

**McKinley School PTA
60 Thompson Street
Fairfield, CT 06825**

**General Board Meeting
November 13, 2008
Library Media Center**

In attendance:

Patty Mihaylo	Susan Kotulsky	Wes Greenop	Bev Greenop
Eileen Gombos	Theresa Conte	Jenn Cerbone	Barbara Harrington
Walter Donne	Nancy Donne	Dale Bernardoni	Scott Bannon
Marie Stalling	Jenn Hoffman	Shannon Goodchild	Sheila Altieri
Dyan DeCastro	Sherrie Fahey		

Meeting called to order at 7:10 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKERS

TD Bank Affinity Program

Peter Andriato of the TD Bank Affinity Program presented the PTA with a check for \$835.30, the total funds earned thus far as part of the Affinity Program.

The representatives took questions from the group and the following were discussed:

- TD may be interested in hosting a table at an upcoming McKinley event.
- A new wave of applications should go out because there is a new wave of students since the last applications were disseminated. TD does have applications in languages other than English.
- It is possible to create an incentive in order to promote McKinley friends and families to join TD as part of the Affinity Program.

High School Scholarship Fund

Beth Posner discussed the non-profit organization, which awards over 60K in scholarships each year. There are individual/family scholarships as well as school specific scholarships (of which McKinley has two). The scholarships reward students in many areas including academics, extracurricular, and other areas. It was suggested that donations be made in honor of teachers in lieu of teacher gifts at holidays, year end etc... Dr. Bernardoni indicated that McKinley teachers would certainly appreciate the gesture.

Anna Cutaia-Leonard, Director of Elementary Education, Fairfield public Schools

Anna is in her first year as Director of Elementary Education and she works with all eleven elementary schools in Fairfield in all areas of education. She discussed the following:

1. Diversity

- Cultural Diversity Task Force (which Dr. Bernardoni, Scott Bannon and Walter Donne are all a part of) is focused on the racial imbalance in the Fairfield elementary schools. Unofficial numbers as of October 1, 2008 indicate that the diversity gap

between McKinley and other Fairfield elementary schools is now under 25%. The task force currently has three efforts:

- i. Preschool – there are two preschool programs (McKinley and Burr) serving all of Fairfield. A total of forty students are enrolled this year.
 - ii. Volunteer Transfers – Parents of students experiencing overcrowding have the option to send their children to McKinley while parents of some McKinley students have the opportunity to send their children to certain other Fairfield elementary schools. Currently there are six children who opted out of McKinley and less than six who opted into McKinley.
 - iii. Taking a closer look at numbers and balance of race and ensuring that the district embraces the efforts.
- Strategic Plan Action Team - 1 of 5 items is Diversity. Their efforts are broader than ethnic and cultural diversity. They also focus on different learning needs.
 - i. Teachers will be surveyed to assess learning needs in the classroom.
 - Curriculum/Assessment
 - i. RTI (Response to Intervention) is a statewide initiative focused on meeting the needs of students as soon as there is a need rather than waiting for a wider gap. RTI addresses needs in the areas of literacy, math, writing and behavior. Data is currently being collected on intervention programs to be utilized district wide. The two programs being looked at closely are *Leveled Literacy Instruction* and *Literacy Wings*.
 - ii. Word Work – there is some question about whether word work is the best model of phonics instruction. Research is being conducted to determine best practice for phonics instruction.
 - iii. Math curriculum is also under review and there are plans to revamp math curriculum and instruction that should come to fruition in the 2010/2011 school year.

2. Budget

- Parents and teachers are encouraged to attend and be a part of the dialogue at the following meetings while recognizing the current economic situation and maintaining a realistic viewpoint:
 - i. BOE/PTA meeting on December 9, 2008
Transportation, maintenance, high school traffic, and preschool will be discussed.
 - ii. Superintendent's Meeting on December 10, 2008 at 10:30am
There will be a large open discussion with the superintendent.
- Budget topics to discuss:
 - i. Creating a budget that allows us to move forward.
There will be no new programs for the 2009/2010 school year.
The district has a no layoffs plan aimed at protecting all staff.
 - ii. Class size – The district is committed to current class size guidelines.
23 students in K-2 (18 at McKinley)
25 students in 3-5 (20 at McKinley)

Question: What is the role of technology in next year's budget? The technology budget is in place for next year and there will be a continued focus on technology initiatives to be implemented about five years in the future.

3. Survey

- The survey asking parents about their interest in before and after school programs, magnet and pocket schools etc... will be re-administered. The survey is available in the library and at conferences. There will be an email blast and information on Fair TV regarding the survey.
- The survey will close the end of November and will be reviewed December 2nd at 7pm at the central office.
- Thus far there have been 500 plus respondents, and people are encouraged to retake the survey if they completed it the first time around.

The October 2, 2008 minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Nancy Donne to approve the minutes as amended and seconded by Barbara Harrington. All in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Voting Results

The motion to elect Susan Kotulsky as PTA Council Representative passed. The motion for the PTA to finance the first grade Shadows presentation passed.

President-Elect Position

Melissa Bonet, a first grade parent, is interested in the President-Elect position. Patty will meet with her on Saturday morning to discuss the position.

NEW BUSINESS

Craft Fair Updates

There are now 43 vendors including the fifth grade Student Council. We are at capacity for vendors but still need volunteers to help with admissions, bake sale, and to assist vendors with loading and unloading.

Holiday Shop

We currently have enough volunteers. The items will be \$0.25 - \$7 and the children's buying will be supervised. The holiday shop will be held during the craft fair from 11:30-2:00pm.

Clothing Drive

There will be a bilingual flyer going out tomorrow. There will be eight tables of clothing including suits, jackets, hats and gloves, children's clothing etc... In anticipation that many families may be interested in selecting a large number of items, we will try to limit the amount of

clothing selected by each family by offering to call families who wish to come back once others have had a chance to shop.

Marie will work with Mrs. Bonenfant to send any leftover clothing to Zimbabwe.

Fundraising

It is anticipated that fundraising will be reduced this year due to the current economy.

- The Flying Dish event was successful.
- Primo Pizza promotion is still in the works.
- The Blue Tulip store weekend is this weekend. Flyers going home from most classroom teachers.
- A number of fundraising ideas were discussed:
 - Cheer Pom Poms
 - Grocery tote bags (Jenn will contact Anne Roche re: logos)
 - Yellow Moon affinity program
 - Nutmeg bowling will give McKinley a discount but no affinity program is available
 - Conference night bookfair
 - Spaghetti/potluck dinner, breakfast or doughnuts with daddy
 - Sound Tigers night
 - Islanders' tickets raffle
- Celebration Books – Parents can purchase books for their children or teacher. All books purchased through Celebration Books contain a personalized label.

REPORTS

President's Report

There will be a blood drive tentatively on January 30, 2009. McKinley night with the Sound Tigers will also be in January. Patty introduced Family Fitness Night, a new initiative in partnership with Tim Cepitelli of Wakeman. The Beautify McKinley project is underway.

Wes recognized Patty for her tremendous work on organizing the World's Fair.

Principal's Report

- Ellen Griesedieck of the American Mural Project came to McKinley and worked with the fifth grade classes.
- The first grade students will be participating in a series of lessons about visual literacy. They were recently visited by Linda Friedlander, the coordinator from the Yale Center for British Art. The students will be taking several trips to YCBA this year to look first hand at artwork. They will also be visited by docents here at school. Kathy Reddy was responsible for setting up this exciting program.
- Student Council hosted a mock election on October 30th. It was a success and the results were nearly identical to the national electoral votes.
- United Way Day of Caring was on October 29th. Corporate affiliates made donations of gently used books and compiled 13,000 books for the Schools of Hope and two smaller

schools. The schools sent Language Arts consultants to assist with sorting and leveling the books. The McKinley student council loaded three to four thousand books to send to Zimbabwe. The kindergarten and first grade children will shop for books and parents will have the opportunity to come in for a side-by-side reading demonstration.

- A Wakeman volunteer is the son of a publishing executive and has arranged for \$1000 in books to be donated by the publishing company.
- Unicef raised \$1046.46 this year.
- Juvenile Diabetes fundraiser took place. We are not sure how much has been raised yet.
- The Shadows program came and presented to the first grade classes. This was a wonderful presentation.
- Dr. Bernardoni would like to thank the PTA for providing food for the Veterans and for organizing Diversity Day.
- The Cross Country team had a successful beach meet where 200 children from three different schools participated.
- Grades K-3 will go to the Nutcracker. The only cost will be for the bus because Target donated funds to cover all other costs.

Board of Education Representatives

Possibility that McKinley students may attend Fairfield Woods for middle school.

Teacher Representative

The first grade classrooms are lucky to have a foster grandma (Ms. Miller) to help out. The children are working on reading fluency as well as editing and revising their writing. The second grades are working on expanding the main event in their writing. Grade three is working on math in real life situations. For example, they are planning all financial aspects (mileage, gas, hotel, parking, park entrance etc...) of trips to six flags and other places. The fifth grades have completed their election projects and are presenting tomorrow. Ms. Mayeran has completed all fitness tests for the fourth and fifth grades including flexibility, abdominal strength, upper body strength and endurance. It was reported that 89% of students improved. Ms. Bossio and Ms. Miller thank PTA for support on Diversity Day. ESL is up and running with 20 members. Ms. Miller is working with the Center for Women and Families to teach the fourth and fifth grades about bullying and how to prevent it. Mrs. Martin thanks the PTA for their help on Veterans Day. Mrs. Levesque reported that the fruit smoothie sale made \$137 for Juvenile Diabetes. The third, fourth, and fifth grades are taking the Blue Ribbon testing in the PC lab. The results will give teachers a good idea of where to focus instruction.

Director of Cultural Arts Programming

The Chinese Acrobats will be performing next week. *Struggle For Freedom* a civil rights performance will be presented later in the year. The Modern Dance Company will present a free performance of modern dance. The United Way grant will host an author to read to a select group of Fairfield students and Dr. Bernardoni is trying to get Steven Kellogg or another author of similar caliber to come to McKinley for an evening read aloud.

Volunteer Coordinator

There is one position open to chair the summer reading program. Patty Mihaylo agrees to co-chair the summer picnic with Sherrie Fahey. Theresa asks all volunteers to read the chairperson

guidelines if you have volunteered to chair an event or program. If you know anyone who wants to volunteer, please have him or her call Theresa or Tracey.

Walter suggested that a good way to get others to volunteer is to simply invite a fellow parent to volunteer with you as a way to get them involved.

Dr. Bernardoni shared a thank you note from Mrs. Dapp to the PTA for providing the books for Nutmeg Readers.

Motion to adjourn seconded by Marie Stalling. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07pm.