

PTO Minutes
Tuesday, October 10, 2006

I. Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and introductions were made.

II. Minutes of September meeting were approved.

III. Mission Moments - Tom had us laughing with the *Top Five Meeting Rules for Managers*
1.) Never arrive on time or you'll be stamped a beginner. 2.) Never say anything until the meeting is half over – it'll make you seem wise. 3.) Be as vague as possible. 4.) When in doubt, form a subcommittee. 5.) Be the first to call for adjournment, that is what everyone is waiting for.

IV. Dr. Bob Hasson, Superintendent

Dr. Hasson began by thanking the PTO for the invitation and more generally the positive relationship with the PTO including all of our hard work and feedback. He joked that he's the only Superintendent he knows that has a Muffin Morning. Over the last month three major reports have come out that will influence school districts in the state of Maine over the next ten years.

- *A Case for Cooperation* by the Maine Children's Alliance is a report that addresses the tendency in Maine for each community to have a distinct "sense of place" and way of doing business. In the interest of containing cost and improving education the report provides a gentle nudge toward regionalization and cooperation. The report may be viewed at Maine Children's Alliance website at www.mekids.org.
- *A Report of the Select Panel* by the Maine State Department of Education calls for all Maine school districts to have enrollment between 3,000-4,000 students and a pairing down of the current 285 districts to approximately 60 to 65. This would clearly change the landscape of school systems. The report can be viewed at www.maine.gov/education
- A study sponsored by GrowSmart Maine and carried out by The Brookings Institute produced a report that, as pertains to education, is very hopeful and makes some very challenging recommendations. The report is looking for increased efficiencies in Maine schools by reducing administrative costs, and lowering our per pupil cost to meet the national average. The report suggests that the only way to get real results is to decrease the number of teachers, increase the student/teacher ratio, and reduce the number of school districts. The report may be viewed at www.growsmartmaine.org.

Closer to home, Dr. Hasson talked about the MSAD51 mission and some of the issues we're dealing with currently. Our goal is to provide schools that are safe, to keep and retain the best possible staff, and to see student achievement improve. To that end, we ask ourselves the question (with respect to instructional strategies), "What are we going to do differently to get different results?" We know that when professionals talk to other professionals about their craft, they improve their skills. That's the direction we're moving in. The impending votes on TABOR and the High School Referendum will both have a serious impact on our district. The School Board has taken a position against TABOR. The analysis of the effect TABOR would have on MSAD51 can be found at www.msad51.org. The Board obviously supports the High School Referendum. The high school has seen a 40% increase in enrollment since 1993 - it was not designed to house the number of students we have now. In addition, the building is in a general state of disrepair after years of overuse and delayed improvements in the absence of any plan to deal with the overcrowding. This year's budget was discovered to contain 360,000.00 in unanticipated costs. One of the ways to cover these costs will be to not totally fund field trips. The PTO co-chairs were asked to consider how the PTO team could assist with funding field trips. With this knowledge we will also try to increase fundraising, schedule guests to visit the schools which is less expensive than busing the children to an event, and consider ideas such as Activity Fees. Dr. Hasson described the exceptional yet underutilized program available to Greely students at the Portland Arts and Technology High School and encouraged anyone interested to take a tour of the school. He closed by thanking us again and specifically mentioned the Parent University as an example of the type of program we can create together that he is grateful for.

V. Emily Hawkinson, Greely High School Facilities Task Force

Emily began by putting the High School project in the context of a longer range plan that included renovations at MIW and the new GMS. The Task Force formed in January to focus on what the community needs in a high school, not just building issues. They took projections, looked and listened to

architectural presentations from 5 different architects, and finally chose Steve Blatt. Steve's is the company that designed the middle school with overwhelming positive feedback from staff, parents and students. Steve brought 4-5 different choices ranging from just renovation to adding much more than is being proposed. A plan that includes a new building and renovating the existing structures was approved by the school board in June and now has to go to referendum. We have a good set of data that shows what issues this building addresses. It's not just a renovation, we net 6 classrooms. The Task Force was sensitive to the idea that we do not want to overbuild. The current high school was built for 550 students. Present enrollment is 700 and projected to go no lower than 629 over the next 10 years. A huge benefit of the plan is the increased security the new design affords. The proposed high school has one highly visible entrance as opposed to the many unlocked doors we now have and a main office with no view of any of those doors. Currently there are no sprinklers and the building is not ADA compliant. ADA updates necessary to bring us in compliance include eye washes, new toilets handles, sinks, and door handles. The current windows are single pane and very inefficient. We will replace all existing flooring, paint and patch all the walls. The plan also call for bringing in 5 data drops, replacing lighting to increase energy efficiency, making the fire alarm system meet code, addressing the ventilation problems in the entire building, replacing boilers and pumps, and replacing the roof. A major piece of the project is repairs to the pool including replacing the liner and ventilation systems. If no repairs are done, the pool will need to shut down within two years. The repairs are an important part of the referendum because the research showed that the pool is one of the most highly used facilities in this community. Some other benefits include major improvements in the Science labs and the ability for entire departments to be located in the same area. Additional Information can be found on the MSAD51 web site. The project will cost 14 million dollars. Emily pointed out that the choice for the voters is not 14 million dollars or nothing. Because if we do not take on this project now, we will pay over the years to fix things as they break, address problems as they arise, and continue to pay our lease on the portable classrooms. As per state law, if we touch the high school we have to address the traffic congestion on Route 9 and Tuttle Road, specifically their intersection. The proposed plan calls for a two-way road to "cut-off" the corner of Route 9 and Tuttle. The road would probably be gated most of the time and only open during the morning drop-off time that causes the traffic. We discussed the open houses that are upcoming and the neighborhood meetings that anyone can host to help inform their neighbors about the project. Finally, it is estimated that the tax impact of the project is \$.84 per mil in Cumberland and \$.67 mil in North Yarmouth. We were all encouraged to educate ourselves and others on a plan called Homestead which offers property tax assistance to qualified home owners. Homestead may make voting for the referendum feasible to individuals on fixed or low incomes

VI. Committee Reports and Review:

Treasurer: Added \$12.39 to budget. Val has asked that invoices go in the PTO mailbox and that a call is made to her to let her know she has mail waiting. Also, she has the checkbook now and as she is off-site, she's requesting a week's lead time for checks. Kelly has taken over QuickBooks.

Fundraising: Sally Foster raised \$40,299.00. We net half of that amount or approximately \$20,150.00. Internet sales increased from last year and are still on-going. NYMS sold almost exactly what they sold last year. MIW and GMS are down. No sales at GHS. Deb filled us in on a few new fundraising ideas she is considering. There is a local group that publishes a book on healthy living and healthy eating which includes coupons. Because they are relatively new, it may be best to wait until they have a track record before we try this. A discount card is a possibility and would be highly profitable. Once we obtain businesses willing to give card holders a discount, we can have the cards made for \$1.00-\$1.50 each and can sell them for \$15.00 each. New ideas will continue to be pursued.

Events: The **PTO Muffin Morning** is all set. **Appreciation Day** is scheduled for October 26th and the events committee is still looking for bakers and drivers. Food donations can be dropped at MIW, Gwen or Shari's house. November 1st is **Family First Night**. November 3rd is **Family Night Out**. We've booked Orbit with Corbett, the alternate for Christa McAuliffe in the *Teacher in Space* program in 1986. He has some funny and educational things to share. Our cost is \$200.00 and we are asking for a \$1.00 per person donation at the door. **Happy Wheels Community Skate** is on November 15th. Under a new name, the **Holiday Gift Workshop** is scheduled for December 9th and planning has already begun.

Web Site: Tara was not present, but we were encouraged on her behalf to send our photos to her if we haven't already.

Publicity: Nothing new, just a reminder that if you want anything put on reader board let them know.

Enrichment: Heather and Tom are meeting with Alli Ray next week to review the budget. The Enrichment Chairs have begun talking with teachers to find out some of the things they'd like to do this year. We were joined by Andrea Peabbles for the Arts Alliance. She is requesting a PTO contribution for a visiting musical group. While the idea has much support, everything is holding for the budget to be approved. That can be done via e-mail vote, so the Arts Alliance won't have to wait until next month to move forward.

Secretary: Nothing new.

New Business:

Melissa pointed out that the newsletter for the High School is 14 pages long which is too long for most people to read thoroughly. She asked that we be as brief as possible when submitting items for the newsletter.

Pat suggested an Activity Fee as a way to offset the cuts for field trips. One of the benefits of such a fee is that instead of asking parents several times throughout the year for donations, we can do it all at once. An Activity Fee also makes it easier to plan because you know before hand the level of financial participation you'll get.

Gloria suggests that with budgets tight we might encourage teachers to provide gift lists for their classrooms as opposed to the personal holiday gifts that they receive which while appreciated may not be as practical as a donation to the classroom might be. Along those lines, the PTO historically has spent \$2,000.00 during Teacher Appreciation Week on individual gifts for teachers. The teachers have asked for gifts that would address department or school wide needs instead.

Co-Chairs:

- We need to address the field trip issues this year, how and which one to cut and what alternatives we can offer.
- At GHS, the teachers are requesting lanyards for their keys. This is similar to a gift they received a few years ago so we'll investigate that.
- The new MIW signage will be paid for by a child centered fundraiser such as a coin or bottle drive. We think this will really motivate the children and give them a chance to be a part of a real community function.
- At NYMS we are going to meet with the principal to select the equipment she'd like.
- The Drowne Road Playground is almost ready for use.
- Heather shared with us a story about the PTO sponsoring repainting the lines on the Four Square game at NYMS and how by going a little above and beyond, we can have a huge impact in our community.

VIII. Adjournment: meeting adjourned at 9:30