

# MSAD #51 PTO

## Monthly Informational Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2009

7:00pm

Greely Middle School

Attending: Vickie Bell, Katie Campbell, Kelley Craig, Dava Davin, Heather Giandrea, JoAnn Longo, Maureen Morrone, Gloria Nicholson, Brenda Pitcher, Deb Regan, Amy Saffian, Beth Smith

### 1. Call to Order and Introductions

Heather called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. All were welcomed.

### 2. Guest Speakers

#### Kim Brandt – Principal, Greely Middle School and Emily Hawkinson

- Kim opened up by thanking the PTO for what she called “incredible support” over the years. And now, as budgets get tighter, the PTO will be counted on to make things possible.
- The main thing Kim wanted us to see tonight was how well our middle school students are doing. Kim is very proud of our kids as they are scoring so much higher than the state average. She has prepared two documents comparing the last three years of MEA test results for MSAD#51 to the state average. Highlights include: during the 07-08 school year our eighth graders scored 87% (meaning 87% of our students meet or exceed standards) in Reading as compared to 71% for the state. The same group, in the same year, scores 78% in Math while the state average is 51%. Growth can also be seen among this particular grade as their percentages increase from sixth grade to seventh grade and again from seventh grade to eighth grade in both subjects. The success of the sixth and seventh grades was just as encouraging – they also meet or exceed standards at a much higher percentage than the state average. In another collection of data, Kim showed us how our kids **rank** among other schools in the state for 2008. For example, sixth graders at Greely Middle School rank 7<sup>th</sup> highest in Reading and 7<sup>th</sup> highest in Math. Our seventh graders rank 10<sup>th</sup> highest in Reading and 8<sup>th</sup> highest in Math. And our eighth graders rank 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in Reading, 4<sup>th</sup> highest in Math, and 5<sup>th</sup> highest in Science and Technology. (Only eighth graders are tested in Science and Technology so no data is available for other grades in that subject.) An important note is that some of the schools that are ranked higher than GMS are testing a much smaller number of students. This data is ultimately used to direct instruction. Unfortunately this is our last year of MEA testing as we will be moving to NECAP testing for financial reasons. The NECAP is a similar measured progress test. On the upside, NECAPs are done in October with results available in December. This will allow us to use the data during the same school year. (MEA’s test in March with results unavailable until June or later.) A question was asked about how these tests fit in with the NEWAs. The NEWAs will still be given in the Fall and the Spring. They are a growth model, giving students a target to work toward. They also provide additional information; with NEWA results a teacher can look at individual components for individual students within each subject.
- Next, we discussed on-line communities that children are visiting such as Facebook. Parents continue to have questions and concerns about this kind of technology. Perhaps the PTO can provide a Parent University or other forum to address this issue.
- Another effort Kim is involved with at this time is the “After Greely” Community Workshop. Comprised of parents, teachers, students, school board members, administrators, and community members, this newly formed group is looking at how our students perform after they leave Greely. Working with Kim is Emily Hawkinson who has many other functions within the MSAD#51 system including being the Bookkeeper at GMS, the Communications and Volunteer Director, School District Liaison Parent Liaison to the Leadership Counsel, former PTO chair and the parent of two kids who’ve been in the district. With her breadth of experience she offers a unique and informed perspective. She is requesting input and suggested e-mail as the best way to contact her.

- Kim is also assessing the benefits of the Kiev Leadership Program. For 17 years we have been sending our seventh graders to Camp Kiev for a week of team building, conflict resolution, and other interpersonal skills building lessons mixed with outdoor activities. A survey is being prepared and will be sent to seventh through tenth grade parents as well as seventh and eighth grade students. The survey results will be used to do a needs assessment.
- A new focus on Restorative Justice is coming to the middle school. This is important because we know that bullying behavior can be common in this age group. Spearheaded by the dean and the guidance department, who have attended training, new methods for addressing problems between students are being implemented. The main idea is to help the students involved in an incident recognize the impact of what has happened and become a part of what should happen next. The aggressor may be asked to ponder what they were thinking and how he/she believes their actions affected the other student. For the child who has been hurt, the focus is on acknowledging their hurt and exploring ways to help them mend. Bringing the two students together in some cases and not in others. A major strength of the program is a common language and process that will be used building wide. Each time a problem arises, the kids will hear the adults asking the same questions and proceeding in a predictable and consistent fashion. Some members thought this would be useful in the lower grade levels also, so that's something to look forward to as Restorative Justice becomes common place at GMS.
- A member asked if the Casco Bay Neighborhood was returning for the 2009-2010 year. Kim does not yet know, but when she does she will make it public, hopefully by 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Night.
- Kim closed by thanking the PTO for Teacher Appreciation Week. It is a big deal for the teachers and they love it every year.

#### **Katie Campbell – No Name-Calling Chair**

We are pleased to have Katie with us tonight to communicate to huge success of this year's No Name-Calling Week in MSAD#51. No Name-Calling Week is a national effort and we enjoyed full involvement with every school in the district participating. MIW was the most active school with parental volunteers at recess, the "Wall of Kindness", poster making, and Peace Cakes. The Peace Cakes were a new addition and a huge hit with every classroom receiving a cake thanks to our volunteer bakers. In addition to planned activities, many teachers took advantage of the opportunity to focus on kindness and peace in the classrooms by reading books, singing songs, and teaching lessons on the theme. At North Yarmouth Memorial School a local artist created some beautiful art for Pledge Posters. The posters were made under Becky Foley's direction. Each poster has the words, "We pledge to...", and will be filled in by the students. At Greely Middle School, we provided an alternative to the cafeteria. Kids could eat lunch in a conference room and play games and do crafts during recess. The room was busy all week. Morning announcements at the middle school included student recorded messages addressing no name-calling and kindness. Greely High School students became involved via the Gay Straight Alliance. They wrote a skit about kindness and generosity that they performed for MIW students during lunch. After the skit, they asked questions of the MIW kids and got them engaged in a conversation about the performance. All of this was accomplished for only \$10 (the cost of plastic forks for the Peace Cakes!) Next year Katie suggests we start planning earlier, have a coordinator for each school, and possibly involve other community organizations such as area churches. It was also suggested that we provide a list of ideas for teachers to use in the classroom.

### **3. Mission Moment**

Both of our Chairs had an inspirational thought for us this evening. Gloria relayed her own experience with the overwhelming gratitude displayed by MIW students during No Name-Calling Week. The children were thrilled to have parents spend time with them on the playground and provide out of the ordinary activities. Heather gave us a quote: *"No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another."* She explained the quote had special meaning as even in these uncertain and financially challenging times, our community continues to come together for the greater good of all its members.

#### 4. Approval of November and January Minutes

We voted to approve minutes from both November 2008 and January 2009.

#### 5. Old & New Business

- **Conflict of Interest Policy**

We voted to adopt the Conflict of Interest Policy prepared for us. The document is now part of the PTO's By-Laws. Each year, each member of the PTO Board will be asked to read and sign a copy of the policy. The signed copy will be maintained with the organization's other documents. Board members who were not present tonight will be contacted for their signature.

#### 6. Committee Reports

##### a) Treasurer

Kelley provided us with an updated Balance Sheet, Budget Worksheet, and Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual statement. All is as expected. Our taxes have been filed. On an unrelated note, Kelley heard from an individual at Ruth's Recyclables that we have "embraced" the program.

##### b) Events

The ice skating event scheduled for January 28<sup>th</sup> was cancelled due to a snow day, and will not be rescheduled. The next scheduled event is a Family Night Out on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Brenda and Sara are still exploring options. Brainstorming for Teacher Appreciation Week is also underway.

##### c) Fundraising

Our next fundraiser is scheduled for Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at O'Naturals Restaurant in Falmouth. Between now and then, we will heavily advertise this in an effort to get as many families out as possible. In addition to earning 10% of the restaurant's receipts between 4 and 8pm, raffle tickets will be sold and donations will be accepted. At this point, the raffle prize will be a basket of items, possibly with a natural or organic theme. Another fundraising idea being looked into is expanding the Memorial Mile Run into a larger race.

##### d) Publicity

All of the websites are operational and the latest PTO newsletter is posted. Some follow-up is planned to ensure that an e-mail is sent to district families with a link to the newsletter.

##### e) Enrichment

Amy Saffian gave an update on enrichment activity which has included several theater productions, a medical round robin, a visit to the Planetarium, Africa Day, and a trip to the Merrill Auditorium. In the works is a possible visit to MIW from the Portland Ballet Company. Bringing the ballet to MIW is a less expensive endeavor than bussing our students to them and the on-site ballet presentation is more interactive.

##### f) Secretary

No update.

##### g) Co-Chair

Gloria informed us that the "Let's GO!" program which helps kids form healthy habits will be implemented at the Drowne Road School.

#### 7. Questions and Comments

There was discussion earlier in the meeting regarding a district calendar that is going to be produced by the Arts Alliance for the 2009-2010 school year. JoAnn Longo will work with Emily Hawkinson and the Superintendent's Office to gather the relevant calendar items.

#### 8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

**Next meeting:** March 10, 2009 at Greely High School

**Respectfully submitted:** Maureen Morrone, Co-Secretary, February 23, 2009