

PTA General Meeting Notes

September 14, 2011

Mantua Elementary School

The president called the meeting to order at 7:38 PM. Present at the meeting were:

Executive Board: Lesley Kowalski, Sandy Spector, Lori Prendergast, Jennifer Epley, Shannon Murphy, Lori Recher

School Representatives: Jan-Marie Fernandez, Cheryl Thompson, Tina Tingler, Janet Sottolano

General Membership: Kate Glynn, Linda Acar, Christine Choi, Kim Nguyen, Aimee Kozick, Anbuchellam Vijay, Diane Schenk, Ally Con, Teresa LeMair, Joe Kim, Christine Child, Margaret Scheele, Nicole Armstrong, Julie Lifland

The Minutes from the June meeting were reviewed. Lesley Kowalski's name was spelled incorrectly on the ballot. The amended Minutes were approved.

President's Report: Lesley introduced the 2011-2012 PTA Board. Our monthly meetings have a new date - meetings will be held on the second Thursday of every month at 7pm.

The Ice Cream Social was a big success, thanks to Abra Allsman and Sun Yoo. And many thanks to Deanna Freemyer and Meri Farling for organizing the Teacher Back to School Breakfast.

The Virginia PTA has 3 proposals to be voted on. We will be putting the descriptions of the proposals on the website, along with a link to vote. Ballots will also be available at the October meeting. A question was raised regarding one of the items - funding for PE every day. Jan-Marie reported that the bill in Congress didn't pass about having PE every day. There is no way [logistically] to add it into the day. While they remain huge advocates for keeping the kids moving (recess, etc.), we cannot accommodate PE every day.

A Disciplinary Policy has been established, based on discussions held in June headed by Nicole Armstrong. The guidelines will be used by all groups using the school building.

We'll be trying a virtual PTA meeting for November.

We are looking for a Grant Writer to submit grant requests on behalf of the school. Anyone interested can contact Lesley for more information. We will be asking for a volunteer through the Alert News as well.

Back to School Night for grades K-3 is tomorrow night. Grades 4-6 will be next week.

The 50th Anniversary Celebration is October 15th.

Treasurer's Report: The 2011-2012 budget was presented by Sandy. A column for prior years has been added to the report for comparison. The Raccoon Run line item has been removed. In prior years it had been under the Kids Care Club, but is run separately. The Yearbook money didn't come in on time to close last year's books, so it is already showing a positive amount. The monies for the 50th Anniversary Celebration have been encumbered from last year's funds. We will be making money on the inflatables wrist bands, food, and the Mantua Made market. We're guessing that we're going to be spending 7K of the 10k encumbered. Currently the Celebration is an unknown expense.

The 2011-2012 Budget was voted on and approved.

Principals' Report: Jan-Marie reported that we have 915 students enrolled this year. This puts us almost at full capacity, which is 947. Most of August was spent on staffing and HR changes. We have several new teachers, as well as a new Office Administrator. Additionally, staff was moved around into new positions. We have a couple of student teachers currently with us as well.

A great time was had by all at Ice Cream Social, with a good turn-out. We're hopeful that we will have good weather for the 50th Celebration. The event will start with the formal ceremony at 11:00.

Mantua made AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) standards, in all categories (including special education and English as a second Language). Dr. Dale is advocating the removal of AYP. By 2014 we would need to be at 100% passage rate, which will be impossible to achieve. Right now Mantua meets the highest level of state requirements.

There are new intervention programs in place for reading and math skills. This has created scheduling issues for Cheryl. After 36 years in Education and Coaching, Cheryl will be retiring at the end of the year. She joined the Mantua family in 1991.

Teresa asked if the Peanut/Allergy Policy is different this year? Jan-Marie noted that the policy comes from the Health Department. The amount of food allergies is off the charts. The school has never seen so many children affected. At lunch there is a nut free table. There are now a few children that have issues with inhalation and/or touching food as well (not just an ingestion allergy), so snack has now been an issue in the classrooms. There are snacks in the freezer for some children that have cross allergies to be covered for special occasions (birthdays, etc.). The letters that went out to families referred to snacks that are shared.

Report of First Vice-President for Community Outreach: The New Family Welcome events were very successful over the summer, thanks to Monica Cameron. Approximately 20-25 families attended. Several families from Fairhill also came to the events, and appreciated the chance to meet other families. The New Family Welcome information is on the PTA website.

The Drama Club will be performing The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Stupid Tales. The Information meeting was held tonight. Auditions will be next week.

Family Fun nights have been scheduled and confirmed, as well as the Restaurant nights. Family Fun Nights include: Nov 4. - Pokemon and other Trading Cards. Feb 10. - Magicians. March 9 - Lego Night. May 4 - Comic Books.

Girls On the Run registration is open right now, and will start the week of the 26th. The club will meet Mondays and Wednesdays, with the goal of running a 5k race.

Kids Care Club is starting off with a collection of school supplies for students in need. Their goal is to collect 100 lbs. of supplies. The Leaf Raking for Seniors, in conjunction with the Boy Scouts is scheduled for December 3rd.

Mr. Malc will be starting the Chess Club for grades 4-6 in October.

Community Building Network - Thomas Jefferson HS will be connecting Mantua students to TJ Students for tutoring and mentoring. Jan-Marie indicated that it has to be connected to science, technology or math, as specified by the grant. Parents that have students at Mantua and TJ can be ambassadors (liaisons). Mantua is supposed to reach out to TJ when there is a need. They would then reach out to parents in the Mantua community that have students at TJ that can help.

Report of Second Vice-Presidents for Membership and Fundraising: Jennifer reported on Fundraising. Abra and Sun Yoo co-chaired the Ice Cream Social, which went smoothly, even with the rain date. We went through 110 pizzas, and sold out of everything.

Spirit Wear will be available to order at Back to School Nights. This year's Spirit Wear features the 50th logo. Order forms also went home in Tuesday folders, and forms are going home again next week. The deadline for orders is October 7th.

Restaurant Nights have been scheduled: Nov. 10 - Noodles & Co., Dec. 22 - Chucky Cheese and Jan. 24 - Baja Fresh.

The Yearbook committee will have an initial meeting with Jostens tomorrow.

Sally Foster Entertainment Books were sent home with each student on Tuesday. The books can be sent back if the families do not wish to purchase. Order forms are in the bag that went home, to be used to order additional books. This coming Tuesday the Sally Foster catalog will be coming home. The homework sheet that went home with the Entertainment Books was a mistake, and should have been recycled.

Box Tops is starting October 3rd, and will run till the 28th. Christine will hold another contest later in the year. We are also collecting Labels for Education. The Box Tops can be dropped off in the box in the front lobby. Be sure to note the child's name and teacher.

Escrips registrations are underway.

Shannon gave the report on Membership. So far 158 families have joined. Online membership is already up and running - many thanks to Nicole and John Armstrong. At this point, online registrations are up over last year. Shannon noted that registration can take a couple of days to update to the website.

Report of the Volunteer Coordinator: Teresa reported that 2 Volunteer meetings were held and were well attended. Additional Volunteer Sheets went out in Tuesday Folders, for school-wide opportunities. She will also be at Back to School Nights. The Volunteer Database is up and online.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: A question was raised on whether or not the Chess Club could be expanded to include 3rd graders. Lori Prendergast responded- this was a question last year as well. The Chess Club has a teacher sponsor - he is volunteering his time. He had tried including 3rd graders before, and feels that limiting the club to grades 4-6 is better. We can have a chess club for 3rd graders if we can find a teacher or parent sponsor for a secondary club.

Diane raised the question of whether there is anything that we can do to organize a trip to Italy at the end of 6th grade, with an Italian teacher? Jan-Marie has no problem with the concept, but it cannot be a school sponsored event.

The Fungi Award: Lesley announced the Fungi Award, to be presented to a member that was a "fun guy" during the past month. The award will be handed out each month. Kathleen DeCarlo and Meri Farling are this month's recipients, for their hard work organizing the 50th Anniversary Celebration 😊

Meeting adjourned at 8:54.