

**Minutes of the Mantua PTA  
September 18, 2002  
Mantua Elementary School**

The president called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Present at the meeting were:

**Executive Board:** Laura Mead, Carole Thomas, Pam Promisel, Beth McKeown, Rob Luftglass

**School Representatives:** Jan-Marie Fernandez, Elaine Wellner, Tina Tingler, Janet Sottolano, Ann Baum

**Board Members:** Donna Cipicchio, Jeannine Davies, Loren Brandman, Randi Kirkland, DeeAnn Jeremiah, Miriam Smolen, Marie Romais, Cheryl May, Robin Hoffman, Jennifer Cooper, Barbara Suidikas, Kris Abel-Helwig, Beth Whitehead, Linda Halstead, Allen Clark, Leanne Stynchula, Gretchen Martens, Laura Samotshozo

**General Membership:** Diane Alejandro, Elana Plotnick, Sandy Jablonski, Ann Ames, Fred Mingo, Lisa Kravitz, Narayana Moola, Nagesh Gadamsetty, Maza Mesfun, Vijaya Avagani, Danilo Torres, Carla McTigue, Ann Fisher, Ginger Jabour, Martha Parsons.

The meeting began with introductions by all participants at the meeting.

Jennifer Cooper moved that the minutes of the June 5, 2002 meeting be approved. The motion carried.

Beth McKeown presented the **Treasurer's Report**. It included a proposed budget to be voted on at Back to School Night and an Income Statement. Beth requested that all Chairs review their budgets. Beth announced that receipts received by the Tuesday before a PTA Meeting (in the PTA Mailbox) will allow Beth to provide an expense check at the Meeting. The income statement included the three months ending September 30, 2002.

Laura Mead presented the **Announcements**, welcoming all participants, especially new members and members who had not previously attended a Board Meeting. Laura stressed that the PTA is an open organization and every parent and teacher in the school are invited and encouraged to participate.

The PTA congratulated 16 sixth graders who completed an entire reading bingo card over the summer, meaning that they read over 24 selected books and/or authors. These sixth graders each received \$5 gift certificates to Borders. Several other sixth graders completed portions of the bingo card, winning other prizes.

Laura gave a high level overview of Reflections, which is a national arts recognition and achievement program sponsored by PTAs. Reflections emphasizes creativity in several areas, including art, writing, photography, and music. This year's theme is "Signs of Courage."

Laura discussed two upcoming community events:

- Woodson Football night – Sept 27. Mantua Students and families are invited to attend a football game and related events that honor the schools in the Woodson Pyramid. Refreshments will be available from Outback Steak House. The PTA will be selling discounted tickets and pompoms at Mantua Elementary School prior to the event.
- September 29 is Uno's Night – 20% of total bill (except tax and tip) will be donated to the PTA.

Laura indicated that we are working on other arrangements similar to the Uno's Night with other restaurants. She also thanked Olde Country Buffet for providing refreshments for the PTA meeting and announced that Olde Country Buffet would like to support the PTA and has suggested a "Mantua Month" with exact details to be determined.

Board members were each provided with "Purple Folders." Laura reviewed the contents of the folders. They included Summary of Policies and Procedures, Contact List, Eight Steps to a Motion (Robert's Rules of Order), Office Staff Responsibilities, The Objects of the PTA, and various Accounting Forms. Any questions should be directed to Laura.

**Principals' Report:** Jan-Marie Fernandez welcomed parents back for the school year. She advised that school hours have changed. School now begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. This is five minutes earlier than previous years. She announced that there are 903 students at Mantua - this is the same total as last year. There were increases in Gifted and Talented (GT) and decreases in the Total Communications (TC) Center resulting in an overall status quo in student population.

Jan-Marie welcomed Tina Tingler who is the new Assistant Principal for the TC Center. Tina joins Mantua from a faculty position at McDaniel's College and Hood College. Tina thanked everyone for making her feel welcome and said that everything is going well in the TC Center. Tina also interpreted at the meeting.

Jan-Marie expressed thanks to the PTA for the Ice Cream Social and the Newcomer's Social. She discussed the new hallway rules – total quiet as a classroom or large group. If in a group of two, students may use a quiet, inside voice. Adults should follow the same rule as a model for the children.

Jan-Marie discussed the new master schedule, where special activities are put in double blocks to maximize uninterrupted learning time. The goal is to reduce fragmentation of learning time. Also, on Mondays, sixth graders will participate in Marvelous Mondays – with various electives – e.g., gardening, dance, etc. Students can change activities every nine weeks.

For 6<sup>th</sup> graders, the first round of Hewlett Packard (HP) donations have been received and should be unboxed shortly. Teacher stations are on backorder until the end of

September. We are putting together the order for the next round of K<sup>12</sup>NECTS for 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Jan-Marie reminded that PCs are replacing Macs, per an FCPS-wide decision. Jan-Marie announced that a Mantua family made a generous private donation of water coolers, as well as water. This water is for all Learning Cottages, as well as the main office.

Elaine Wellner discussed some upcoming student testing. The sixth grade has been chosen to field test writing prompts for future usage on the SOLs. This will take place the week of September 23.

Grades 4 and 6 will take the Stanford 9 Tests between Oct 1-4. Subjects covered include Reading, Math, Language, Science, and Social Studies. This testing is used in conjunction with SOL scores to help determine eligibility for Honors classes (e.g., Math). Results are expected in January, though this is dependent on the testing company.

Elaine Wellner reviewed safety procedures. Because there are 42 buses and approximately 150 cars dropping or picking up children each morning and afternoon, it is imperative that safety procedures are adhered to – especially for bike riders to walk their bicycles on school grounds. A reminder that bicycle riding is a privilege that can be taken away was made.

Several safety options are being evaluated, including the expansion of the Kiss and Ride area and not allowing cars on Horner Court at specific times. The Office of Safety recommends separation between buses, cars, and children and significant efforts will be made to minimize safety concerns. Safety information will be included in the Tuesday Folder.

It was noted that while significant progress has been made in finding volunteers for the Cafeteria, additional volunteers are still needed between 12:30 and 1:45 to help the younger children

**Teacher Representative Report:** Janet Sottolano, our Teacher Representative, thanked the PTA for the “Warm-Fuzzies” fund. This fund provides for small presents for teachers – e.g., candy. Janet reminded the PTA that parents and teachers work together and that parents’ support is very appreciated by the teachers. Also, the K-2 teachers are requesting funds for a field trip to the Baltimore Aquarium at the end of year. The expected costs are about \$25 each for 300 children due to the need to lease buses. Jan-Marie reminded the attendees that historically the PTA funds field trips for every grade, but this is more than usual because they will not be able to use school buses.

The following **Committee Reports** were filed:

**Kids Care Club** – Jennifer Cooper discussed the first meeting that was held today. Approximately 30 students participated in initiating a project to provide materials for the Lamb Center, a homeless shelter in Fairfax. The KCC does service projects for

community – e.g., leaf raking, toy drive, talent show, and raccoon (a.k.a. racoon) run. Information will be provided in the Alert News.

**Hospitality** – DeeAnn Jeremiah thanked the membership for donations for the Welcome Back Breakfast. Several thank you notes from teachers were shared. A signup list for PTA Meeting snacks was distributed.

**Volunteer** – Marie Romais announced a \$1,000 grant from ExxonMobile, donated in recognition of volunteer hours. Laura Mead informed the membership that this donation has been designated for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade team. Laura also reminded PTA members to check with their employers for similar grant programs.

**PTA Membership** – Carole Thomas announced that approximately 50% of parents and 30% of teachers are currently members. There will be a table at Back to School Night to solicit additional members. Dues are used for several projects, especially the Directory. All members will receive a copy of Internet & Computer Ethics for Kids book.

**Directory** – Miriam Smolen is the Chair. We expect to send the Directory to the printers in early October. Validation requests were sent out in August electronically. For those who did not respond, a follow up was included in the Tuesday folder. To minimize paper/copying cost, it was requested that members sign up to receive news/alerts electronically. We still have 300 of 500 families receiving paper copies.

**Silent Auction** – Carole Thomas reminded the membership that the Silent Auction will be on Sunday, November 17 from 6pm to 10pm at the Kena Temple. This will be an Adults-only event. Formal invitations will be in the Tuesday folder in early October. This will be a special event with, among other things, international foods and music and cocktail attire. The committee is working with several restaurants and has also received approximately one hundred donations to date. Fliers soliciting donations from parents will be distributed soon. Help with the auction is needed and appreciated – please see Carole. Jane Love is coordinating Class Baskets. We are still in need of several classroom coordinators for these baskets.

**Garden** – Ann Baum reported that maintenance on the courtyard garden is going well. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade garden team is working hard – weeding and planting. Assistance is needed on hardscape issues (e.g., deck, plumbing) and softscape (e.g., future design). Ann reminded everyone that this is an ongoing project and will need help on an ongoing basis.

**FLEX:** Linda Halstead – announced that over one hundred students are interested, but teachers are needed. Anyone proficient in a foreign language is encouraged to participate.

**Newsletter:** Cheryl May reminded everyone that the Newsletter deadline is 9/20.

**New Business:** A question was asked regarding our sending the Jornadas to Frost. Jan-Marie reported that the Jornadas were part of a pilot last year. Frost is doing an extended pilot and many of our Jornadas were given to Frost because Mantua did not have enough

for an effective continuation of the pilot. Since materials are being shared among the Pyramid schools as part of the K<sup>12</sup>NECTS project, this “donation” was considered a standard part of this program. Jan-Marie also noted that the Jornadas are not being made any more due to the merger of HP and Compaq.

A request to put water coolers in the budget for next year was made – keeping in mind that the school cannot count on a private donation next year. Jan-Marie indicated that the cost is approximately \$3,000, including the equipment lease and the water.

#### **Motions Carried**

- A motion carried to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2002 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm. The next meeting is October 2.

Robert Luftglass  
Secretary