

January 10, 2011  
Chatsworth Avenue School

## **PT Council Minutes**

Meeting was called to order by President Melany Gray at 9:20am.

### **I. Minutes for 11/15/10 (updated) and 12/6/10 approved**

### **II. Unit Summaries**

#### **a. Mamaroneck High School:**

- i. A Mock ACT was given for the first time at MHS on Saturday (1/8) and received good feedback. It was given through Revolution (test prep company) for \$20 (so it was actually a fund raiser for MHS since we only had to cover our expenses). Both juniors and seniors took the test (about 50/50 split) and the test allowed for accommodations.
- ii. Hats will be sold at the HS over the next couple of weeks as a fundraiser.
- iii. Monday, January 17, 2011 is the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual "Day of Service" at the high school. Approximately 100 students are participating in various community service activities around Larchmont and other nearby towns.

#### **b. Hommocks:**

- i. Raising Digital Natives continues at Hommocks
- ii. Starting work on the Hommocks Trivia Night fundraiser. Hoping to bring kids together for a fun evening and get teachers involved as well.

#### **c. SEPTA:**

- i. Continuing a great relationship with the Administration – working with Anthony Minotti on key priorities as the year progresses (i.e., anti-bullying, standardization, etc.). Hoping to develop programs for all the elementary schools in order to have a broad impact. For example: study practices and planners. How to make it easier for students who have organizational issues (posting assignments, etc.).

#### **d. Chatsworth:**

- i. Grant for outdoor garden – planting fruits and vegetables and designing an outdoor classroom.

- ii. Excited to have some parents of children in younger grades stepping into key PTA positions (i.e., Parent's Night Out chair).
- e. **Murray:**
- i. Rehearsals are starting for Peter Pan
  - ii. There is a General Membership PTA meeting on Jan 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:15. There will be a guest speaker who will discuss bullying. Information will be sent to the other schools for inclusion in their Friday Sheets.
  - iii. The Winter Whirl fundraiser is on January 29<sup>th</sup>.
  - iv. The effort to go paperless has been a bit bumpy this year but they are still working on it.
- f. **Central:**
- i. Central has also gone paperless this year – using Constant Contact as their method for communication. It's working out very well.
  - ii. For the first time at the school, a Grants Committee has been established.
  - iii. In addition to the Silent Auction and Scare Fair fundraisers, they are now going to try having a Parents Night Out (1<sup>st</sup> time). The committee for this event is just forming.
  - iv. Succession is weighing heavily since there is a lack of involvement from parents with younger children.
- g. **Mamaroneck Avenue:**
- i. There is a continued push for raising money for the new playground, especially since there is currently no climbing equipment for the students.
  - ii. The Green Committee continues its gardening efforts this year with an emphasis on recycling and minimizing garbage at the school.
  - iii. There are limited volunteers at MAS. They are trying to get more involvement from Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade parents but so far it is not working very well.

### **III. Presentation by Gail Boyle, Chatsworth Principal**

- a. Introduction of the new Assistant Principal, Katie Anderson.
- b. Importance of using resources effectively, especially the parent body. Article walk – small group discussion of parent involvement and what it means. The framework is from a longer article that

describes how parent involvement (in all ways) makes a difference for students.

- c. Chatsworth provides a range of ways parents can be involved, including both PTA and other avenues (in classrooms, etc.).
- d. Progress is continual – we need to break out of our set ideas as to what we believe is “good involvement.” Involvement and communication is much easier at the elementary levels, but harder as your child gets to Hommocks and the HS since you lose the 1-1 with the individual teachers.
- e. Building trust between parents and teachers is a key element in the involvement process. We also need a shared understanding of parent expectations. The main premise must always be a student/academic focus – if you start there, you’re in the right place.
- f. Chatsworth builds its programs with the child centered/ academic focus in mind and uses parent support in a variety of ways:
  - i. PTA/SEPTA
  - ii. Chatsworth Planning Council
  - iii. Parent support for school culture, community and communication
  - iv. Parent support for health and wellness
  - v. Parent support for curriculum
  - vi. PTA sponsored enhancements
- g. Moving forward: Using Data Systems to engage families (article).

#### **IV. School Board Report (Robin Nichinsky)**

- a. Tuesday (1/4) School Board meeting: Math coach, Mariana Ivanov, spoke about the curriculum mapping initiative and how it will ensure consistency, etc. in the math program.
- b. Interviews for the High School Principal are on-going.
- c. The Citizens Budget Advisory Committee meets at 7:30 tonight (1/10). Its next meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup> will discuss the budget process.
- d. 1/18: School Board Meeting.
- e. 2/1: School Board Meeting will discuss community engagement.
- f. The School Board will soon be unveiling its 5 year capital plan.

## **V. Superintendent's Report (Dr. Shaps)**

- a. As discussed before, the PTC will be a way to test ideas before bringing them to a broader parent audience – for example, providing feedback on the web site and participating in a survey regarding the Feb 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.
- b. The HS Principal search is in its 2<sup>nd</sup> phase. When finalists have been identified, they will begin to bring in teachers and parents as part of the process.
- c. Technology Meeting: The meeting last week discussed the role of technology in school. The speaker was from Apple, which is at the leading edge of technology. The meeting generated a lot of ideas and conversation about the impact of technology on student performance, literacy, etc. This meeting was a great way to expand our ongoing conversation about technology and how it fits into the vision for our school district.
- d. Many political changes are now occurring on both state and local levels that are sure to impact our school system...Keep watching.
- e. YouTube Clip on Education: Reaction from PT Council Members - really got people thinking about expanding beyond the traditional ways of looking at education. Dr. Shaps mentioned examples of new models in public education such as the Coalition of Central Schools (Seizer, Harvard) and the Francis Parker Middle School (integrated approach to learning). He also explained that the industrial model of public education came as an alternative to child labor. The charge for our district going forward includes elements such as:
  - i. Defining what success is for all students when they leave the district to an environment of uncertainty;
  - ii. Optimizing conditions that preserve social creativity yet embrace technology;
  - iii. Moving away from standardized testing and formats that regurgitate information;
  - iv. Promoting divergent thinking as a capacity of creativity.

## **VI. Other Business (Melany)**

- a. Gave update on outstanding issues surrounding After School Clubs, specifically with regard to confirmation of a \$50/ hour cap for

(district) teachers' compensation, and the liability insurance aspect for (district) teachers still to be clarified by central office.

- b. Offered overview of Nominating Committee guidelines and invited volunteers to come forward in the near future. There was a short discussion regarding the PT Council Standing Rules and ways in which they may be revised going forward.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lori Herbsman and Jennifer Malherbe

**In Attendance:**

PTC: Melany Gray, Co-President, Jennifer Malherbe, Co-President; Past President: Cindy Habig; Lori Herbsman, Secretary; Kristine Budhill, Treasurer; Celeste Sharpe, Legislation; Diversity: Debbie Trepanier; Technology, Laurie Lee  
Central: Pam Buchmueller, Barbara Lambert, Co-Presidents  
Chatsworth: Laura Livaccari, Lisa Samson, Co-Presidents  
Murray Avenue: Ann LoBue, Liz Paras, Co-Presidents  
Hommocks: Rachel Goldman, Co-President  
Mamaroneck High School: Sherri Rozansky, Amy Rothman, Co-Presidents  
SEPTA: Cecilia Absher, Sam Jensen, Co-Presidents  
District: Debbie Manetta, Director of Communications  
Board Liaison: Robin Nichinsky  
Special Guest: Gail Boyle, Dr. Shaps

Approved 2/11/11