PES PTO Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Beginning Time: 7:05 p.m.

Attendance: Christine Koobatian, Marni Baggett, Cathy Winter, Janine Tesbir, Yvette Allen-Lomaro, Michele Pangle, Carissa Keepin, Carol Kachur, Marge Skinger, Melinda Lovelett, Pam Meyer, Nicole Dragone, Karen O'Leary, Jackie Westlein, Debbie Nemec, Corinne Rendflash, Alex Gittines, Randy Booth, Jessi Booth, Donna Scribner, Deirdre Johnson, Tina Keppler, Sherry Swanson, Rachel Ewers, Cindy Canty, Heidi Kossakowski, and Christine Almedia (27 attendees)

Classroom Representatives: Mrs. King AM, Ms. Field, Mrs. Kamide, Mrs. Kloss, Ms. Broden, Mrs. Fein, Mrs Yacawych, Mrs. Tyler, Mrs. Lachmann, Mrs. O'Brien, Mrs. D'Aniello, Mr. Ciconne, Mrs. Corbin, Mr. Battaglia, Mrs. Canty (15 out of 25 classrooms) **Missing**: Mrs. Rosa AM, Mrs. Rosa PM, Mrs. King AM, Ms. Kloss, Mrs. Matthews, Mrs. Stoddard, Mrs. Ewers, and Mrs. Spencer

President's Report (Christine Koobatian)
Christine Koobatian welcomed everyone.

- Thank you to the many volunteers who made our Welcome Back picnic a great success! We especially thank Tara Carter and Karen O'Leary for volunteering to be the chair people next year! Thank you also to DiPalmas for offering the pizza to us at a significant discount, Denmos for donating the ice cream and spoons, and All 4 Fun for donating a bouncy house. Please support the local businesses that support our school.
- We have lots of exciting events planned for October/November. Details will be sent home via email. Currently 92% of our PES families are on our PTO Email Distribution list.
- The PTO Advisory Council will host a Board Of Education Candidates Forum on Tuesday, October 20th at PHS from 7-9PM. It will be televised on the local cable channel as well. The BOE is responsible approving curriculum, budget and staff changes. It is our responsibility as parents and citizens to understand what the candidates stand for. Thank you to PES parent Alexandra Gittines for organizing this event, and to PES parent Toula Ousuljoglou for being our moderator! Please attend or watch this important forum, and vote on November 3rd.
- Still have 3 outstanding PTO needs: A chairperson for our April 10th Evening Under The Stars, Play Scape Tune-Up committee chairperson, and a coordinator to head up our "Improve our Playing Fields" committee.

Teacher's Representative Report (Cindy Canty and Rachel Ewers)

- Thank you to all the parents for a good parent night.
- Mrs. Smith would like all students to have 2 or 2 ½ gallon plastic zip lock bag in the back backs for library books.
- Maybe room parents can put out a message to the classroom parents looking for a volunteer to bring in enough zip lock bags for the entire class.
- If you have gentle used books you don't need or want, please consider giving to your child's classroom to use.
- Bottle cap recycling still going on. Can only recycle hard plastic tops such as ones off of water bottles, milk, and detergent, etc. If you can bend them, they cannot be recycled. NO metal caps please.

Principal's Report (Carissa Keepin)

- This is a very busy time for elementary teachers in Region 15. There have been changes to the social studies curriculum which was new to us last year – some units have been refined so we are discovering those changes.
- We have no tech teacher, yet many teachers have the new Smart Board technology in their classrooms and are trying hard to integrate this technology into their instruction and student learning.
- The biggest change this year is learning about our new Language Arts Curriculum which is not yet fully complete. Teachers are studying and reading about the approaches of Readers' And Writers' Workshop, which they are being asked to launch this year. We also have maintained our guided reading approach as well, and each teacher has four reading groups per class. In addition the teacher meets with two of these groups a day, conducts whole class mini lessons in reading or writing, and conferences with students about their work. This curriculum is huge and takes a great deal of learning and planning and sharing. The highly collaborative culture at PES, through our Collaborative Team process and Professional Learning Community work, helps us to facilitate the many discussions that are needed.
- Our September in-service two hours was spent looking at a video about structuring the Readers' and Writers' Workshop classroom, and Dr. Lanning explaining how to schedule all of the components within a 120 minute period. We are looking forward to the full launch of this new curriculum next fall.
- We are very proud of Stacie Broden and Jeff Haddad, both PES teachers, who recently graduated from their three year Math Coaches training that was provided by the state department of education. This was extensive training in coaching and teaching techniques and mathematical understanding, to help them better work with classroom teachers to improve their math instruction.
- As a staff we are working on creating a beautiful garden in memory of Linda Segreti, a PES first grade teacher who passed away last year. Landscaper Bill Miller has volunteered to help us design and create it. We will put it on the front lawn, planting her favorite colored flowers, and will get additional input from the staff. Our hope is to have a staff gathering in her honor when it is in full bloom.
- Each grade level has protected days we call "Buddy Days" where the intern is available to free up a teacher to observe another. So your children will be seeing many of the teachers at a grade level visiting their classrooms throughout the school year. This is just another way we are making our professional practice more public, by opening our classroom doors and sharing ideas for instruction.
- Our first class of the month is Mr. Ciccone's 4th grade. They got several nominations from teachers around the building, including Mrs. Smith! We are very proud of this wonderful class of role models.

Vice President's Report (Cathy Winter)

- We are working on a new website. We're hoping to get a basic version up and ready to go very soon (this month or next). We expect a full roll out (with parent logins, etc, by next school year).
- Here are some other key points with regards to the website:
  - Up to date information on all activities and events.
  - One-stop location for all PTO documents (divided into Flyers, Meeting Minutes, and Forms)
  - Extra fundraising opportunities (via vendors, right hand column)
  - Calendar of Events
  - PTO Board can update themselves so no waiting on IT.

- Parent log-on to volunteer for committees online, order items for fundraisers, enter directory info (for directory production) and more!

Vice President's Report (Yvette Allen-Lomaro)

- Letter from Mrs. Fein's 2nd grade class:

  Dear PES PTO Members,
  Thank you so much for purchasing a Smartboard for our classroom. We really enjoy it!
  In fact, we are writing this letter using the Smartboard with a Letter Generator Program.
  Busy Bees, Spelling City, and math problems are some other activities we use it for in second grade.
  Every time we use the Smartboard, we learn something new. Hopefully, we will be experts by the end of the school year.
  Thank you again for your generosity!
- Jackie Westlein has graciously taken over the New Family Committee. She has matched all of the families with a veteran buddy family. All have been contacted with the exception of one family in Miss Kloss' first grade. She has no phone number or e-mail for them. Carissa will Be checking on that and getting back to Jackie.
- Teacher grant letters and applications will go out to all staff members on October 7th. They are due to Carissa for her perusal and approval by October 30th. Yvette will pick them up on November 4th and then contact the committee to review them. There is still room on the review committee. If you are interested, contact Yvette at yvet829@att.net or 405-2537. The committee will be meeting in mid-November to award the approximately $4,000.

Secretary's Report (Michele Pangle)

- Please remember to sign in on both the PTO Sign-in Sheet and Room Parent Sign-in Sheet. Also, please print your name so I can read it.
- Looking for crafters to donate any crafts they made (i.e., scarfs, ornaments, etc) for the Holiday Fair in December.

Treasurers Report (Marni Baggett)

- Referred to 9/09 financials on reverse of agenda.
- Thank you everyone for completing correct forms (expense voucher, deposit forms).
- The 2008-2009 federal tax return (form 990) was mailed today!

<u>Committee Reports</u>

1. Hospitality (Dawn Kowalski)

- Our annual Fall Teacher's Luncheon is this Thursday, October 8th, if you are interested in helping with this event, we still need the following: help with clean up from 2:00-3:25, Caesar salad with chicken (Christine Amendola volunteered to bring in), Jell-O salad, a dessert other than brownies, cookies, or lemon bars (Nicole Dragone volunteered to bring this in), and pitchers of iced tea both sweetened and unsweetened (Chrissy Schenk volunteered to bring these in).

2. Board of Education (Alex Gittines)

- The Region 15 PTO Advisory Council will be presenting a Meet the Candidates Forum on October 20, 2009 at 7pm at Pomperaug High School, All-Purpose Room. The Southbury candidates for the three open Region 15 Board of Education positions will be attending to answer questions. You may submit questions in advance of the event- directed to a specific candidate, party affiliation, or all candidates- to Alex Gittines by email at looiegittines@gmail.com.
- The election for representatives to the Board of Education will be held on November 3, 2009. To confirm your polling place, please consult the Southbury Town website, http://www.southbury-ct.org or call the Registrar of Voters at 262-0644. Absentee Ballots can be obtained at the Town Clerks Office in Town Hall. Your vote is important!

3. **Family Night Out (Michele Pangle)**
   - The October Family Night Out will be Wednesday, October 14th at the Blue Colony Diner in Newtown, CT. You can eat in or dine out for breakfast, lunch and or dinner and 20% will be donated back to PES PTO. Just remember to mention PES! It is good for the entire week. The next events are at DiPalmas on November 17th, Oriental Gourmet on December 10th and Miranda's on January 13th. Mark your calendars now!
4. **Odyssey of the Mind (Marge Skinger)**
   - Registration ended October 2nd
   - 17 new kids have applied making the total 23 kids.
   - Need coaches!!!!!! Primary team will be coached by Tara Carter and will consist of 4 second graders, 2 first, and one kindergartner. 4th grade has one 3rd grader and has a coach. We have 3 5th graders who need more kids to make a team.
   - Marge will send out a final call to 5th graders and 4th to see if a 5th grade team can be made
5. **Fall Fundraiser** (Chrissy Schenk)
   - Grand total to date is $10,100.00 which does not include the several company matches of approximately $400.00.
   - 141 families donated; 37% participation so far. We are still accepting donations…it is not too late if you haven't remembered to send it in yet.
6. **Enrichment (Jen Atkinson)**
   - Off to great start with Fall programs. There are 39 students participating in the 4 classes. Today we finished the start of the fall classes. We had an overwhelming response to the Lego Fungineering and Computer Explorers was kind enough to find another instructor to add another class. We did not have to turn any student away.
   - Feedback from instructors about PES students and school is incredible. All parents should feel proud of our children. Instructors find PES eager to learn and well behaved. Parents are very involved and program is very organized.
   - Magic is a huge success. I can see some great character building over the next 3 weeks. Class is wonderful for self-confidence, self-esteem, public speaking, etc. We had many eager students show off their magic this first class.
   - Kindergarten did not have enough of a response this fall. We will brainstorm for the future. I would appreciate feedback from kindergarten parents on this.
   - Thank all the volunteers for this Fall session. Thank all those who signed up to volunteer on the PTO committee sheets in the beginning of the year. I now have the list and I will be contacting you because I will be planning a meeting for November to plan for the winter session. Any one that has suggestions, comments, etc. please let me know. We are always looking for new ideas and companies to use for enrichment.
   - Thank you to Eileen Studdert for getting the enrichment program going and for making my transition so easy!!
7. **Family Portraits (Heather Ellicott)**
   - Saturday was a washout due to the weather. We had 10 families on Sunday at the Audubon Center.
   - Plan on rescheduling for next weekend (Columbus Day weekend) and can still accommodate families that were not able to attend this past weekend.
   - The session is $70.00 which includes one 8 x 10 or two 5 x 7 prints. $10.00 per family goes to the PTO.
8. **Newsletter (Mary Nichols)**
   - Still organizing. The deadline is October 26th. Mary's email is nicholsroadtrip@charter.net

9. **Spirit Wear (Christine Koobatian for Stacie Herbert)**
    - Using a new vendor this year. Same as Gainfield's.
    - The items are very cool/trendy and will include hats this year.
10. **Box Tops (Debbie Nemec)**
    - One more email will go out reminding people about the box tops due date is October 16th
    - There are two sweepstakes; one for $25K and one for $50K
    - Avery brand now has box tops
    - Top 3 kids will get a $10.00 gift certificate to the book fair, and the Class with the highest percent participation will receive a pizza party.
    - Over $1,500.00 is made by PES PTO each year from box tops. Those box tops add up!
11. **Craft Night (C. Koobatian for Heather Aldo)**
    - Halloween theme on October 26th from 6:30-8:00. Details to follow.
12. **Game Night (C. Koobatian for Karen Opalka)**
    - Bingo on October 19th at 6:30-8:00 p.m.
    - Bring your pennies!
13. **Other (Melinda Lovelett)**
    - RMS is having another clothing drive. The last one raised a little under $2,000.00. Thank you!
    - They have a storage unit next to the library so Melinda can accept clothes, curtains, bedding, stuffed animals, toys, etc. all year..just contact her to arrange a time to meet
14. **Other (Melinda Lovelett)**
    - Please check the lost and found bin. Whatever clothes are not claimed by the Winter Recess will be sold to Carousal Kids, and the money will be given back to PES families in need via Mrs. Soltesz.
15. **Other (C. Koobatian)**
    - Thank you to Heather and Ryan Lovelett for babysitting at the PTO meeting tonight.

Raffle Winners: Lunch with Carissa Keepin – Heidi Kossakowski, Gift Certificate to Dunkin Donuts – Deidre Johnson

- *The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m..*

Respectfully submitted by:
Michele Pangle, PTO Secretary