



September 16, 2026 Meeting

Call to Order @7:03 pm

Welcome and Intro

Introduce the PTO Board:

Korine Szot, President
Claudia Kale, Vice President
Hilary Fineman, Secretary
Randa Rydzy, Treasurer

Ryan Pidor, Membership
Dan Fredeman, Fundraising
Megan Britton, Communications
Meredith Alvarez, Spirit Wear

Mission Statement: The Somerville NJ Pre K - 8 PTO is an organization of parents, teachers and administrators from **Van Derveer Elementary School** and **Somerville Middle School** who work together to build a nurturing and engaged school community to contribute to a better educational environment for our children.

PTO Yearly Goals

- Foster family relationships in the school community through volunteer opportunities and free events throughout the year
- Provide grants for creative and education classroom and schoolwide projects
- Encourage more parents and guardians to get involved so the PTO remains strong into the future

Membership Report: Currently 134 paid families and 20 staff members

Treasurer Report:

- Fund Requests:
 - Added over the summer—a social for outgoing PTO board (\$100) and PTO shirts for new Board members (\$160)
 - VDV Mini fridge for relaxation and lactation room (
 - VDV welcome shirts for new staff \$360
 - Volunteer Raffle prizes \$62
 -

Opening Balance \$34,412.63

Income \$382.41

Expenses -\$2765.39

Ending Balance \$32,029.65

Please encourage teachers to ask for funds!

Fundraising Report

- **Fundraisers**

- Dine to Donate coming up 10/14 from 4-8 pm @ Chipotle at Bridgewater Commons
- Gertrude Hawk chocolate fundraiser—flyers will come home with our children and orders can be picked up at the Holiday Shop (or arrangements

- **Spirit Wear**

Total since August \$4027

PreK popsicles: \$424

YMCS BTSN: \$110

VSV BTSN: \$1,471

Ice Cream Social: \$410

Old Business

- Camp SMS—headphones for new students
- Teacher Welcome Back (SMS Video)
 - Bears for VDV and Bulldogs for SMS
- PS popsicles (9/1 at VDV and YMCA) and Ice Cream Social was last Friday
- SMS back to school night 9/17
- Volunteer Raffle—can win a Needoh or a coffee gift card if you are a paid member when you volunteer—drawings done at the next PTO meeting
 - For the Ice Cream Social...THE WINNER IS...Dan Federman

Ongoing Business

- SMS Diversity Event:
 - 10/8 from 5:30 to 8 pm in the cafeteria—asking families to bring culturally relevant food that includes a list of ingredients, presentations, student presentations and performances, and raffles
- Trunk or Treat: 10/31—2:30 to 4:30 pm
 - Hilary and Randa co-chairs
 - First 30 minutes is sensory friendly and then event is an hour and a half
 - Candy monsters in mid-October and if coming, please donate a bag of candy
 - May need to rent/purchase a new popcorn machine
 - Will have businesses sponsor the event again
 - Prizes for the best 3 trunks
- Holiday Shop: (12/5)
 - Claudia and Korine co-chairs
 - Still need a vendor (Little Shop in the past or 2 boxes from other vendors)
 - A great volunteer opportunity

- Gertrude Hawk Fundraiser pick up during Holiday shop
- Teacher Holiday Treat Bars

Updates from the Schools & School Organizations

- **VDV:**

SEPTEMBER UPDATES & HIGHLIGHTS

- Sept 1 – Staff PD Day: Teachers & staff prepared their learning environments.
- Sept 2 – First Day of School: A joyful, energetic opening day for all VDV students & staff. This same day we also celebrated our Preschool Launch & YMCA Partnership by welcoming all our preschool families at the Peek & Popsicles! We are proud of our new early learning partnership with the Somerville YMCA.
- Sept 3, 9, 10 – Chromebook Distributions: Grades 5, 1, and K received devices for modern digital learning. K-2 Chromebooks have the option to go home.
- Sept 9 – School Wide Read Aloud was a Social story by Ms. Frevert starring Marco & there was an instrumental Demo with Elefante music demo for Gr 4–5.
- Sept 10 – Back to School Night & Assembly: A great BTSN was held & during the day our K–3 students had an interactive Musiquita assembly to celebrate Hispanic Heritage month.
- Sept 11 – PTO Ice Cream Social: Fantastic community turnout celebrating school spirit and our families
- Sept 14–18 – i-Ready Diagnostics: Grades 1–5 completed baseline assessments with great focus.
- Sept 16 – Launched our Walking Wednesday School Bus
- Sept 21 – Yom Kippur: School closed in observance of Yom Kippur.
- Sept 22–25 – K i-Ready Diagnostics: Kindergarten baseline testing for personalized learning paths.
- Sept 23rd -Wellness Wednesday done by our school nurses on a Happy and Healthy Me
- Sept 25 – First PBIS Prize Cart: Students earned rewards for positive behavior (Van Derbucks).
- Sept 30 – Spirit Day: Wearing Spirit Wear or Black and Gold

OCTOBER UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct 2 – Custodian Appreciation Day: Celebrating our custodial team for keeping VDV clean and looking beautiful outside and inside
- Oct 5 – K Immunizations Due: Supporting student health & wellness requirements.
- Oct 5–9 – Week of Respect: School-wide lessons and activities on respect and being an upstander.
- Oct 12 No school for students, Staff Development Day
- Oct 22 – Fun with Pumpkins (6:00–7:15 PM): Festive seasonal evening for our Preschool-2nd Grade families.
- Oct 23- PBIS Prize Cart
- Oct 26–30 – Red Ribbon Week: Activities promoting healthy life choices and personal safety.
- Oct 26 – Picture Day: Capturing school memories for Preschool through 5th grade including the YMCA.
- Oct 30 – Halloween Parade (9:15 AM) Around VDV and 10:45am with be the Preschool YMCA Halloween Parade

UPDATES

- Security Entrance Vestibule: Construction on the main entrance security vestibule is still underway. Once complete, Officer Sal will manage visitor check-ins at the new entry.
- Playground Outlook: Summer work is wrapping up, and we hope to be out on the main playground soon for active outdoor recess and play!
- Academic Growth & Goals: Celebrated meeting all our 2025–2026 i-Ready growth targets and set ambitious 2026–2027 proficiency goals in reading & math.
- **SMS:**
 - The school year is in full swing, and students took their iReady diagnostic tests last week. The focus this year is on goal-setting, and not only are there school goals and individual student goals, but parents will also be asked to set a goal for their child while attending the SMS Back-to-School Night, which was (9/17). Goal-setting worksheets will go home with students for any parents that are unable to attend. 9/17 is also Picture Day AND an early-dismissal day. All three Fall sports have begun! Boys and Girls Soccer had their first game this past Monday (9/14), and the Girls took home a big win! The first Cross Country meet is this Friday at Exchange Field, and the soccer teams will also both play that

same day. Robotics, Yearbook, Band, Chorus, and Student Council are also all in full swing!

- Next week is Start with Hello Week to help promote violence prevention and increase connection among our school community. It will include daily themes and a raffle for those that participate. The Week of Respect is the first full week of October, and our Diversity Celebration will be during the Week of Respect on Thursday, 10/8, from 5:30-8 pm. A number of staff volunteers have already signed up! The celebration will include performances, presentations, student projects, raffles, and FOOD. Everyone is asked to RSVP and bring a culturally-relevant dish. The event is funded by both the PTO and through a grant from the SEA.
- Finally, there is no school this Monday, 9/21, and the mid-point of the marking is 10/9.

- **Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG):** Parent led organization that provides guidance and counsel to the district regarding best practices in special education and related services.

- On socials—FB, X, and if you want to join, email us somervillenjsepag@gmail.com
- 4th Tuesday (9/22) meeting this month and will be the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7 pm virtually

New Business/Open for Discussion

- Cub Scouts meeting at Good Shepherd on Friday at 7 pm and ice cream social

Close of Meeting @ 8:01 pm

Meetings are 3rd Wed of every month @ 7pm: 10/21, 11/18, 1/20, 2/17, 3/17, 4/21, 5/19