

PTA Board Meeting Notes

January 5, 2011

Mantua Elementary School

The president called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. Present at the meeting were:

Executive Board: Nicole Armstrong, Lori Recher, Sandy Spector

School Representatives: Jan Marie Fernandez, Cheryl Thompson, Janet Sottolano & Mom 😊

General Membership: Shannon Murphy, Haydee Cooper, Margaret Scheele, Leslie Kowalski, Rachael Webster, John Thomas, Melissa Morgan

The minutes from the December meeting were reviewed and approved.

President's Report: The directories have been distributed. All members should have received them by now. The teacher's copies are going out in tomorrow's mail.

The PTA is looking to establish safety guidelines for handling large number of children through PTA programs, for example, having any large PTA activity designate [at least] one volunteer responsible for the safety of the kids. We will be establishing broad guidelines, for large groups in particular, along with training on school policy, medical issues, etc. In the past there have been instances where, even though there were adults present, they didn't feel that they were in a position to direct/discipline the kids. Establishing a point person should help, as well as clarifying to the parents that there will be another parent for this express purpose. There will also be "enforcement" of the behavior such as with a contract that the kids sign. All input is welcome. Cheryl will talk with the school safety committee to see if there is any standing documentation. Nicole will check to see if the National PTA has guidelines. We will also need a procedure for collecting/accessing emergency contacts. These guidelines will be up and running for next year's committees.

The Eagle Scout candidates are looking for a project to do together. The school and PTA currently don't have anything for them, but there are possible gardening projects that will be investigated.

Treasurer's Report: The Book Fair net \$7300, and was only budgeted for \$5600. The check still needs to be cut to the library. Drama club made about \$2000, and was budgeted to break even. Last year they provided some meals for the kids during rehearsals, which was not done this year. This may account for the surplus monies. Cheryl suggested that some of the money should go to checking the sound and lighting systems. It

needs to be checked on a semi-regular basis, and currently is not checked at all. Nicole also received a suggestion to upgrade the back drops, but pricing needs to be checked. Reducing the number of students involved in the Drama Club has been discussed as well, as the 90 enrolled this year was too large a group.

Box Tops program received a check for \$1194.20. Once again, great job by Christy Choi.

The Tax Exempt form is online. Anyone purchasing supplies should be using this form.

Principals' Report: December was a very busy month. The kids had a fabulous Winter Sing-a-long. Dr. Moniuszko was at Mantua on the Monday before Winter break, and was very impressed with the school overall. Mrs. Berry left at the end of Dec. as her husband was transferred to PA, and a new kindergarten teacher started after the break - Ms. Jami Cutrell.

The 3rd grade teachers had some added "adventure" right before the start of Winter Break, as their classrooms had to be completely packed up so that they could be retiled. Additionally they had to unpack and set up before school started up again. Many of the teachers recruited family members to help, and all handled it beautifully. This will be an ongoing process, with 2 classes being redone each weekend throughout the rest of the year. This project came up unexpectedly, but if the school doesn't take advantage of it now, Mantua goes back to the bottom of the queue. All new flooring will be tile to make them easier to keep clean. The pods will be tiled as well, and will be the last areas to be addressed. Shannon asked about the possible sound impact, especially for the children with cochlear implants? There will be an impact, but not known how severe. If necessary we can always add area rugs. There is asbestos tiling under the regular flooring and a full asbestos removal is being performed.

A new teacher for the 5th-6th grade TC program started in November - Ms. Annette Asfaw. The update on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program is that the preschool part will be moving to Camelot in the fall. Grades K-6 will remain here at Mantua for the next 2 years. Canterbury Woods is being renovated, so there is a good chance that the entire program may move there when the renovations are complete. No announcement will be for the next 2 years. After our current 5-6 graders leave we will be down to approx 9-10 students in the entire program.

Cheryl reported that ESOL testing will be starting Jan. 14th, and eCart testing will start the end of January into February.

Nicole mentioned that at some point Mantua was on a list to get the gym floor replaced. We were number 27th (approximately). Floor replacement is very costly. Currently the gym floor is very slippery. Facilities maintains the list; we'll check to see where Mantua currently stands.

Mantua will be the pilot school for doing the SOL tests (3rd grade) all online this year. Mantua will be receiving a cart of net books to help practice using the online tools. We will be practicing the online testing with eCart as well. A major advantage to online testing is that we can get results within 2 days. We have 3 computer labs now.

The Strings concert is set for January 27th and the Band Concert for February 8th.

Report of First Co-Vice-Presidents for Community Outreach: The Kindergarten Readiness forum is tomorrow at 10:30 in the lower pod. This meeting is to determine if a child is ready to go to kindergarten. Shannon will post on the MOMs and Mantua Parents list serves.

Kids Care Club and the Cub Scouts raked leaves for 12 seniors. Girls On the Run is prepping for a spring session. Mentor works is planning a tea/training session. All Chat n Chew groups have met once and things are going smoothly. FLEX will be offering Sign language K-2, and Spanish K-2 in the spring. We are still working on developing the extra enrichment classes - Robotics and Drama Rama for grades 3-6, Investigation Station for grades K-3. We will be extending an offer to the teachers to see if they would like to teach these classes, and then will start to recruit from outside. These classes are for the spring - March thru May.

A Hispanic gathering is still being planned. Currently which day to hold the event is being discussed, with a Friday night event possible. Art Reflections reported that one entry made it through to the District level, though no word on judging as of yet. We are still without a Talent Show Chairperson. By this point in previous years planning would be already under way. Things are not looking very promising.

Report of Second Vice-President for Membership and Fundraising: Our second Restaurant Night is scheduled at Baja Fresh on Jan. 19th from 4-10 pm. Flyers will be distributed in Tuesday folders. Kathleen will be watching the issue involving the cashiers not checking for flyers .

Haydee reported that the Auction is trying to get contributions from the parents and staff. Staff participation has been good, while parent participation is light, having only received about a dozen so far. Deadline for donations is Jan. 15th. Shannon raised the point that perhaps all classes are not getting the same flyers in Tuesday folders.

The Carnival theme this year is Super Heroes. Sally Foster is not doing well. We can place orders any time through the end of the year. The Yearbook pricing will increase at the end of January; all are encouraged to place their orders now. Alice in Wonderland DVDs sales are going well. The Parenting with a Purpose seminar was well received.

Report of the Volunteer Coordinator:

All classroom Carnival basket & booth coordinators are being contacted. The Carnival is March 26th.

New Business:

Chat n Chew groups may need more time to meet. They are currently trying to do a craft, have a snack and

discuss the books within a 30 minute time frame. Currently the groups meet once a month on Mondays. Perhaps next year they can meet on another day (full day) for [possibly] 45 minutes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06.