Harding Avenue Elementary October 2026 PTA — Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order & Approval of Minutes

- **Approval of Prior Minutes:** A motion to approve the previous month's meeting minutes was made by Katie Cin and seconded by Megan. Motion passed.

II. Treasurer's Report

Financial figures updated through October 3rd.

- **Income Highlights (Total: $7,753.00 YTD / $4,645.30 recent window):**
    - **PTA Member Dues:** $60.00 (27 members joining)
    - **General Donations:** $25.00
    - **Merchandise Sales:** $903.00 (Approaching the $2,000 semester goal)
    - **Spirit Night (Chipotle):** $148.00
    - **Fall Festival Income:** $3,282.00
- **Expense Highlights (Total Spent YTD: $9,958.00 / Recent Expenses: $4,799.44):**
    - **Fall Festival Expenses:** $1,075.00
    - **Book Fair Fund:** $275.00
    - **Teacher & Staff Support:** Classroom supply reimbursements, initial coupon offsets, and new teacher reimbursements.
    - **Hospitality & Membership Raffles:** $20.00 gift cards for member sign-up incentives.
    - **Back-to-School Events:** $540.00

- **Scholastic Fee (Student Magazines):** $1,400.00
- **PTA Administration & Dues:** Dues paid out for 108 members; $57.00 for flowers/communication.
- **Merchandise Inventory:** $3,000.00 upfront investment (recouping steadily).

- **Account Balances & Summary:**
  - **Checking Account Start (Sept):** $11,233.00
  - **Checking Account Current:** $9,953.69 ($149.00 in outstanding checks pending)
  - **Savings Account Balance:** $6,243.00
  - **Budget Note:** Expenses currently exceed income by approximately $2,200.00. However, most major semester upfront expenses (merchandise inventory, Scholastic magazines, Fall Festival) are complete, and revenues will balance back out over the semester.

III. Principal's Report

Presenter: Dr. B-Graves (Principal)

1. School Accreditation & Performance

- **School of Distinction:** HAE maintains its status as a School of Distinction under Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) accreditation by achieving at least 91% across all accreditation categories (attendance and subject areas).

- **Upcoming SOL Cut-Score Increases:**
  - VBOE is increasing pass-cut scores on SOL tests incrementally through 2029.
  - **Concerns & Home Partnership:** Foundational gaps post-COVID (reading fluency, literary stamina, basic multiplication, and addition facts K–2) slow down grade-level mastery.
  - **Action Needed:** The fastest way to close these gaps is daily practice at home (e.g., 20 minutes of nightly reading, asking comprehension questions, practicing math facts in daily routines).

- *Note:* While SOL tests do not define the whole child, they dictate official school ratings.

2. Staffing Updates

- **ESL:** Currently utilizing a long-term substitute for English as a Second Language.
- **Lunch/Recess Aides:** Experiencing hiring turn-over (three candidates resigned prior to starting). A new recess/lunch aide is scheduled to begin in the next 1–2 weeks.
- **Kindergarten Care Professional:** Starting next week.

3. School Activities & Facilities

- **Recess Equipment:** Special thanks to the PTA for funding new recess balls, especially for K–2. The school will be purchasing dedicated K–2 basketball hoops and an outdoor storage bin to keep equipment localized to their play area.
- **Red Ribbon Week:** Scheduled for October 26th–30th, coordinated by school counselor Elena Carter.
- **5th Grade Math Competition:** All 5th-grade students will participate in an upcoming multiplication contest to build basic fluency for long division. Prizes have been ordered by the PTA/school.

4. Communication & Reading Discussion

- **Newsletters & Text Alerts:** Dr. B-Graves plans to distribute newsletters twice a month. Parents confirmed text messages are the preferred channel for quick updates.
- **Audiobooks:** Dr. B-Graves clarified that while audiobooks are great for older students with established comprehension, younger readers need physical reading practice to build fluency and word recognition.
- **Book Swaps:** The Dolly Parton Day book swap was a huge success. The PTA and administration plan to hold frequent/semester-based book swaps using PTA storage inventory so every student receives a book.
- **Reading Incentives:**
    - Discussion around county-wide game-based reading comprehension tools under review.
    - Suggestion to explore local reading reward partnerships (e.g., Pizza Hut *BOOK IT!*, local pizzerias, Blacksburg Books, Little Bookworm punch cards).

IV. Committee Reports

1. Box Tops for Education & Givebacks

Chair: Elena

- **Box Tops:** Scanning receipts via the app has earned $30.00 so far. Encouraging parents to sign up and use referral codes. A physical informational flyer will be sent home in student folders for non-social-media families.
- **Givebacks & Kroger Rewards:** Reminder for families to select *Harding Avenue Elementary PTA* inside the Kroger app to direct automatic percentage donations.

2. Communications

Chair: Katie

- Bulletin board updated.
- Direct links for Box Tops, Kroger Rewards, and Givebacks will be included in the upcoming email newsletter.

3. Spirit Nights

Chair: Kiri

- Recent event at Sweet Frog was well-attended.
- Upcoming Spirit Night: **Roots** on the 15th (children eat free).
- *Future Ideas/Under Exploration:* Sharkey's (confirming family hours), Noodles & Company, Chicken Salad Chick, and BW3s (March Tournament timing).

4. Events

Chair: Courtney

- **Fall Festival Recap:** Highly successful. Noted parent feedback regarding request for a larger bounce house in future years.
- **Pumpkin Decorating Contest:** K–4 will decorate paper templates; 5th graders receive real pumpkins (corrected flyers going home tomorrow).
- **Upcoming:** Boo Thru and Turkey Bingo details to follow at the next meeting.

5. Hospitality
Chair: Megan

- **Past Events:** Hosted National Guacamole & Dip Day for staff in September.
- **Upcoming Events:**
    - **Late Conference Night Dinner (Oct 29):** Providing dinner for teachers staying late.
    - **Thankful Cart (Nov):** Bringing snack and drink carts to staff.
    - **Cookie Exchange (Dec):** Annual tradition combining with National Hot Cocoa Day. Sign-up Genius will be sent for families to donate 1–2 dozen treats.
- **Staff Lounge Stocking:** Sign-up sheets available for drinks, snacks, and personal hygiene items for staff restrooms/lounge.

V. Old Business
- **100% Teacher Sponsorship:** PTA member dues have achieved 100% participation/sponsorship among school teachers.
- **Merchandise:** Restocked items sold nearly $1,000.00 since the previous meeting.

VI. New Business
- **Grade-Level Art Fundraiser:** A parent volunteer is organizing a class art auction project. One collaborative artwork per class will be created.
    - Select pieces will be auctioned off during **Turkey Bingo**.
    - Remaining pieces will be available at **Spring Game Night**.
- **PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports):** County-wide initiative. Custom reward charms are actively being created using the HAE 3D printer.