

October 2, 2009
Room 101N
Mamaroneck High School

PT Council Minutes

Meeting was called to order by President Cindy Habig at 9:15am.

- I. Presentation by Dr. Mark Orfinger - MHS Principal
 - a. 13th year at Mamaroneck High School. Takes about 8-9 years to change a school. MHS is going through a "renaissance" – very different than it was when Dr. Orfinger first arrived - when there was tension between parents and teachers and the school did not have the same welcoming feel it does today.
 - b. Electives and academics: look for the best teachers in their fields – examples of areas that have really grown:
 - i. Video Production: 2nd year for teacher, Emily Dombroff. Professional videographer (used to be an English teacher). Excellent female role model – has attracted more girls to the class. MHS Info – 10 minute news feed shown to the entire MHS community.
 - ii. Brand new photography studio and a new teacher; now teaching as an art class, not just a technical class on how to produce pictures.
 - iii. Science Research: program produced 3 Intel Competition (formerly Westinghouse) semi-finalists. Excelled in other competitions as well. Program starts with 9th graders (7am once a week) – 4 year program with classes in grades 10-12. Research extends to behavioral science as well as physical science.
 - c. "One Read" Program – 1 book/topic for the whole MHS community. This year there was a choice of 5 books that were all on the topic of genetic engineering. Students met in mixed groups (grades) for book discussions. Teacher committee chooses the books.
 - d. For high achieving students: MHS offers broad selection of Advanced Placement (AP) courses (college credit if a 4 or 5 is obtained on the Advanced Placement exam).

- e. Wide range of academic electives with some new classes and new teachers, including History vs. Hollywood and College Writing. Most of these classes are for seniors.

II. PT Council Business

- a. Approval of Minutes from 6/8/09 and 9/11/09. Will send approved minutes to Laurie Lee so they can be posted on the web site. The PT Council List and Master Contact list were attached to the agenda/minutes email.
- b. Official change (by Cindy) from PT Council President and President-Elect to "Co-Presidents." This will be officially updated in the by-laws later in the year.

III. Technology Update – Laurie Lee

- a. Attended Web Site Advisory Committee meeting: purpose is to find out what parents/teachers/district needs are, then prioritize these needs, decide what issues are important and proceed from there. Main issue seems to be the navigation of the web site – will try to figure out ways to make it user-friendly. All comments/feedback (specific problems, what parents would like to see included on web site) should be solicited at the school level by Presidents/Exec board and this information should be sent to Laurie before the next PT Council meeting. Time line? Need to first identify problems. Improving the Faculty Directory has already been called out as a priority. Meeting with Superintendent Paul Fried also discussed that resources may need to be added to address these issues. This will be a step by step process (especially getting consistency among teachers re: posting homework, etc.) – but we are getting closer to working out these problems.
- b. Student Directories: the disks have been distributed to the schools.

IV. Treasurer's Report – Kristine Budill

- a. Same dues as last year - we are compelled to charge these dues but we are spending less. When we revise the by-laws for next year, we could reduce the dues. As far as our surplus, we can spend if there's something appropriate to spend on, otherwise we can issue checks back to the schools.

- b. Budget (hand-out): amend as follows (voted by board in favor of changes):
 - i. Raise Mailing amount to \$70 from \$60
 - ii. Reduce WEPD PTA Meetings by \$160 (was \$260)
 - iii. Changes would be: Expenses \$4100, Surplus \$972. Bank Balance \$7241.11

V. Leadership Night – October 5th

- a. New Format – get people together from all schools who have leadership roles in the PTA. “Professional development for professional volunteers.” Discussions that will help with leadership skills. 7pm: snacks/schmooze, 7:30pm: program will start.

VI. School Board – Rick Marsico

- a. Search firm for new principal search has been selected; it is a national company with 2 local representatives with a lot of experience in Westchester (they know the district and have many contacts). They will attend the BOE meeting on 10/20/09.
- b. Next stage: 1-1 meetings (high level only), focus groups, big general meetings and surveys: all of which will help them develop a profile based on data collected from the community. Surveys will be distributed in each school (boxes will be set up to collect them), email blasts will be sent to alert parents of the bigger meetings as well. PT Council will be included as a focus group.

VII. Diversity – Liz Liscio

- a. Dr. Minotti leads meeting on the last Thursday of the month: he reports on district efforts regarding the Latino community (district now running these initiatives – not the PTAs):
 - i. Entire calendar was translated into Spanish
 - ii. Share point on web site – every document that has been translated will be posted (PTA posting may come in the future)
 - iii. Schools have had Latino parent meetings
 - iv. Resource set up for those parents that want the progress report and report cards translated into Spanish
 - v. Oct 21st: meeting in Spanish on college information

- vi. Spanish speaking representative on SEPTA board
- vii. Music initiatives – community drive for instruments

VIII. Teacher Institute Liaison/Legislation – Rina Beder

- a. Teacher Institute: 1st meeting is October 5th: will give an overview at the next PT Council Meeting
- b. Legislation: Andy Spano is hiring a consultant to look at school district budgets. He will hopefully realize that most of the budget is state mandated.

IX. Announcements

- a. Amy: thanks for support of SEPTA at Back to School Nights
- b. Feel free to send agenda items for meetings
- c. Melany and Cindy met with Paul Fried – they are working on schedule for meetings in each building
- d. Next Meeting – Mamaroneck School Foundation liaison will give a presentation. Reminder: please RSVP to MSF lunch!
- e. Resource Guide: don't throw away – it's actually helpful

Meeting adjourned at 11:05am.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Herbsman

In Attendance:

PTC: Cindy Habig, President, Melany Gray, Co-President; Kristine Budill, Treasurer; Laurie Girsky and Jean Meyerowitz, Communications; Laurie Lee, Technology; Rina Beder, Legislation/ Teacher Institute; Liz Liscio, Diversity;
MHS: Lynne Buly, Sherri Rozansky, Co-Presidents.
Central: Jennifer Malherbe, Pam Buchmueller, Co-Presidents.
Chatsworth: Joan Capaldi, Laura Livaccari Herzig, Co-Presidents.
Mamaroneck Avenue: Jennifer Vaccaro, Lisa Boren, Co-Presidents.
Murray Avenue: Tracy Owen, Ann LoBue, Co-Presidents.
SEPTA: Amy Lieberman, Cecilia Absher, Co-Presidents.
District: Debbie Manetta, Director of Communications.
Board of Education: Richard Marsico, Vice President.
Guest: Dr. Mark Orfinger

Minutes Approved: 10/19/09