



The Rice School / La Escuela Rice PTO

Meeting Minutes

PTO General Body Meeting Minutes

Prepared for printing and board sharing | Submitted October 2, 2026

Document purpose: Official record of the September 30, 2026 PTO General Meeting.

Meeting Information

1	School	The Rice School / La Escuela Rice
2	Date	September 30, 2026
3	Time	6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. (scheduled)
4	Location	N/A
5	Meeting Type	Virtual (Teams)
6	Presiding Officer	Kristen “Kris” Williams

Attendance & Quorum

1	Present Attendees	Board Members: Kris Williams; Nikki Allen; Ayana Nwaokolo; Leora Guadalupe; Tiffiney; Wendy Gonzalez; Dawn Simpson; Lizzett Alvear Attendees: Bill, Christopher Spencer, Elizabeth Jacobo, Arianne Davis, Judy Momanyi, Kourtney Rodriguez, L. Santacruz, Latoya Ingram, Martha Lucia, Natala Campbell, Patric Morrow, Rochelle Myles, Erika Rubio, Yvette Carnot, Yvonne Alcaraz, Michaela (Karter and Kai), Patrice Morrow, Rochelle Myles, Antwan F.
2	Attendees Present Virtually	All Present
3	Admin & Staff Present	None
4	Quorum	None recorded.

Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Kris Williams at 6:05 p.m.



Detailed Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome & Call to Order

2. Upcoming Events

Kristen — President

Homecoming

- Homecoming Court (Grades 6–8)
 - Homecoming court announced king/queen (8th), Prince/Princess (7th), Duke/Duchess (8th)
 - Communications will go out soon
 - Voting will take place on October 2nd—students to be informed on Monday
 - Nominees will be presented on the field (semi-formal)
- Spirit Wednesday
 - Students will be able to dress up in spirit colors and items (tutus, t-shirts, hairbows, etc.)
- Cluster Decorating Contest
- Pep Rally (Grades 6-8)

Upcoming Events

- 4th Grade Field Trip
 - If parents want to attend, they must be VIPS approved
 - Special Exhibit at the Houston Museum of Natural Science (Date TBD)
 - Also waiting for 8th and 5th grade field trips to be approved
- STEMTOBER
 - LEGO Lovers – Halloween-themed LEGO kits and display
 - Bridge Battle – Students build bridges, and we test the weight
 - Rocket Launch Day – Rockets made by students and launch by Baking Soda (Arm & Hammer Sponsored) + Vinegar
 - Trivia + Contests available for all grades
- STEM Night – October 29th
 - Annual Event where each grade level will host a STEM activity and concession item
 - Proceeds go to each grade level
 - We are no longer having the usual Haunted House—Instead, we are doing a math-themed escape room (more STEM-focused)
 - Students will do
 - New Ticketing System – No more paper tickets
 - Parents will buy tickets online and use an app to make purchases during STEM Night Festivities (ONLINE ONLY Before and During)
 - Questions:
 - Do we need help with preparation and decorating the Escape Room?



- We will put out communications for volunteers needed leading up to and during the event via ParentSquare and GroupMe
 - All volunteers must be VIPS approved
- Who picks the concessions per grade level—teachers, students, parents?
 - We send out forms to the Teacher Lead (assigned to each grade level)
 - We want the concessions to be STEM-themed and creative
 - Every grade has chosen their activity and concession as of today
 - Teachers reach out to parents for donations
- CHAT MESSAGES:
 - To help with the bulletin board weekly please email me ToiBabineaux@outlook.com we begin on this Friday.
 - For any possible vendors for STEM Night please message me or email me: lizzetalvear@gmail.com

3. Changes Within Rice

Tiffiney — Vice President

- PTO would like to help boost morale with teachers. What are some ways PTO can help?
 - Previous events: Snack Cart (well received from last year), Coffee Cart, Mexican Corn Event, Popcorn Event
 - New Ideas: Door Decorating (LaToya Ingram), Set up a Happy Hour for Teachers (Board Member Ideas), Become a Room Parent (some classes have more students due to the changes – Tiffiney Carter)
 - Parents asked about the affected grade levels/classes from budget cut layoffs.
 - Latoya Ingram: Houston Chron has articles that go into detail about budget cuts, each school affected, etc. (10000 students short/4000 projected = \$ 50 million shortfall)
 - The Rice School is NOT the only school affected.
 - Link shared in Chat by Toi Babineaux:
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/Dd5DHAARLV0/?stkn=YXE2MDNqZGh5Mm50>
 - Lyons sent out messages to parents in affected grades.
- Teacher morale-boosting ideas
- Room Parent information
 - Room Parent Sign Up Link - <https://form.jotform.com/261996841645068>
 - Question: How do we become a Room Parent?
 - Kris: PTO had this approved with Montelongo, but it is a pending item with Lyons; Planning to start Room Parents in October
 - Nikki will be leading the Room Parents Effort
 - Look out for communications in the next 2-3 days
- Graduate Committee information
 - 5th/8th Field Trips – TBD
 - End of Year Dance for 8th Grade
 - Still need plans approved by Principal Lyons
 - Questions (Patrice Morrow): Is the 5th and 8th Grade Committee still active, how can we sign up?
 - Nikki – They will share a link to sign up
 - Sign-up is still open—we will reach out once the first meeting is scheduled
 - There is a separate GroupMe for 8th Grade Committee (Leora)



4. Fundraisers

Toi — Fundraiser Coordinator

- Recent Fundraiser: Coffee in the Carline
 - Made over \$500 in profits
 - Coffee, tea, and next time, Hot Coffee will be available
- Upcoming potential fundraisers
 - Houston Texans – Game Day (Mond/Thursday arrive by 5 pm or Sunday by 9 am)
 - Need 40 volunteers to make enough profit
 - Other opportunity to sell items and make extra profit
 - Otis Spunkmeyer with limited participation
- Fundraiser questionnaire
 - Will be sent out
- Questions:
 - Kourtney Rodriguez: Are Parents connected via ParentSquare? How can we make sure parents are engaging?
 - Latoya commented: There is no way to comment on Parent Square—only an appreciate button.
 - Comments are only enabled if the poster accepts.
 - L. Santacruz commented: The same message alerts you numerous times—no way to toggle off class-irrelevant updates (i.e., HISD News)
 - Overall: Parent Square is not very user-friendly. ClassDojo provided a better experience for parents. Kris will bring this up to Principal Lyons.
 - Latoya: Would it be possible to post in each classroom or grade level—similar to the 5th/8th grade committee—something informal where each grade level/cluster can go to post events and essential information.
 - Kris: Maybe once we get room parents rolling
- Kourtney suggested we do banners and hang them on the fence instead of flyers
 - Invest in annual events such as STEM Night, Carline Café—change out the dates.
- L. Santacruz: Did we receive helpful feedback from Spirit Week? Maybe we encourage the teachers and reward them for participation—coupons, parties, etc. –hype up the teachers for a better turnaround
 - Kris: We have tried this in the past, and it wasn't as successful as expected. We are actively working on fresh ideas to increase engagement.
- Suggestion via Teams Chat (Bill): “Put event notices on the digital sign in front of the school”

5. Uniform Store Announcements

Nikki — Uniform Store Director

- New process
 - We are moving the Uniform Store to Online Only
 - Reasons: Build Balance for Parent Volunteers
 - Currently Available via PTO Website: <https://www.ricek8pto.com/shop>
 - Ordered by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday will be delivered on Thursday
 - K-2nd will be delivered to classrooms
 - Other grades will need to pick up at the Uniform Store during Lunch
- Inventory updates



- New Sweatshirts Release—embroidered and screen print
 - Pre-orders for personalization for **2 WEEKS** only—stay tuned for dates.
 - After 2 weeks is up, no personalization available.

6. Additional Updates

Leora — Communications Officer

- **Next PTO Meeting/Social—Fast Friends on October 21st from 6 pm to 7 pm**
- **Coffee with the Principal – October 7th at 9 am**
 - Location: Cafeteria
 - Stay tuned for flyers
- **POParrazi Popcorn Update**
 - PTO has yet to receive funds/earnings from last year's fundraiser.
 - PTO is currently being advised by a lawyer – a demand letter was sent today and includes the lawyer's address for the check to be sent to. **If we don't receive a check, we will pursue legal action.**
 - Questions (Kourtney): Are we going to go with another Popcorn Vendor
 - Kris: Double Good, since it's a "well-oiled machine", but PTO has not revisited. Double Good is only 3 days long, and we have parents who procrastinate (Toi)
- **Mr. Wilson-Band room classroom light issue**
 - Asks that parents complain to the District's Maintenance System to get this issue mitigated quickly
- **After-school club's update**
 - Waiting on Teacher/Parent Response
 - Time Commitment: Meet twice a month, 4:15 p.m.- 5:15 p.m. (Date chosen by Club Lead Volunteer)
 - Principal Lyons informed us that there are funds available for a stipend.
 - Principal Lyons is asking that we hold clubs only on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.
- Fundraising Ideas (Yvonne Alcaraz): Little Caesars Make-at-Home Kits; Pick up orders on STEM Night to get more participation.
 - Email: ToiBabineaux@outlook.com with all fundraising ideas.

7. Questions & Open Discussion

- Christopher Spencer: Asked about the Concessions ideas for 5th Grade and when that will be decided.
 - They have already decided; wait for communications from grade levels.
- Ayana: Can we pitch ideas for the teachers for next year's concessions, and when does this occur?
 - Nikki: Room Parents could help with this, but it has always been a teacher-led effort. They typically choose the easiest, low-effort options.
 - Kris: Teachers are open to suggestions, and they will take ideas from parents
- Fill out the Annual Student Update by tonight!
 - Students can get free dress (Dates TBD)

8. Closing & Adjournment

- Any questions about Homecoming can go to Kris at Riceptok8@yahoo.com



Next Meeting

1	Date	October 21, 2026
2	Time	6:00pm - 7:00 pm
3	Location	The Rice School Cafeteria

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm

Secretary Certification

Respectfully submitted,

Ayana Nwaokolo

Secretary

Date: October 1, 2026