Stafford Township PTO

General Meeting Minutes

Date: September 8, 2026 **Location:** Stafford Township Arts Center **Meeting Type:** General Membership Meeting

Call to Order and Welcome

The first PTO meeting of the school year was called to order. Members were welcomed and thanked for attending.

The PTO wished families a successful start to the new school year and introduced district administrators, who provided updates from their departments and schools.

Superintendent’s Report

Mr. Chidiac welcomed returning and new families and thanked the PTO for its continued support of Stafford Township students, staff and administrators.

Families were encouraged to become involved during their children’s elementary years by attending PTO events, volunteering and participating in school activities.

Mr. Chidiac highlighted several upcoming PTO and district events, including:

- Casino Royale, the PTO’s new major fundraiser
- The annual PTO volleyball game
- A possible new “Staffordmania” event
- School celebrations and family activities
- Trunk or Treat

He also shared several district facility updates.

District Facility Improvements

New HVAC systems were installed at:

- Ocean Acres
- Primary Learning Center
- McKinley Elementary School

Additional improvements included:

- A new parking lot at Oxycocus
- Renovations to the preschool classrooms located along Route 9

- Plans for preschool students and staff to return to the renovated building on September 14
- Continued progress on the district's new preschool facility

The new preschool building remains on schedule to open in September 2027. It is expected to include approximately 24 classrooms in a two-story, state-of-the-art facility. The district's goal is to provide free preschool opportunities for all eligible Stafford Township students.

Proposed Special Education School

The district is beginning preliminary planning for a possible preschool-through-sixth-grade Ocean County special education school.

The proposed program would be located at the Ocean Acres property where the district's central administrative offices are located. The long-term goal is to create a specialized, state-of-the-art facility serving students from Ocean County and potentially other areas of New Jersey.

The project is in the early planning stages and would likely take approximately two years to develop.

Mr. Chidiac reminded families that district administrators regularly attend PTO meetings and are available to answer questions.

Personnel Department Update

Mrs. Bush,Director of Personnel- The district hired approximately **54 new staff members** for the school year. New hires included:

- Certified classroom staff
- Classroom assistants
- Cafeteria and playground assistants
- Bus drivers
- Bus attendants

The Personnel Department thanked the PTO for providing:

- $50 Amazon gift cards to all certified staff members
- $25 Amazon gift cards to 20 newly hired certified staff members

The gift cards helped teachers purchase classroom supplies, books and other materials following district budget reductions.

Special Services Update

Mrs. Zaun, new appointed Director of Special Services introduced herself. She previously served as an administrator at Stafford Intermediate School and has an extensive background in special education.

The PTO was thanked for its continued support of the district's special education programs.

Stafford Olympics

The district's Stafford Olympics event for students in self-contained special education classes is scheduled for **October 1**.

The PTO is assisting with the cost of event T-shirts.

Special Education Parent Meeting

The first special education parent meeting of the school year will be held on:

September 22 at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting will include:

- Information about district special education programs
- Responses to questions submitted by the parent advisory group
- An overview of services available to students and families

The Special Services Department also created two informational brochures:

- A "Meet Our Team" brochure featuring case managers and office personnel
- A brochure explaining the district's special education programs and services

The materials will be shared with families.

Curriculum and Instruction Update

Mrs. Banach,The Director of Curriculum and Instruction provided several districtwide academic updates.

Fall Enrichment Programs

Information about fall enrichment programs was scheduled to be distributed through Blackboard Connect at **5:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting**.

Families interested in enrolling their children were encouraged to review the information promptly and return the required materials to their schools.

Academic Assessments and Programs

Beginning-of-the-year assessments will take place throughout the district.

Updates include:

- Introduction of the IXL learning program for students in grades 1–6
- Continued use of the LinkIt assessment program in grades 4–6
- State-required universal literacy screening for students in kindergarten through grade 3

- Developmental Reading Assessments for students in kindergarten through grade 4

The district selected IXL in part because Southern Regional also uses the program, providing greater continuity for students as they progress through school.

The Curriculum Department thanked the PTO for providing food and refreshments during staff opening week.

Stafford Intermediate School Update

Mr. Meyer, Stafford Intermediate School vice principal welcomed families and thanked the PTO for its summer preparation and continued support.

Upcoming Intermediate School events included:

- Back-to-School Night on the evening of the meeting
- Fall school pictures on the following Wednesday and Thursday

The school is looking forward to a busy and successful year.

McKinley Elementary School Update

Mrs. Alesio, McKinley administrators reported that students began the year with a schoolwide kickoff assembly.

The assembly reinforced McKinley's three core expectations:

- Respectful
- Responsible
- Reflective

Families were encouraged to reinforce these expectations at home.

Upcoming McKinley dates included:

- **Back-to-School Night:** September 9 at 6:00 p.m.
- **School Picture Days:** September 21 and September 22

Ocean Acres School Update

Mr. D'Amico, VP Ocean Acres School- The district announced that Ocean Acres will receive a new gymnasium floor during the November school break.

The current tile floor is approximately 25 years old and has created safety concerns because it can become slippery. The new floor will provide a safer and more appropriate surface for students.

Ocean Acres administrators also thanked the PTO for purchasing the school's new book-vending machine. Students were already showing enthusiasm and curiosity about the machine.

The school began the year with a kickoff assembly reviewing school rules, routines and expectations.

Upcoming Ocean Acres dates included:

- **Back-to-School Night:** September 16 at 6:00 p.m.
- **School Picture Days:** September 21 and September 22
- A schoolwide educational assembly planned for October

Special Education Administration Update

Carolyn Roselli introduced herself as the vice principal overseeing special education programs for students in grades 3–6.

She will work with:

- Self-contained special education classes
- Registered behavior technicians
- Board-certified behavior analysts
- Special education staff at McKinley and Stafford Intermediate

She thanked the PTO for supporting the Stafford Olympics and other special education initiatives.

Preschool Update

Trish Costello, Community Parent Involvement Specialist for the Stafford preschool program, thanked the PTO for supporting preschool students and families.

The preschool program is preparing to transition into its renovated building on September 14.

Upcoming preschool dates included:

- **Back-to-School Night:** September 28
- **Preschool Grandparents' Day:** September 29

Grandparents' Day will be a one-hour event specifically for grandparents of current preschool students. The event is expected to include a snack, craft and time for grandparents to visit with their grandchildren.

Additional details will be distributed to preschool families.

Treasurer's Report

The PTO began the fiscal year on July 1 with a balance of **$17,610.50**.

The current balance was reported as approximately **$55,099.30**. This amount should be verified against the Treasurer's worksheet before the minutes are formally approved.

A motion was made to approve the Treasurer's Report. Ange seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Sarah Creutzinger & Angela Howell

Recent PTO expenses included:

- A new mascot costume for the Primary Learning Center
- Scholarships for graduating seniors
- 252 $50 Amazon gift cards for certified staff members
- 20 $25 Amazon gift cards for newly hired certified staff members
- Supplies for districtwide student birthday treats
- Support for a McKinley playground item
- Books for the Primary Learning Center and Ocean Acres book-vending machines
- Coffee for the Transportation Department's opening day
- Bagels for staff opening day
- Deposits for Casino Royale
- Spirit-wear inventory
- PTO insurance renewal
- Annual state filing fees
- Other administrative expenses

The PTO thanked **Bagels & Beyond** for donating bagels for the Transportation Department and **Yellow Dog** for providing coffee for the staff opening day.

Corresponding Secretary's Report

The PTO received several thank-you messages.

Mary Kate Casaletto thanked the PTO for her Amazon gift card and for organizing the Clear the List initiative. The initiative helped clear her entire classroom wish list.

Mrs. Palermo used her gift card to purchase a new pencil sharpener and thanked the PTO for its continued support.

Scholarship recipient Liam McGinty thanked the PTO for supporting his continued music education at Rowan University.

Mr. Condolfo and Mrs. Staub thanked the PTO for its contributions and volunteer assistance with the Fun Run.

Mrs. Staub also expressed appreciation for the scholarship awarded to her son, Leo.

Leo Staub thanked the PTO for its generous scholarship and its commitment to his future.

Nicole Carrier, a new Primary Learning Center staff member, thanked the PTO for the gift card she received to purchase classroom materials.

Membership Report

Current PTO membership totals were reported as:

- **285 family memberships**
- **267 staff memberships**

Membership revenue has reached approximately **$3,200**.

The PTO's goal is to achieve 100% staff participation at each school while continuing to increase family memberships.

Family membership costs $6. Membership information is available through the PTO website, social-media pages and meeting materials.

Ocean Acres Book-Vending Machine

Following the success of the book-vending machine at the Primary Learning Center, the PTO purchased and installed another machine at Ocean Acres.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned for the following week.

Students will earn special tokens based on criteria established by the school administration. Students may then use their tokens to select a new book from the machine.

The machine will be stocked with enough books to provide opportunities for all students.

Casino Royale Fundraiser

The PTO introduced its new major fundraiser, **Casino Royale**, which will be held in January.

Planning and fundraising efforts have already begun. The PTO is:

- Seeking sponsors
- Soliciting raffle prizes
- Accepting donations from businesses and families
- Organizing volunteer opportunities
- Collecting funds and deposits

Because this is the PTO's first casino-night fundraiser, members were asked for patience as the committee develops the event.

Final ticketing information and event details will be announced once confirmed.

Spirit Wear

The PTO introduced a new spirit-wear design.

Preorders are available through the PTO website and social-media pages. The preorder period closes on **September 18**.

Orders are expected to arrive approximately two weeks after the preorder closes.

A limited amount of current and previous-year merchandise is also available for purchase in person.

The PTO plans to launch a year-round online spirit-wear store within the next month or two.

BlueClaws Fundraiser

The PTO plans to hold another Jersey Shore BlueClaws fundraiser following the success of last year's event.

The PTO hopes to coordinate with the district music department so a Stafford student singing group may perform at the game.

This would allow students to participate while friends and family members attend to support them.

Additional details will be announced when confirmed.

Welcome Packets

The PTO thanked the volunteers who helped assemble and staple welcome packets distributed to students at the beginning of the school year.

Kindergarten Social

The annual Kindergarten Social will begin at **3:30 p.m. immediately after school**.

The event gives kindergarten students and their parents an opportunity to meet classmates and other families.

Activities may be organized around classroom animal themes used by preschool and kindergarten classes.

Approximately ten volunteers may be needed to assist with activity stations and general event support.

Members may volunteer through the QR code included on the meeting agenda.

Families were reminded that the event is intended specifically for kindergarten students. The PTO will make a stronger effort to limit attendance by older siblings so kindergarten students can enjoy an event planned especially for them.

Class Coordinator Applications

The deadline to apply to become a class coordinator is **Friday, September 11**.

Applicants must be current PTO members.

The application form is available through the PTO website and social-media pages.

When selecting class coordinators, the PTO considers an applicant's previous participation, particularly for families who have been in the district for several years.

Coordinators are encouraged to:

- Attend at least two PTO meetings during the year
- Volunteer at a minimum of one PTO event
- Sign in at meetings so participation can be documented

Class coordinators are available for classes located within Stafford Township School District buildings.

The PTO is unable to assign coordinators to off-site preschool classrooms because they do not have access to those locations.

The selection committee expects to meet during the week following the application deadline.

Applicants will likely receive notification around September 22–25, although those dates are tentative.

Selected coordinators must attend the class-coordinator meeting at:

October 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the Stafford Township Arts Center

At this meeting, coordinators will receive class lists, guidelines and information needed for the position.

Community Fundraisers

Several restaurant and business fundraisers are being planned.

A September fundraiser with Aqua-Fresh bin cleaning is currently underway. The participating business will donate a portion of eligible bookings made before the end of the month.

An October fundraiser is also being planned with a local printing business.

A **Burger 25 fundraiser** is scheduled as an all-day event on **Monday, October 19**.

Flyers and additional instructions will be distributed through welcome packets, the PTO website and the PTO Facebook page.

Student Birthday Grams

Every Stafford Township School District student, including students attending off-site programs, will receive a birthday gram during the month of their birthday.

Each birthday gram includes:

- A birthday message from the PTO
- A pencil
- A Chick-fil-A card for a complimentary ice cream, cookie or brownie

Approximately 2,700 birthday grams must be assembled throughout the year.

The PTO thanked the Giberson family and the volunteers who began preparing the grams over the summer.

Additional volunteers will be needed throughout the school year.

Open Chairperson Positions

The PTO currently needs volunteers to chair several committees.

Immediate openings include:

- Sixth-grade chairperson
- Trunk-or-Treat chairperson

Members interested in either position were asked to speak with the board following the meeting.

Additional chairperson opportunities may become available throughout the year.

Executive Board Elections

All PTO Executive Board positions will be open for election near the end of the school year.

Board members serve two-year terms.

Christine and Jackie announced that this will be their final year serving on the board, so vacancies are expected.

To be eligible for a board position:

- The candidate must have a child enrolled in the district for both years of the term.
- The candidate must have previously served as a committee chairperson.

Members who may be interested in running for the board were encouraged to speak with the current executive board members.

The board will help interested members find chairperson opportunities so they may meet the eligibility requirements.

Trunk or Treat

Trunk or Treat is held for McKinley and Stafford Intermediate students and serves as their class Halloween celebration.

Students in the younger schools hold celebrations inside their classrooms.

Each class coordinator is responsible for organizing a decorated trunk with support from approved parent volunteers.

Students visit the trunks associated with their school.

The PTO collects donated candy for the event.

Additional plans and volunteer information will be shared once a Trunk-or-Treat chairperson has been selected.

Volunteer and Attendance Reminders

Members were reminded to scan the QR code located in the upper-right corner of the meeting agenda.

The QR code may be used to:

- Sign in for the meeting
- Document PTO participation
- View current volunteer opportunities
- Register to assist with upcoming events

Meeting attendance and volunteer involvement are considered when selecting class coordinators and filling leadership positions.

Upcoming Dates

- **September 9:** McKinley Back-to-School Night
- **September 11:** Class coordinator application deadline
- **September 14:** Preschool students and staff return to the renovated building
- **September 14:** PLC Kindergarten Back-to-School Night
- **September 16:** Ocean Acres Back-to-School Night
- **September 18:** Spirit-wear preorder deadline
- **September 21–22:** McKinley and Ocean Acres school pictures
- **September 22 at 6:00 p.m.:** Special education parent meeting
- **Late September:** Anticipated class coordinator notifications
- **September 28:** Preschool Back-to-School Night
- **September 29:** Preschool Grandparents' Day
- **October 1:** Stafford Olympics
- **October 6 at 6:30 p.m.:** Class coordinator meeting
- **October 19:** Burger 25 fundraiser

- **November break:** Ocean Acres gym-floor replacement
- **January:** Casino Royale fundraiser
- **September 2027:** Anticipated opening of the new preschool facility

Action Items

- Verify the current treasury balance against the Treasurer's worksheet.
- Continue recruiting family and staff PTO members.
- Secure sponsors, donations and raffle items for Casino Royale.
- Finalize the Casino Royale ticket-sale date.
- Recruit volunteers for the Kindergarten Social.
- Review class coordinator applications after September 11.
- Recruit sixth-grade and Trunk-or-Treat chairpersons.
- Finalize BlueClaws fundraiser arrangements.
- Share details for upcoming restaurant and community fundraisers.
- Continue recruiting volunteers to assemble birthday grams.
- Distribute information about fall enrichment programs.
- Share special education brochures and parent-meeting information.
- Finalize details for the Stafford Olympics.

Adjournment.