PES PTO Meeting Minutes

Friday, September 11, 2009

Beginning Time: 9:40am

Attendance: Christine Koobatian, Marni Baggett, Cathy Winter, Eileen Studdert, Janine Tresbir, Michele Pangle, Carissa Keepin, Marie Papaioannae, Sherry Swanson, Beth Rosen, Carol Kachur, Cathy Sexton-Dale, Dawn Kowalski, Lori Karp, Nanci Uliano, Marge Skinger, Melinda Lovelett, Pam Meyer, Veronica Espinosa, Amy Schmitt, Patty Rotolo, Alice Maisano, Michele Britton, Nicole Dragon, Christina DaCunha, Katherine Letendre, Christine Zink, Karen Harper, Karen O'Leary, Maureen Nee, Karen Opalka, Jackie Westlein, Sabine Lebel, Kim Nihill, Melissa Miller, Jennifer Enger, Jen Parella, Heather Ellicott, Lisa Segal, Sue Dolan, Lisa Coville, Eleanor Tremblay, Heather Aldo, Mary Nichols, Amy Gulick, and Michele Francione (46 attendees)

President's Report (Christine Koobatian)

- Welcome: Christine Koobatian welcomed everyone, thanked Dawn Kowalski for the refreshments, and introduced the rest of the Board members: Vice Presidents Yvette Allen-Lomaro, Cathy Winter, Marni Baggett, Janine Tesbir, Michele Pangle, and Eileen Studdert. The Board has been working hard to create a sense of family here at PES, and build camaraderie and friendships through different programs and committees. It is an inclusive organization, not an exclusive one and our sole purpose is to make PES the best possible school it can be for our children.
- Smart Boards: Last year our focus was technology, specifically Smart Boards, which is interactive technology in the classrooms. We purchased 13 Smart Boards for PES. Now we have Smart Boards in every 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classroom, four 2nd grade classrooms and one 1st grade classroom. We are now working on local business, personal and corporate donations to fill the balance. Cathy Winter is taking the lead with this pursuit.
- Playing Fields: This year our focus will be improving the playing fields. Our fields are dry and dusty, and we don't have much grass. Our kids run around on a black top area behind the school. We are hoping to form a committee to assess what our needs are (not just planting grass, but irrigation as well), and also see if we can get the town and/or organized sports clubs (baseball, soccer, lacrosse) to help with the costs. If you are interested in helping, please let Christine know. People with a background in landscaping, negotiations, project management or sports would be helpful. Anyone who has an interest in helping.
- Get Involved: We have a wonderful, active PTO organization here at PES. It isn't the "same few people" doing everything. We have over 40 active committees doing so many incredible things…from the Carnival, which included dozens of volunteers to Box Tops, which brings in $2000 to our school. She received 4 emails just in the last week from different parents letting her know about a new program at Stop & Shop, and Janet Yule has volunteered to sign PES up not only for that, but to organize all corporate programs. You will be hearing more about that. We are only as strong as our members, and we all have different skill sets. If you are interested in getting more involved, please let Christine know. She will find something for you that matches your interests and skills.
- Family Picnic: We would like to thank Tara Carter and Karen O'Leary for organizing the volunteers and pizza orders. Please sign up to help at the picnic, even for just a half hour. If everyone pitches in, we can all have fun, and the responsibilities won't be on the hands of a few. Pizza orders are due today. We won't be ordering extra.
- PES Entrance: We would like to thank the Helms family for donating the beautiful urns filled with fall plants and scarecrows that transformed our school entrance.

- Evening Under The Stars: Last year our big fundraiser was our Evening Under the Stars. We raised almost $23,000, with Cathy Winter at the helm. This year we have the date booked (April 10th), and we are looking to form a committee.
- PES Notepads: Finally, thank you to Janet Yule for providing PES notepads to us at cost. We are selling them for $5 each at our PTO meetings.

Teacher's Representative Report (Cindy Canty)

- The teachers LOVE the smartboards. Mrs. Yacawych said they are AWESOME!
- Mr. Battaglia and Mrs. Ewers have been appointed the Technology Integration Support personnel. They spent time with the teachers prior to the start of school training the teachers on the Smart Boards.
- Mrs. Smith has asked that 2 gallon zip lock bags be kept in the students backpacks to protect books from spills, etc.
- October 19th, Alan Katz will be the author coming in for the Author/Illustrator program.
- The 5th grade classes are still collecting plastic bottle tops such as water bottles, detergent bottles, etc.
- On September 16th at the High School, the 5th graders will be able to attend Instrument Night. It is different from last year whereas students will be able to sign up that night for their instrument and will get their first choice.
- The focus in art class this year is food. Mrs. Neal would like for parents to send in old recipes or cookbooks for use in class.
- The PES Diabetes walk this year is April 15, 2010. PES was 7th in the Nation last year and 1st in Connecticut.
- Field day for Kindergarten (a.m. and p.m.), 1st grade, 2nd grade, and 3rd grade is scheduled for May 26th. The rain date is scheduled for May 28th.

Principal's Report (Carissa Keepin)

- Students settled in easily and things are humming along at PES! Thank you to PTO especially Yvette Allen-Lomaro and Cathy Winter for the wonderful K Orientation, and also for all of the help with the New Family Orientation. Also thank you to Mary Silverman and the PTO for providing our New Family Committee that offers ongoing support. These actions that we take say so much to the people new to our school, welcoming them with open arms and a lending hand. Thank YOU!
- New Phone system here at PES and we hope it is working well. Intended not to frustrate you with automation but to make things more efficient. It is a welcome addition to Kathy and Donna in the office.
- Many classrooms have newly installed Smart Boards thanks to all of you! Although we no longer have a Technology Teacher, she designated two stipend positions as Technology Integration Support people, and they are Frank Battaglia and Rachel Ewers. These two fifth grade teachers are highly skilled and knowledgeable and have already provided initial training sessions to teachers.
- Recess before lunch is going well! As many of you know both the physical education staff and Mrs. Lori Karp approached her with this concept last year. After study and discussion, we decided to rearrange the master schedule for this year to accommodate this. In addition, we adding five minutes to grade 1 and 2 lunches. Anecdotal feedback from staff and students is that students appear to be eating and drinking more at lunch, and students like the fact they get to cool off after recess in the large café rather than their smaller and warmer classrooms. Some fourth graders complained that they are "too starving to even play" (and they have the first lunch period). We did

have one logistical issue with lunch boxes, and after trying several options we have finally solved the issue.

- We have a new Mission Statement. Normally people don't get very excited about such things, but the staff at PES is very excited. We would like to make this in to a banner to hang in the café and a poster to put in the main hallway.
- We thank the PTO for the funds to order new recess equipment for our children. I have been to every classroom in gr. 3-5 already, and will see gr. 2 today and gr. 1 on Monday. I speak about the school emphasis on trying hard, doing our best and our rules. The children have asked for nerf footballs and other nerf type balls. So I made need to order these as well.
- CMTs are in and will be mailed out on Sept. 18th. Our results are being analyzed carefully and I will present them to the staff next week at a faculty meeting. Our special education population was over 40 in number, so their progress and achievement was looked at carefully by the federal government per NCLB. Although they did not make AYP, we are in Safe Harbor due to the amount of growth shown by the special education students over time.
- Upcoming: PTO Picnic (I am terribly sorry I cannot attend this year – the first time ever – due to another professional meeting I must attend. I am so sorry to miss truly my favorite night of the school year). We also separated gr. 2 out for Parent Night due to a conflict.

Vice President's Report (Cathy Winter)

- Thank you to all who helped with the Kindergarten orientation and the New Families orientation…we had a very successful day! Special thanks…Pomperaug Pals, Parent volunteers (assisted with tours), Nancy Uliano and Christine Zink (bulletin boards), Dawn Kowalski (refreshments) and Andrew Baggett who helped create signs for us.
- New Families – we have 11 new families, mostly with children in grades 1 & 4. We are looking for "buddy families" to check in with them at least once a month and be a "go to" for questions to be answered. Please let me or Yvette know if you are interested!
- Teacher grants will be sent to all PES staff in mid-September and are due back at the end of October. We have a little over $4000 to award this year. We had a bit more but approved the purchase of new recess materials (balls, etc.) in August. If anyone is interested in helping out on this committee, we will be meeting in November to look over the grants and make the decisions. Please give me your name and email address, or email Yvette directly.

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.
- On October 3rd Mrs. Spencer's Pomperaug Pals will be selling baked goods at the Southbury Celebration to raise money for the Southbury Fuel Bank. I will be sending out an email shortly looking for people to bake goodies for this event. For new families entering PES, a Pomperaug Pals are 5th graders who volunteer to help at Kindergarten/New Family Orientation, during the first week of school to help the new kids and kindergarteners find their way to their classrooms, and they take part in community events throughout the year.

Treasurers Report (Marni Baggett)

- Mentioned our process of creating the 09-10 budget and that each month YTD actual to budget would be reported at the PTO meetings .
- If anyone has any Qs regarding the budget they can contact Marni or Assistant Treasurer, Janine Tesbir.
- Committee Chairs received PTO Policies & Procedures for Money via email this morning … please review & contact Marni/Janine if any Qs. Also asked Chairs to share with their committee members and ensure they stay within their event's budget. Any expenditures over budget must be pre-approved by the PTO Board. Each Chair will receive their budget and electronic forms in an upcoming email.
- PES PTO is a tax exempt 501c3 organization….this & protection of individuals handling money is the reason for our Policies & Procedures
- Pointed out the Expense Voucher form and noted that hard copies of forms could be found in the treasurer folder in the front office, or obtained electronically from Marni.
- Stressed that if people do not use email to please contact the Board and/or committee chairs via phone or in person for whatever needs they may have.

<u>Committee Reports</u>

1. **Hospitality** (Dawn Kowalski)
   - October 8th will be the Teacher's Appreciation Lunch..the theme is Farewell to Summer. There are signup sheets at the refreshment table or contact Dawn Kowalski if you are interested in making something for this event.
   - The luncheon begins around 11:00 a.m.
   - Dawn does not have access to an oven so if you are making something hot, you might want to drop it off closer to the lunch time..around 10:45. Items that are not hot or do not need to be refrigerated, can be sent into school with your kids or dropped off at the school in the morning.
   - Contact Dawn if you are interested in helping out with refreshments for the PTO meeting each month. She is looking to have at least two volunteers for each meeting.
2. **Board of Education** (Michele Pangle for Alex Gittines)
   - The first BoE meeting of the school year is September 14th (this coming Monday) at 7:30pm in the All-Purpose Room at PHS. Meetings are every other Monday and are open to the public. They are also televised on local cable access if you'd like to watch at home. Currently, the Region is negotiating the teachers' contract.
   - Board of Ed representatives are listed on the Region 15 website. You are welcome to contact them to give opinions, ask questions or get feedback. The Board of Education sets the school budget, hires the teachers, and determines the curriculum of the schools. The policies and budget that they put forth determines everything from how many aides are available to supervise lunch periods to what textbooks are used to teach our children. I encourage everyone to stay informed and involved.
   - Also, this election year, two PES parents are running for positions: Suzanne Navas is running for Board of Ed. and Ed Gittines is running for Board of Selectmen. For a complete list of candidates go to southburydemocrats.org and southburyrepublicans.org . Election Day is Tuesday, November 3rd. Absentee ballots are available at the Town Hall.
3. **Family Night Out** (Michele Pangle)
   - We will once again do Family Nights Out at different local restaurants. A percent of the sales for each evening will go to PES. I am hoping to schedule one every month.
   - Right now we have one scheduled for November 17th at DiPalma's and for January 13th at Miranda's. Twenty percent of the proceeds those evenings will be donated back to PES PTO (eat in or take out) if you mention PES.

- Amy Gulick has volunteered to co chair this committee. Thank you Amy!!!

4. **Carnival** (Nicole Dragone and Nanci Uliano)
   - This past carnival was a huge success…grossed around $15,000.00 and the net profit was $10,000.00!
   - 75 percent participation from PES families…around 1,200 people attended.
   - If you have any items that would be good for prizes, please keep them. We need over 10,000 prizes for the carnival.
   - This year we opened up the carnival to family and friends.
   - Nicole is stepping down this year as co-chair and Nanci is looking for a co-chairperson.
5. **Odyssey of the Mind** (Marge Skinger)
   - Flyers will be going home at the end of next week
   - OM allows the kids to think "outside the box". It is an international program for kindergarten through college. Teams are made up of 5-7 kids (no more than 7) grouped together by age/grade. Teams are given 6 problems to choose from. The kids are responsible to make all their own props, costumes..most supplies are found in your attic, basement, and the town transfer station.
   - Each team must have a coach, so if you are interested, contact Marge Skinger. Kids are turned away each year because we don't have enough coaches. Each coach usually spends about ½ hour more on OM work than the team. Teams can meet as often as they like or as little..and for as long or short as they like. It is up the team.
   - Only 3rd 4th, 5th graders at the elementary school level compete. The kindergarteners, 1st and 2nd graders can go to the competition but they are primary teams. All teams will receive medals.
   - The PTO covers the cost to register for OM. The parent's of the OM kids pay $35.00 for the competition in March.
6. **Fall Fundraiser** (Christine Zink, Karen Harper and Chrissy Schenk)
   - Fall Fundraiser starts next week (Sept. 14th – Sept. 25th)
   - It is a direct donation made to PES PTO, which is a non-profit 501c3 organization, so donations may be tax deductible.
   - The goal for this year is to get 80% Family Participation. Last year we had 50% participation and raised $12,000.
   - Extended family members can donate to the fundraiser as well.
   - The money is raised to fund our PTO Operating Budget, including technological improvements in the classrooms, books, recess equipment, cultural Arts programs in school, reading incentive program, Picnic and more!
   - All donations are confidential!

7. **Enrichment** (Eileen Studdert for Jen Atkinson)
   - The enrichment program is pleased to be starting its 4th year at PES. A four week fall session is starting Friday, October 2nd
   - New this year is the introduction of Kindergarten. This fall, every Wednesday in October is devoted only to Kindergarten. They will be able to choose from two classes; Fairytale Storytime Dance or Sense-a-tional Science.
   - Also new this fall, Juggle Joy Educational Entertainment will join the enrichment program teaching the art of magic.
   - Please look for a flyer to come home Monday, September 21st outlining the procedure and dates for registration. The course catalogs and registration forms will be sent out via the PTO email distribution list. There will be copies available in the office for whoever may need them.

- Fall classes are: Monday: Intro to Singing – High School Musical Grades 2-5 and Sense-a-tional Science Grades 1-3
  Tuesday: Lego Fungineering Grades 1-2
  Wednesday's: Kindergarten Only – Fairytale Storytime Dance and Sense-a-tional Science
  Friday: Learn Magic Grades 3-5
- Registration for the fall session will take place on-line starting Wednesday, September 23rd and end on Wednesday, September 30th.
- Volunteers are needed for the classrooms in order for these programs to run. Contact Jen Atkinson at 262-1137 with any suggestions, ideas, comments, or questions.

8. **Room Parents** (Karen Opalka)
   - If you signed up to be a room parent, you should have been called by the teacher to notify you.
   - The room parent meeting is going to be on Thursday, September 17th at 9:45 a.m. at the public library. At this meeting you will get the pink forms so you can create your classroom list.
9. **Volunteer Coordinator** (Karen Opalka)
   - If you haven't done so, please complete the green volunteer form sent home. This form is given to the various committees so they can see who wants to volunteer.
   - We need all the help we can get on each committee. If you volunteered on the green form, and don't receive a call, be proactive and contact the chairperson and express your interest in helping.
10. **Family Portraits** (Heather Ellicott)
    - Will be on October 3rd and 4th at the Audubon Center in Southbury. A portion of each sitting will be donated to PES PTO.
    - The sessions are 20 minutes long and pictures are taken of your family, just kids, etc.
    - Flyers will be going home next week
    - You will get on 8 x 10 or two 5 x 7 as part of your sitting fee.
    - Rain date will be October 10th and 11th.
11. **Newsletter** (Mary Nichols)
    - The newsletter is distributed via the email distribution list. The first one of the year will go out as a hard copy. If you don't have access to email, there is a form available that you can complete letting the PTO know … you will then get a hard copy
    - If you are a committee chair and have an event going on in the next two months, let Mary know if there is something you want in the newsletter by September 21st
    - Mary's email is nicholsroadtrip@charter.net
12. **Region 15 PTO Perpetual Fund** (Nanci Uliano)
    - The Fund helps Region 15 students suffering from chronic illnesses or Region 15 families experiencing financial hardships due to catastrophic medical events.
    - The Region 15 PTO Perpetual Fund is holding its annual fundraiser raffle. Tickets are $5.00 each; the deadline to purchase tickets is Friday, October 16th. The drawing will be on Friday, October 23rd. Winners will be notified by phone.
    - First prize is an Apple iPod Touch; 2nd prize is Kitchen TV; 3rd prize is Pet Lover Package (gift certificate to local artist, Lisa DeFeo to paint a 6" by 6" mini portrait of your pets, gift certificate to Petland; and a gift certificate from Primp Your Pooch
13. **Box Tops** (Christine Koobatian for Debbie Nemec)
    - Keep collecting those box tops from participating General Mills and Kimberly Clark products! A flyer will go home next week announcing the next contest! The deadline will be Friday, October 16th. The top 3 winners will win $10 vouchers to the PES Book Fair in November, and the class with the highest % participation will win a Pizza Party!

Raffle Winners: Lunch with Carissa Keepin – Marni Baggett, Gift Certificate to Dunkin Donuts – Sherry Swanson.

- *The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am.*

Respectfully submitted by:
Michele Pangle, PTO Secretary