- **Committee Reports:**
 - **Skate Night:** Allison Dorsey -

- Skate Night has been moved to April 21st. It was originally scheduled for the week of Sly Park.
 - We will be doing sales online again and bracelets as well, this was super accessible for everyone last year.
- **The Event:** Anastasia Dolotov/Kerry Sokol -
 - Vendors booked; ticket sales delayed until art contributions confirmed.
 - Plan to simplify class packages and focus on bigger donations/auction items.
 - Exploring adult beverage donations and connections with local businesses.
- **Science Night:** Kelly Hall/Sarah Zorn/Melissa Miller -
 - Date being pushed back due to committee workload in March.
 - Collaboration with Mrs. Dewald for science fair participation.
 - Parent interest forms to be reviewed to gauge volunteer support.

Additional Discussion & Updates:

- Garden: Melissa Miller - Art classes completed for K-3 and intermediate grades. The artwork created was amazing and the students enjoyed the classes. Plans to return to the garden after rain; ongoing harvest.
- Intermediate Dance - Scheduled for February 19th; PTO providing snacks, parents contributing fruit. The theme created by students, music created by Steve Buzzard; low-key event.
- CPR training opportunity from UC Davis for teachers/PTO. They will do this for free. If interested, we will get the information and post it.
- Lunar New Year scheduled for February 20th; alternate location identified in case of rain.
- Campus Beautification Workshop on February 28th; ongoing support needed.
- PTO Canva account available for volunteer use (free for non-profit up to 50 users).
- Discussion on energizing community participation, leadership recruitment and parent engagement:

- Discussion focused on families at David Lubin and identifying differences in engagement with the PTO. The board discussed ways to increase parent interest in PTO involvement, including monthly communication aligned with the lunch menu and a flyer using clear, engaging language to explain how families can help and why joining PTO matters.
- The board acknowledged several challenging years and noted that while there was hope this year would allow for recovery, additional support is still needed. Members expressed openness to new ideas to energize the community, increase participation, and build enthusiasm.
- Calendar and communication needs: The need for additional support with managing the PTO calendar was discussed. Previous attempts to assign this role have not been successful. The board noted that having dedicated individuals in this role is important for keeping the community informed, and some potential support is currently available.
- New family and kindergarten outreach: A board member suggested creating an informational packet for kindergarten and new families. It was noted that a first-day packet exists, but has been reduced in scope.
- Short-term communication solutions: As a short-term approach, the board discussed creating materials to share via ParentSquare. Printing through the district was identified as a potentially reasonable option.
- Leadership and succession planning: Concerns were raised about board members transitioning out. The board emphasized the importance of recruiting new leaders and filling executive board roles. Members were encouraged to consider stepping into different roles and inviting others to become involved.

Adjournment - Kearsten motioned. Denae seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:39pm.