

MSAD #51 PTO
Annual Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2009

7:00pm

Mabel I. Wilson School

Attending: Vickie Bell, Katie Campbell, Stacey Carlson, Linda Collins, Kelley Craig, Dava Davin, Heather Giandrea, Tom Gilley, Maureen Morrone, Gloria Nicholson, Sara Perfetti, Brenda Pitcher, Deb Regan, Jen Rohde, Amy Saffian, Beth Smith

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Gloria called the meeting to order at 7:10pm. Attendees introduced themselves and all were welcomed.

2. Mission Moment

A large collection of "Thank You" notes was available for us to peruse including many from teachers who appreciated the PTO-supplied food at recent staff meetings and an entire 1st Grade class who enjoyed their trip to see *Charlotte's Web*.

3. Approval of February and March Minutes

We voted to approve meeting minutes from both February and March of 2009.

3. Old & New Business

• **Elections**

The following candidates ran unopposed and were approved.

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Length of Term</u>
Stacey Carlson	Co-Secretary	2 years
Linda Collins	MIW Enrichment	2 years
Kelley Craig	Co-Treasurer	1 year
Heather Giandrea	Co-Chair	1 year
Tom Gilley	Co-Publicity	2 years
Jen Rohde	Volunteer Chair	2 years
Amy Saffian	Drowne/NYMS Enrichment	2 years

Still open are two Co-Events positions and one Co-Fundraising position.

• **Approval of Diversity Committee**

Katie Campbell presented to us her vision of a new committee dedicated to raising MSAD51 student's comfort level and awareness of issues of diversity. Feedback obtained from GHS graduates regarding how well prepared they were for adult life, reveals that many felt "unprepared for the diversity of the world." The hope is that the work of this new committee will lessen the shock for future graduates. From Katie's personal experience in this arena, she feels there is an existing network of people available to assist, and even the desire to make directed monetary contributions to this kind of effort.

The discussion that followed was lengthy and spirited. It's expected that the initial diversity lessons will not be part of the curriculum but rather included in the Family Night Out and other PTO sponsored events. Further, programs could be offered through the Recreation Program perhaps for Early Release Wednesdays. The ideas grew to include the possibility of classes choosing countries to represent at Field Day, volunteers in the classroom teaching languages, and having lunch menus dedicated to particular countries or cultures. The balance between PTO efforts and the school involvement is not clear yet, but it's thought that if we have the ideas and the funding, and can make it happen, we'll be given permission. In fact, the PTO has been asked by the district to look into ways to bring this type of program to MSAD51.

Related to the creation of this committee, but more sweeping is the idea that the PTO may become a more operative organization; all in keeping with our stated mission of course. Some attendees made the point that the PTO should be a resource for parents unwilling or unable to go directly to the School Board to air their opinions. The PTO could take issues to the School Board or Administrators on behalf of a group of parents. This is a departure from our current focus on the parent/teacher connection and acting as a vehicle to disseminate information from the School Board and the Administrators to the parents; the PTO doesn't influence policy or curriculum.

The sentiment is that the PTO's role will be evolving as budgets gets tighter and it becomes more difficult to recruit volunteers (note that Events and Fundraising are lacking chairs.) These issues (the new Diversity Committee, the PTO becoming a forum, and the lack of volunteers to head certain Committees) are large enough issues that we need to put time aside to talk more about them. The June PTO meeting will be a brainstorming session where we will explore ideas concerning the PTO's direction for the future.

- **Berry Talbot Royer - Internal Control Review**

In an effort to increase the professionalism of the PTO, we determined we'd have an outside auditor review our practices. Last week Heather met with the firm of Berry Talbot Royer and received excellent feedback on our operations. Mr. Talbot was impressed with the "tightness" of our controls and made several suggestions that we intend to pursue.

5. Committee Reports

a) Treasurer

Kelley provided us with updated figures. Enrichment money is starting to leave the account which is excellent. For next year, a change will be made on the *Budget Worksheet* as follows: the *Holiday Fest* and *Roller Skating* line items will be removed from the *Income* section of the *Budget Worksheet* and instead included in the *Events* line item.

b) Events

Teacher Appreciation was different this year and was well received. The teachers enjoyed having their meetings "catered" by the PTO and they loved the daily raffles. Sara was pleased with the response but noted that these new additions, like all new additions, will become commonplace at some point. She suggests that the real secret to success is keeping things fresh by continuing to develop new ways to celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week. While this was a successful event, it was a lot of work that was carried by just a few people. This event is a good example of an underlying problem with this particular committee - it required a large amount of donated food, and a significant amount of coordinating before during and after the event, none of which is easy to do.

We have no one signed up to run the Events Committee next year and if that remains unchanged all the Appreciation Days (Teachers, Staff, and Bus Drivers) and possibly other events will not happen. The question that seems obvious is, "If it's difficult to get donated items, and difficult to get volunteers, and difficult to get somebody to run this Committee, is it really something we should be doing? Are we adding value?" To answer this and other broader question, the June PTO meeting will be a strategic planning session regarding what types of things the PTO should be involved in.

c) Fundraising

The Memorial Mile Run has moved from an Event to a Fundraiser this year. Race Applications are widely available. The primary focus at the moment is procuring the 35 pies that will be awarded to the race winners. As we get closer to Memorial Day, Beth expects she'll be looking for volunteers to staff the event and transport pies.

d) Publicity

Things are running smoothly including the Newsletter publication and distribution.

e) Enrichment

All looks good.

f) Secretary

No update.

g) Co-Chair

No update.

6. Questions and Comments

There was no further discussion.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Next meeting: 7:00pm on Tuesday, June 9, 2009 at Greely Middle School, Room 125

Respectfully submitted: Maureen Morrone, Co- Secretary, May 19, 2009

