

MSAD #51 PTO
Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2009

7:00pm

Greely Middle School

Attending: Vickie Bell, Katie Campbell, Stacey Carlson, Lalla Carothers, Linda Collins, Kelley Craig, Dava Davin, Shari Elder, Heather Giandrea, Tara Hill, Carol Lambert, Mori LeFevre, Maureen Morrone, Gloria Nicholson, Sara Perfetti, Brenda Pitcher, Deb Regan, Amy Saffian, Jen Segal, Tom Shepard, Beth Smith, Tyra Tarbox

1. **Call to Order**

Gloria called the meeting to order at 7:05.

2. **Approval of May Minutes**

May Minutes were voted on and approved.

3. **Old & New Business**

❖ **Strategic Planning**

This month's meeting was dedicated to brainstorming ways to make the PTO current and relevant. This introspective exercise is the result of difficulty we've had recently in recruiting new volunteers to participate in both large and small ways. Sara Perfetti was our facilitator. Our expectation was not to fully resolve all the issues facing the PTO but to establish guiding principles. These guiding principles will provide the structure we need to move forward and will make planning and decision making easier.

We began by talking about higher level ideas such as "*What is PTO?*" We are a 501C3 public benefit corporation - a non-profit alliance of the parents, teachers, and administrators of MSAD#51. Our **membership** includes all of the employees of MSAD#51, and the parents and guardians of the students enrolled in MSAD#51. Our **purpose** is to *promote communication among parents, teachers, and administrators of MSAD#51 through fundraising and volunteer activities in order to provide the best educational experience for the children of the district.*

Next, we volunteered some of the reasons for our own personal involvement in PTO. Some of our motivations were: to bridge the gap between Pre-School and Kindergarten; to offer ideas; to find out what's going on; to give back to the community; to meet new people. We were able to establish some common themes from the collection of our motivations and summarized them as follows:

Why we're here (What might entice others to join):

- *Influence and enhance the educational experience for our kids*
- *Support the current curriculum*
- *Involvement in our community*
- *Communication- to know what's going on. To feel connected.*

We then spent some time discussing the role of the PTO Board. Two styles were explored. The first style is a true democratic model, where the PTO Board solicits input from PTO members and builds consensus. The second is more of a representative model, where the PTO Board takes a leadership role, and deals with opposing viewpoints when and if they arise. No decisions were made regarding what type of style this PTO board should adopt, but our eyes were opened to the range of opportunities and responsibilities before us. There seemed to be strong support for refusing to choose just one style – we can use different styles for different endeavors.

"What do effective non-profits do?" was the next question we tried to answer. Surprising to most of us was the fact that business practices do not often successfully translate to non-profits. After an eye-opening exercise, and a review of Sara's research on the topic, we established the following:

Highly Effective Behavior:

(The first two reflect behaviors you use within your own organization. The remaining 4 is the work we do outside of our organization.)

1. *Adaptable*
2. *Sharing leadership-empowering others*
3. *Work with government for policy change*
4. *Use business as a powerful partner*
5. *Convert individuals into evangelists for your cause*
6. *Treat other non-profits as allies*

Tom Shepard from the MSAD#51 School Board was with us and expressed his interest in using the PTO to gather information from the community at large. Unfortunately, the School Board meetings are not well attended, and the Board has a difficult time leading when they are not aware of the issues that are concerning parents. Tom's hope is that as we reevaluate what we do, we will consider bringing people together and then informing the Board about who their constituents are and what is important to them. To that end, and in response to similar requests our Co-Chairs frequently receive from principals and administrators an on-line forum has already been created.

CommunityDialog51@yahoo.com had 70+ members join during its first 5 days of operation.

Finally, we wrapped up the meeting with the understanding that we would reconvene to delve into the details of what we do as a PTO, what we'd like to do, and see what fits into this larger picture that we've drawn. The next phase will include measurable goals for us as an organization and as individuals.

❖ **Ruth's Reusable Resources**

Last year we spent \$3,138.00 on a partial year's membership to Ruth's and obtained \$20,301.05 in materials. This year the membership will cost \$4,372.00 because we are adding the high school. We voted to renew our membership and make the following adjustments to increase teacher participation and increase our return on investment: address the teachers directly in an attempt to make them fully aware of what an awesome opportunity this is; provide a challenge for each building to meet (a "materials procured" goal); periodic updates on each building's progress toward reaching their goal.

4. Committee Reports

a) Treasurer
No update.

b) Events
No update.

c) Fundraising
No update.

d) Publicity
No update.

e) Enrichment

No update.

f) Secretary

No update.

g) Co-Chair

No update.

5. Questions and Comments

- ❖ Heather and Gloria will schedule the second Strategic Planning meeting later in June. We have momentum on this topic that we don't want to lose.
- ❖ Tara spoke briefly about her intention to provide opportunities for our older youth to work toward physical and intellectual growth outside of the classroom. A sign-up sheet was passed around so interested parties could be notified of upcoming planning meetings.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:38pm.

Respectfully submitted: Maureen Morrone, Co- Secretary, June 25, 2009

