

PTO Minutes
Tuesday, January 9, 2007

- I. Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and introductions were made.
- II. Minutes of November meeting were approved.

Mission Moment - Tom shared a quote from Malcolm Forbes: "Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one." On a lighter note, Tom offered the *Top Three Quotes You Don't Hear at Work* 1.) The light at the end of the tunnel has been turned off due to budget cuts. 2.) Teamwork means never having to take the blame yourself. 3.) If at first you don't succeed, delegate it.

- III. Attendees: Karen Bubar, Pat Carroll, Kelley Craig, Valerie Currier, Shari Elder, Wanda Ewings, Heather Giandrea, Tom Gilley, Gwen Hall, Maureen Morrone, Gloria Nicholson, Andrea Peabbles, Deb Regan, Catherine Robinson, Tom Shepard, Melissa Skahan, Becky Sledjeski
- IV. Presentation: Karen Bubar, Assistant Principal, Mabel I Wilson and Drowne Road Schools

We were pleased to have Ms. Bubar present to the PTO the current vision for the MIW and Drowne Road schools. At present we see our focus as helping to balance each child's social, academic, and emotional needs so that each child may work toward his/her best. We gauge this by looking for "a year's growth in a year's time". We reviewed a handout together with an emphasis on the "K-3 Goals" which included the following three themes.

Theme 1: Effective Educators Goal: *To establish a professional learning environment where educators work together to improve student achievement.* To this end, teachers have a lot of different groups in which they work together. We have Leader Teams, which include staff across grades, and specialty lines, that get together to discuss curriculum, logistics, and schedules. In Staff Meetings and on early-release Wednesdays the focus is often on the content of our curriculum and looking at how to improve student achievement. Teachers review assessment data or examples of student work together. One success from having these types of conversations across grade levels is our writing program. There is now a standard writing program for kids K-2 and grades 3-5. The programs maintain consistency in writing instruction year to year.

Theme 2: Effective and Purposeful Instruction Goal: *To improve student achievement in reading, writing and math.* A result of this theme was the implementation of the Everyday Math program six years ago. The program offers consistency of math instruction in K-5 students as well as picking out struggling kids for extra help and offering more of a challenge for kids doing well. This program, as all others, is constantly evaluated. One indicator of the effectiveness of our writing program is the ability of our Kindergarten writers. It has been amazing to go into the classroom this year and see what they can do. Many children are writing a complete sentence with a corresponding picture. In past years, that was not even a goal for the end of the Kindergarten year and these guys can already do it. This kind of success really raises the excitement among teachers and students. We also recently took some parent feedback on the new all day Kindergarten program and were happy to learn that the parents and teachers are pretty pleased with how the children are doing. We've been working hard to keep the program balanced to meet the needs of both the 5 year old, and the math and reading goals. Getting outside more and allowing lots of social interaction has been integral. We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness based on outcomes and parent feedback.

Theme 3: Successful Students Goal: *To have all students feel safe, cared for, and see themselves as contributing members of the larger community.* We want kids and parents to feel safe in school, and to feel that they belong, are cared for; we want them to have a personal connection to the school. To this end, we will have monthly all-school assemblies, an increase from the 4 we had last year. During the assemblies we bring the entire school together to help students feel like they do belong to a larger community. Often, the children are involved in the presentations. A committee has been formed to evaluate that these assemblies are meaningful and serve to make a big school feel connected. We've also had in a group of Responsive Classroom consultants. The consultants offer a method of teaching and a collection of practices that allow you to build the social aspect of school on the academic portion. The focus is to foster

a sense of belonging through consistency of language and consistency of school life. The very beginning of this process is for each child to make a strong classroom connection. The teachers are already applying what they've learned from the consultants and are eager to continue the implementation.

Upcoming Events: February 2nd report cards are coming home. February 5th Kindergarten Registration begins. This year the registration forms will be available on-line and the administration is interested in feedback on how it works. March is Celebration of the Arts month.

In response to several questions, Ms. Bubar reviewed the Kindergarten registration and screening processes with us, and then addressed the issue of preparing the current first grade teachers for the upcoming class of children that will be further along academically than past first grade groups.

V. Committee Reports and Review:

Events: The Holiday Workshop in December was a huge success. We even had photos of the event published in the Notes, the Forecaster, and on MaineToday.com. The turn out was more than last year and more than expected for this year. So much so that some of the crafts were sold out and many lasted just until the end. The Raffle was also very successful raising \$1,068.00. Upcoming events include Friday Family Night Out on March 3rd. The committee is interested in suggestions on what type of event this should be. It would be nice to tie this into March being Arts month. Also on the calendar are Family 1st Night on March 7th, and Happy Wheels set tentatively for March 28th. Planning is beginning for Staff Appreciation Week. Karen Morgan, the local comedienne, has offered to donate her time to do a performance for the teachers and staff. Karen will also offer us a box of her books at cost.

Treasurer: This was Kelley's first month with the books and she updated QuickBooks. There were several postings including more Sally Foster purchases and the income from the Holiday Workshop (which is an event, not a fund raiser). We also discussed the existence of the Box Tops On-Line Marketplace. This marketplace includes many popular retailers that community members are probably already using. When you log-on to Box Tops and then take the link over to the available retailers, a certain percentage of each purchase is credited to the PTO. We discussed ways to make community members aware of this simple and potentially lucrative fund raising avenue. The NYMS reader board has been installed. The project came in under budget as the school contributed \$500.00 to its cost.

Fundraising: The committee recently met with the PTO Co-Chairs to discuss our next fund raiser which will be discount cards. The cards will cost between \$10.00 and \$15.00 and will offer purchasers of the card a percentage off products and services provided by local businesses. We are focusing on businesses located in Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Falmouth, and Yarmouth, and would like to include a nice variety. We want these cards to be a win-win-win situation; the PTO earns money on the sale of the cards, the businesses gain customers as a result of participating, and the purchasers of the cards enjoy discounts that will most likely surpass what they pay for the card. How the cards will be marketed, potential sales incentives, and which businesses will be on the cards are details that are still being worked out. They will most likely go on sale somewhere around the beginning of April so as not to compete with other community based fundraisers. Please forward any suggestions to Deb and Becky. Melissa noted that the upcoming Thursday was the first community fundraising meeting where area organizations can inform one another of what their fund raising efforts are so as not to have duplicate or competing campaigns. She also mentioned that our community had raised more funds than our local public and private counterparts for the months of August 2006 through December 2006.

Web site: We still need photos for the PTO Board Member page on the web-site and someone threatened to bring in a camera next time! Continue to forward photos or other postings to Tara.

Publicity: E-mail any requests for reader board postings to Catherine or to Tom if it's for NYMS. The major project for Publicity this month has been advertising for the upcoming Rachel Simmons visit. Events include a showing of the movie "Odd Girl Out", which was adapted from Rachel's book, on January 18th, a presentation by Rachel Simmons for the community on January 24th, and workshops held by Rachel in school on the 25th. To get the word out, we've posted flyers (more of which are available), utilized the

print media and our websites, and several local television stations are doing news pieces on the event which addresses an issue many parents and educators are interested and involved in. After an initial attempt to partner with a neighboring district to present these events, we've instead decided to invite members of neighboring communities to join us and we'll accept donations at the door. Several district counselors will be available at the events and we'll have copies of Rachel's book for sale. We are very excited to be able to bring an authority of Rachel's stature to our community.

☀ Break

Enrichment: Enrichment activities have been very light with only a first grade trip to the Nutcracker performance so far. Most teachers are planning to use their funds in the spring. Enrichment leaders will stay in contact with grade level coordinators to be sure that each grade utilizes all of the funds available to them this year.

Newsletter: All newsletters are now on-line documents and within 2 months they all will be school based. It's important that when parents fill out the blue form at the beginning of the school year that they provide their e-mail address as that is how the newsletters are distributed. If anyone is not getting e-mail prompts that updated newsletters are available on-line, they should contact the particular school whose newsletter they are interested in to remedy the problem.

Secretary: No update.

Co-Chairs: The co-chairs provided a written synopsis which we reviewed briefly. Items include the selection of climbing equipment for NYMS and the search for the funds; with the sign at NYMS installed, we are moving on to lighting for the school and painting the sign as the color was not as expected; at MIW, Don Foster is getting estimates for a remote lock and security cameras at the student drop-off; the thermostat in the MIW library was moved to provide a more even temperature in that room; Heather is working on making Touch-a-Truck a part of the Memorial Mile event this May; Kim Brandt has made closet space available at GMS for us to store events material; Hannaford Helps totals will be available in March; and we've tentatively scheduled the principals of NYMS, GMS and GHS to speak at the February, March and April PTO meetings respectively.

VI. New & Old Business: We have decided to purchase lanyards for all teachers and staff district wide at approximately \$2.00 each. The cost will come out of the teacher appreciation budget. The lanyards will read "MSAD51", and the type of clasp on them will be selected to best suit all possible applications, i.e., to hold keys, a badge, etc. Extras will be ordered and kept with personnel for new hires.

VII. Open for Questions/Comments: There was a question regarding Governor Baldacci's recent proposal to drastically reduce the number of school superintendents in the state and how that may affect MSAD51. After some discussion it was understood that the governor has proposed an idea that the legislature will need to work on. As such, we are a long way from having anything substantive to look at, and in the meantime we will continue our efforts to make MSAD51 the best it can be.

VIII. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.