

PTA Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2011
8:45 am
RSS Cafeteria

Present:

Cheryl Artabane
Karen Bronson
Wendy Adler
Sarin Bachmann
Kim Palumbo

Hedy Cardozo
Jen Kitchen
Felicia DePaola
Jen Schlactus
Debra Weisel

Bill Stark
Bonnie Ackerman
Robyn Weintraub

Gina Healy, HS Principal

- Brought copies of *Focus*, school newspaper.
- Spring sports are underway.
- NYSSMA and festival band had great results.
- Destination Imagination team won States and now going to finals in Tennessee.
- Project Prevention program last night with Harvard professor/author Dan Kindlon; “Too Much of a Good Thing” about raising children in affluent communities. Great, funny program.
- Today Shawn Derek has an anti-drug/alcohol message performance.
- Junior Defensive Driving program tonight.

Motion to approve minutes from March meeting: Felicia DePaola, second: Kim Palumbo.

Karen Bronson, MS Principal

- Stellar week for music.
 - Select band went to NYSSMA, won highest award: gold with distinction. Had an assembly yesterday to honor them.
 - Choral students at NYSSMA, all scored excellent or outstanding.
- Spelling Bee: Thank you to Susan Rosson for helping to put it together.
- MS Theater production of *Little Miss Fortune Cookie*—everyone did a great job.
- MS Yearbook is beautiful.
- Student government—money raised from Lifesavers for Japan going to Red Cross.

- Had great brain research/science presentation by Steven Dana. At last faculty meeting teachers talked about how it applied to classroom: stimulation, attention span, questioning, etc.... Tied into Differentiated Instruction. At same meeting, had teachers share creative options on regents earth science projects.

Deborah Weisel, Elementary School Principal

- Thank you to the PTA for helping to bring author Michael Dooley. Kids and adults enjoyed it. He was in full 1812 costume all day. I had lunch with him and he stayed in character the whole time.
- Spirit of Achievement award (Junior Achievement), three hundred people were there, mostly corporate.
- Destination Imagination: two elementary teams going to Tennessee with Ms. Taylor. Met with both teams yesterday to discuss logistics and financing.
- Student placement forms have been sent out. Helps to organize the process, tells us what we need to know about parents' concerns and students' strengths.
- Shared Decision-Making Team, this past Tuesday. Will need new members for a 2 year term.
- CD Project run by Mr. Mariconda and Mr. DiMicelli underway. Recording will happen in early May.
- Exuma book drive brought in over 3000 books. Three principals from Exuma met with our kids to talk about life and schools in the Bahamas (not the resorts).
- Installing a new PA system in the building to make announcements clearer in rooms, but also heard in hallways, outside, etc...
- April 27 is the Art Fair.
- Last night was Zumba for Japan. Great event, very well attended.

Bill Stark, Superintendent

- Searches have gone well. We are optimistic that we will announce an Assistant Principal at the April 26th BOE meeting.
- MS Principal search had 135 applications. We don't want to lose best candidates to neighboring districts that also have positions available, so trying to move quickly.
 - Stark interviewed 15, sent 5 to the committee. Committee picked 2 who are coming back today, meeting the BOE.
 - Hopefully the MS Principal will also be decided by the end of April.
- Tomorrow is the big budget meeting. By NYS law, the BOE must present a budget shortly.
- At April 26 meeting town assessor Mitch Markowitz will talk to the community about property assessments and how the numbers are adjusted. We want people to understand that we don't control the assessors' decisions.

- Race to the Top. We don't participate in it, but we are bound by it. For NYS to get the \$700 million it received, it agreed to teacher and principal evaluation based (in part) on student performance.
 - Goes into effect in September. We will be responsible for implementing it.
 - Will potentially cost districts a lot of \$\$ in training, processes and appeals. This is part of the national standards movement.
 - For example, the Superintendent of New Rochelle is receiving \$600,000 to implement Race to the Top, but he estimates it will cost him \$700,000 to implement. The district is already laying off staff—where will the extra money come from?
 - There are potential costs in Blind Brook, as well as considerations on how this will affect our kids. Will there be more standardized tests?
 - This is a reminder that we live in a larger world, and there are some things that we don't have control over.
- April 28: final Community Conversation.

Jen Schlactus introduces Wendy Adler, candidate for the BOE.

Adele Saunders, Treasurer, home sick.

Mixed bags fundraiser will earn about \$6000. Thank you to Lauren Wels for all her hard work.

Jen Kitchen, Liaison

Final results of Reflections contest are in—we had some winners in each school. There will be a celebratory dinner.

Bonnie Ackerman, Liaison

In HS Congress meetings, Race to Nowhere is topic of discussion.

BBEP is bringing the Harlem Magic

Cheryl Artabane, Dial-A-Friend

- Need a programmer who can provide long-term support. Can school contribute to costs since school uses DAF?
- Should we include email addresses?
- Artwork competition will begin April 15.

3 DI teams going to Tennessee. Can PTA help offset costs? Perhaps, but a concern because we don't help all other teams/clubs.

Motion to adjourn: Jen Kitchen. Second: Hedy Cardozo.