

PTA Meeting Minutes
May 26, 2011
7:00pm
RSS Library

Present:

Felicia DePaola
Lawrence Engle
Bill Stark
Karen Bronson
Deborah Weisel
Kim Palumbo
Robin Willig

Howard Levy
Alicia Talmadge
Kelly Lieberman
Patty Chernick
Gina Healy
Susan Joseph
Kerri Bernard

Maureen Braren
Shari Zeller-mayer-
Silverstein
Cheryl Artabane
Adele Saunders
Glen Schuster
Pam Sunshine

Jen Schlactus not present.

Motion to approve minutes from April meeting: Kelly Lieberman, second: Kim Palumbo.

Bill Stark, Superintendent

- You are no doubt aware of our administrative change. Ms. Weisel accepted a position closer to her home. We appreciate the very fine job she has done here. Tracy Taylor (currently in TN with the DI teams) is our principal-elect.
- Tax cap will become real issue.
 - Historically our budgets pass in the high 60% (last one approved by over 70%). Tax cap can potentially be overruled.
 - We're cautiously optimistic that we can stay within the 2% figure and maintain our programming.
- NAEP: National Assessment of Education Progress adopted by 47 out of 50 states. This will move education in a specific direction nationally. Core standards that are being adopted are "mile deep, inch wide".
 - Teachers are to be evaluated on test scores released in August (but evaluations in June?).
 - To have outsiders come in and evaluate teachers and administration will cost additional money.
 - All very concerning trends that will impact our district.
- Larry Engle—schools are losing local control/self-determination
 - 2% cap will create a mindset that 2% is the new norm—will be difficult to ever propose higher budget increase.

- PTA communication is essential; help the BOE and administration to inform the community about these concerns.
- We should be very concerned about NAEP. It tells us what to teach. We don't teach college courses — we shouldn't go so deep into narrow focused topics.
- Stark: there are potential ramifications for music and art programs because they are not 'core subjects'.
- I'm not against national standards; I'm against a national curriculum.

Deborah Weisel, RSS Principal

- This has been an incredible two years. Thank you to Mr. Stark and to everyone. This was a tough decision but best for me and my family.
- Finished state assessments in grades 3, 4, and 5 in math and ELA. Tracy did a great job putting the schedule together—endless planning and logistics involved in testing.
- We have new friends at RSS: 27 chicks hatched, we have butterflies and hermit crabs. Lots of inquiry-based science learning going on. Seth Horowitz is doing a great job.
- Colonial Day last week was fun.
- Ms. Taylor is in Tennessee with our DI teams.
- Fifth grade concert last night was great.
- Xee Rothmann dedication in the library scheduled for June 16.
- The Ridge Street We Care CD is out and it's fantastic; I laughed, I cried... Thank you to the PTA for funding the project. All students will receive a copy of the CD as a gift. Thank you to parent Robin Maizes and the Shared Decision Making Team.

Karen Bronson, MS Principal

- Completing state testing for all grades in ELA and math, including field testing. I commend the students, faculty, staff, custodians, etc... huge undertaking to organize and implement.
- We had such an excellent year in music. Great showings for chorus, instrumental. The 6th grade jazz ensemble is great.
- Spring art show was wonderful.
- Westchester Assistant DA Susan Brownbill-Vega discussed internet safety with our 8th graders. The kids had lots of great questions.
- Diane Garret of Diane's Books in Greenwich will meet with 6th graders in early June to talk about new and classic books.
- We had a great program with Nora Baskin, the author of *Anything But Typical* which our 7th graders read. Kids did great projects and 'blogging' about the book.

- Rafael Medoff visited our 8th grade Social Studies classes. Had a day of workshops on political cartoons of WWII/Holocaust.
- Lots of trips:
 - 6th grade had second half of their outdoor education experience.
 - 7th grade getting ready for Gettysburg.
 - 8th grade went to Lake Compounce.
- Incoming 6th grade orientation was wonderful. Had some small groups/workshops. It was a very special evening.
- I had the opportunity to meet with incoming Principal Pat Lambert. I'm thrilled to work with her this summer.

Parent Question: During the 8th grade internet safety assembly, what kind of questions did the kids ask?

A: Kids were mostly concerned with how much they could 'get away with'.

Debbie Handler: I read *Anything But Typical*. Very interesting. Great book for thinking about others who are different.

Gina Healy, HS Principal

- Seniors have finished classes and are now doing Senior Options. Our kids are working in banking, engineering and other fields. Some are even assisting in classrooms at RSS.
- We administered 292 AP exams over 2 weeks.
- Our junior class trip to Baltimore/DC was good.
- Sophomore Circus another success.
- Sleep for Solutions brought attention to local homelessness and raised a lot of money.
- We've had great concerts.
- Our theater group has gotten numerous award nominations.
- Our DI team is in Tennessee for global finals.
- Our Mock Trial team won regionals and did well at the state competition.
- The baseball team made it to the playoffs.
- We're currently developing the master schedule for next year. Students should have their schedules by mid-June.
- The search is underway for new math and Italian teachers.

Parent: do you have programs at the HS on internet safety?

A; We have not done a program for the students but should in the fall. Parent involvement is essential on this topic. "What you permit, you promote"

Kerri Bernard, RSS Teacher

- On behalf of all the teachers, thank you to the PTA for all you do.

- RSS School spirit day was today; it was a lot of fun and great to have everyone together. There was no more competition this year, so it was more about school spirit instead of about which team won. Felt like a carnival. Mr. Forzaglia got dunked in the water tank.
- The CD project had great energy and it was another opportunity to get the whole school together.
- Science is fun and exciting with Seth Horowitz—lots of inquiry-based learning.
- Thank you to Debbie, we're going to miss you.

Larry Engle: BOE

- Last Tuesday was the election. The budget was overwhelmingly approved.
 - Glen Schuster was reelected.
 - Jeff Diamond elected.
- Next meeting is June 6: student recognition night.

Felicia: Thank you Larry for your years of service.

Patty Chernick, Ways and Means

- Comic Book Fair was great. Raised \$2600. Thank you Emily Turtill.
- Mixed Bags earned approximately \$6000

Howard Levy, Arts Advisory Committee, HS band teacher

- The Arts Advisory Committee is a public committee, we welcome anyone.
- Next meeting: June 13.
- We are looking for a capital investment in a new soundboard for the MS/HS auditorium.
 - We are hoping to get funding from the PTA and other groups to cover the cost.
 - Current soundboard is obsolete and insufficient for our needs.
 - We currently rent soundboards for our shows at a cost of \$3K/year.
 - We would purchase the same model that we rent (Yamaha LS9-32). This soundboard has 32 channels, memory, upgrade capabilities, etc... Would benefit all grades, K-12.
 - Estimates are \$10,578 and \$12,000.

Adele Saunders, Treasurer

- Comic Book Fair \$2590.
- Mixed Bags earned approximately \$6000. Thank you to Lauren Wels.

- Book Fair: \$4K.
- Plant sale raised \$1900.

Kim Palumbo looking into a California Pizza Kitchen fundraiser for the fall.

Pam Sunshine: Programming

- Spirit Day was great.
- Teacher appreciation breakfast June 7th.

Nominating Committee presents slate for next year (see attachment).

Motion to adjourn: Pam Sunshine. Second: Adele Saunders.

PTA Slate for 2011-2012 School Year

Presidents

Felicia DePaola
Jen Schlactus

Ways and Means

Robin Gould
Patty Chernick

Programming

Susan Rosson
Pam Sunshine

Membership

Cheryl Artabane
Kelly Lieberman

Liaisons

RSS: Jen Kitchen
MS: Debbie Handler
HS: Bonnie Ackerman

Legal

Beth Singer

Recording Secretary

Robyn Weintraub

Corresponding Secretary

Leslie Mook

Treasurer

Adele Saunders