Lake Ridge Academy Parents Association

Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2026
Location: Kemper Science & Engineering Building

Attendees

In Person:
Erin Currie Holzaepfel, Sandy McGuire, Laura Vrabel, Julia Sertich, Rachel Forthofer, Michele Monnolly, Paige Lathrope, Katie Carden, Maria Arzuaga, Andradia Scovil, Lauren Givan, Vicki Todd, Ashley Doolos, Dani Porto, Teneqwa Estvanic, Mitch White

Via Zoom:
Jackie Powidel, Charlotte Lewis, Kevin Pullella, Brittney Alegant, Vanessa Delgado, Lacee Richardson, Tiffany Smedley, Niyati Sheth, Shuntele Milan, Leeanne Crawford, Mia Chubaroua

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Call to Order, Introductions & Explanation of Roles

- President Lauren Givan called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Minutes Review & Approval

- Minutes from the September 2026 PA meeting were reviewed. Ashley Doolos made a motion to approve the minutes, and Julia Sertich seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Financial Report & Budget Discussion

- Treasurer Rachel Forthofer presented the proposed PA budget and distributed copies to attendees for review. No vote was taken on the proposed budget.
- The fall mum sale raised approximately $3,100, of which $450 was transferred to the Upper School in recognition of its assistance with the sale.
- Scholarship payments from the previous year were disbursed, along with several other outstanding expenses related to the prior school year.

- Erin Currie Holzaepfel shared that Liz Teagno (Pizza Friday Chair) reported that Masters Pizza wanted to combine the PA and Upper School invoices. Since the PA does not manage the Upper School program, Liz requested that the invoices remain separate going forward.

PA Fundraising

FunDrive

- Vicki Todd provided an update on the fall FunDrive.
- Many families donated items, which were dropped off at Heusinger House the previous week. Due to the large volume of donations, sorting had to take place inside the house because the garage was full.
- The FunDrive raised an estimated $900 from items delivered to Savers.
- Members discussed alternative ways to generate more revenue from larger donated items, such as desks, which received relatively low returns through Savers. Selling these items through Facebook Marketplace was suggested.
- Dates for the spring FunDrive still need to be determined. Members noted that advance advertising helped increase participation.

RaiseRight

- Erin Currie Holzaepfel provided an update based on a recent discussion with Kate Dake, who was unable to attend the meeting.
- The RaiseRight program is now featured in the school's weekly emails, resulting in an increase in families registering to participate.
- While increased participation is positive, physical gift card orders shipped to the school incur shipping fees charged to the PA. Families also have the option to purchase e-gift cards or have eligible physical gift cards shipped directly to their homes.
- Members discussed coordinating one large group order for the holiday season to help manage shipping costs.

Recap of Events

Parent Day of Service

- Vicki Todd thanked parents on behalf of Tom and Kate Dake for volunteering during the rescheduled Day of Service.
- Members shared positive feedback and compliments about the campus improvements and the work completed by volunteers.
- Lauren Givan discussed the cleanup efforts inside Heusinger House.

Upcoming Events & Programs

Fall Conference Meal

- Ashley Doolos provided an update on the conference meal, which will be purchased from Domasteics Catering.
- Erin Currie Holzaepfel noted that the SignUpGenius for additional PA-provided items, including desserts, beverages, silverware, and other supplies, was filled within the first week. As a result, the sign-up was removed from the weekly emails.

Gala

- Vicki Todd shared that tickets were on sale for the Venetian Masquerade-themed Gala, scheduled for November 14 at Hotel Cleveland.
- The Gala is the school's largest annual fundraiser.
- The event also includes the school's Gift from the Heart initiative. Past projects have included new playground equipment, Aspiration Acres, and new windows.
- Erin Currie Holzaepfel shared that parents could support the silent auction by donating items through the Amazon Wish List or securing donations from local businesses.

Lower School Holiday Craft Workshop

- Lauren Givan provided an update on the Lower School Holiday Craft Workshop, scheduled for December 15.
- A volunteer kickoff meeting was held on Thursday, October 1, at the Dake Advancement Center, with a follow-up crafter meeting scheduled for October 26.
- Additional volunteers who submitted interest forms will receive an email with further information in the near future.

Lower School Book Fair

- Julia Sertich shared that Mrs. Lane requested at least one adult volunteer during each class preview to help students stay within their e-wallet budgets and create wish lists.
- Most volunteer spots were filled, but parents were encouraged to check the schedule for additional opportunities to help.

Holiday Cookie Boxes

- Julia Sertich shared that each faculty and staff member will receive a box of assorted baked goods before holiday break, continuing a long-standing Lake Ridge tradition that was revived a few years ago.
- Approximately 100 dozen cookies are collected for the program. Both homemade and store-bought treats are welcome.

- A donation sign-up will be emailed closer to the date. Donations will be collected on the day of the Holiday Craft Workshop and the following Wednesday morning.

ISACS Parent Webinars

- The PA purchased access for LRA parents to webinars offered by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS). Upcoming topics include:
    - "The Power of Beliefs" (December)
    - "The Family Guide to Screen Life Balance" (January)
    - "Protecting Your Child in the Age of Deepfakes" (February)
    - "How Temperament Shapes Who We Become" (April)
    - "The Power of One" (May 4)
- **Potential Group Viewing:** Members discussed hosting an evening group viewing of a recorded webinar, possibly in February. Technology-related topics were suggested because of their relevance across grade levels.

Division Coordinator Introductions & Updates

Upper School

- Nyree Skimin was unable to attend the meeting.
- Several Upper School sports teams were advancing into postseason play, including volleyball, which had a game scheduled for Thursday evening.
- An old-fashioned family murder mystery performance on October 23rd and 24th. Advance VIP tickets included cookies and reserved tables near the front, offering a scaled-back dinner theater experience.

Middle School

- No report.

Lower School

- Kevin Pullella, Grades 3–5 Coordinator, recognized the new grade parents for their efforts, including preparing for the third-grade field trip on short notice before it was canceled. Fourth- and fifth-grade teachers also shared positive feedback about their new grade parents. No additional updates were reported.
- Laura Vrabel, JK–2 Coordinator, provided an update on grade parents and recurring Lower School volunteer roles.

Grants

- Vanessa Delgado, Grants Chair, provided an overview of the PA Grants Program.

- The grant request letter was distributed earlier in the month, with submissions due by the end of October.
- Approximately three requests had been received at the time of the meeting.
- A reminder will be sent before the deadline, and the committee expects to meet during the first week of November to review requests and make funding decisions.

New Business

Parent Garden Club

- Parents proposed forming a garden club following conversations during the Day of Service. The group would meet approximately once a month to help maintain and beautify the campus.
- Potential projects include maintaining existing gardens and flower pots, growing vegetables, and adding seasonal flowers that would bloom in time for the earlier graduation date.
- Members discussed exploring additional planting opportunities in Aspiration Acres while incorporating and preserving existing wildflowers.
- Members suggested coordinating with Pat Smith and Mr. Harris to ensure projects align with existing gardening plans and student activities.
- After-school or family gardening events could provide opportunities for students and families to participate in planting, maintaining, and harvesting campus gardens.

Campus Rock Painting

- A volunteer coordinator is needed to oversee campus rock painting requests, scheduling, and shared supplies. This responsibility was previously included among the recurring Lower School volunteer positions.
- The coordinator would help maintain reusable supplies, including paintbrushes and paints, and organize participation by classes, Scouts, sports teams, seniors, and other school groups.
- Members suggested creating a submission form for painting requests. Pending administrative review, the form could be shared through PA communications and division directors' staff emails.
- Scheduling should allow student artwork adequate display time, particularly projects involving younger students, while maintaining flexibility for special events, team accomplishments, and tributes.
- No minimum display period was established. Weather conditions and competing requests would also need to be considered when coordinating the painting schedule.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 a.m.