

TMS PTA Executive Board Meeting
September 28, 2009 – 9:00am in the Lecture Hall

1. **The meeting was called to order at 9:00am** In attendance were: Gay Campbell, Nancy Socher, Carey Sienicki, Mark Greenfelder, Dana Walker, Bob Simmons, Maggie Rasnic, Shannon Davies, Gretchen Schofield, Michele Sanford, Linda Colbert, Jill Hecht, Tracey Zillian, Shelly Koshuta, Dana Miller, Donna Bobalek, Debbie Bacigalupo, Nicole DuBar, Julie Hirka, Justine Podolny, Janet Valdes Dupena, Bets Thomas, Grace Pool, Michelle Kang and Amy Kish.
2. **The Secretary submitted meeting minutes for review.** A motion by Tracey Zillian with a second from Nancy Socher was made to approve the minutes from the September 10th TMS PTA General Membership meeting. Motion carried by voice vote. A motion by Tracey Zillian with a second from Debbie Bacigalupo was made to approve the minutes from the September 3rd TMS PTA Executive Board meeting minutes. Motion carried by voice vote.
3. **President's Report**
 - The next state PTA convention is November 13-15, 2009 and will be held in Fredericksburg, VA. Contact Gay Campbell if you are interested in attending the convention or any workshops offered. A ballot for PTA resolution legislation was distributed and those present were asked to vote, so results can be sent to the convention.
 - An appeal was made for the board to pursue new members to fill the vacant positions. Check the website for current updates. There is a difficulty in filling the Reflections position in our school, as a result the program might not be offered if a chairperson is not identified.
 - Thoreau Matters stuffing will be at 9:00 tomorrow in the conference room.
 - Updated Bylaws are now online and in the library for reference. A few reminders:
 - For votes in Executive Board meetings a quorum of 7 is required and for General Membership meeting a quorum of 10 is required.
 - All persons on the Board need to join the PTA; please do so if you have not yet.
 - A vote is required for all changes in the budget over \$300. Please consider this when planning your committee's budget.
 - Landscape day went well on Saturday, thanks to Maureen Alonzo our resident horticulturist. There were about 9 volunteers present to assist. There will be (2) more events this calendar year to participate.
4. **Principal's Report** - Mark Greenfelder began with an introduction of his staff who were present at the meeting: Dana Walker (8th grade Assistant Principal), Bob Simmons (8th grade Assistant Principal and source of general information because of longevity at the school), Maggie Rasnic (Director of Student Services), Shannon Davies (Building use forms and equipment and table reservation; after-school specialist). He thanked the PTA, especially the presidents, for their continued cooperation over the past 6 years; he encouraged continued attendance at the meeting to get important information on what was happening at the school.
 - **Results of budget cuts** - On the surface, there have not been significant changes this year. By realigning Thoreau's school budget, there was an emphasis to keep staffing in place (loss in janitorial and cafeteria staffing) with some increases in class sizes and fewer offerings for remediation classes. Across the board, teacher's pay was frozen this year. Next year's impact may need to be more significant. Please keep involved with meetings regarding school budget with your supervisor (who controls tax and transfer rates) and the school board public hearings.
 - **Transportation** changes have impacted the school. Although saving a reported \$4 million in costs, there are difficulties with routes that are being addressed (some late and some very early arrivals) and changes in bus drivers. Concerned parents should contact their school board member to address specific issues: Stuart D. Gibson 571-423-1082 stuart.gibson@fcps.edu.
 - **Team parties** will definitely continue in spite of budget cuts (there may be some differences between team offerings).
 - **Educational Philosophy** Grading and Reporting will be enhanced to include rubric on a 1-4 scale for items such as behavior, skills and organization. Standards based assessment for grading, without outside factors, making kids accountable for their own education. A suggestion was given at B2SN to read *15 Fixes for Grading and Reporting* which outlines some of the practices. Initiatives introduced at the school will be more widespread in the future: no zero policy, give 2nd chances for an opportunity to learn the material. Many past initiatives, such as Algebra for all 8th graders, Time to Soar have been adopted by FCPS. Will discuss many of these issues in more detail next month.
 - **Behavior** to date has been terrific. The usual issues of outside technology continue to be a concern in school (social networking, texting, internet and cell phone). It crosses all demographics. Consider networking with other parents and closely monitoring your child's actions while using these technologies.
 - **Excellence in Action Camp** went very well; 7th graders were more comfortable with lockers and getting around the school during the first days of school. Would like to expand the program to 2 separate weeks next year, to accommodate family vacations. Food donated for lunch from local businesses was great.

- **Open House** was an opportunity for families to see students' classes in a low stress environment for parents. Less attendance this year than in past years, probably because the Excellence in Action camp was successful. Will continue to offer this program in the future.
- **Back To School Night** went well. Next year, will try to alleviate the wait for schedule pick-up at the front door by better distribution to students in class. Feedback welcomed about how to better improve the event.
- **Spirit Game** vs. Kilmer has evolved over the years with a different character (more competitive) and due to a change in principals at Kilmer, the event will not happen this year.
- **NFCU's 20th Anniversary** as a Partner in Education with Thoreau MS will be celebrated this year at the headquarters and in a County recognition event in October. It is a very successful partnership: they provide thousands of dollars (including all A honor roll Band and Strings), and time (mentors and tutors) in support of the school, continuing despite a downturn in the economy (note: other schools are experiencing a lessening of support in this economy, but NFCU continues their generosity). Many Thoreau families are members.

5. **Committee Reports.**

- **8th Grade Event** – All is confirmed with School of Rock for the event on Tuesday, November 10th. Questions for admission charge, sound engineer and attendance were discussed and suggestions were given.
- **Volunteers** – If you have found errors in contact information, please update the data base and return to Gretchen Schofield.
- **School Directory** - Final request for input. We have the current student roster but are looking for parent emails. These can be submitted either on the PTA Membership envelope or e-mailed. All information submitted by Sept 30th will appear in the directory. Each student will receive one directory free from the PTA; additional directories can be ordered using the PTA Membership envelope. Questions? Please contact Andrea Gavurin at Directory@ThoreauPTA.org or 703-242-8547.
- **School Magazine Fundraiser** - began September 21st and raised \$15,000 to date (40% of proceeds go directly to the school). Friday will be the final turn-in date (may be extended until October 7th, if deemed below projections).
- **Membership** – To 398 members have joined basically an even split between both grades; orders for 46 extra directories and 121 opt-out forms were also collected. Plans are in place to solicit teacher memberships.
- **Parent Programs** –After next October 26th PTA Board meeting, Iris Beckwith will present Internet Safety emphasizing “Sexting” and Social networking issues. Parents of pyramid schools will be invited to attend. VMCC needs volunteers.
- **School Spirit** – limit to (2) “goodies” in the year (candy canes in December & candy hearts in February) distributed on the outside of student’s lockers by hospitality committee.
- **School Store/T-shirts** – 50 volunteers were received this year to operate the store. Will rotate so everyone gets a chance. If you are unable to meet your obligation at the school store, please find a sub. Contact Jill Hecht, volunteer coordinator, if you will not show up. Possibly expanding current operations at lunch times (10:30-12:00 TU, WE & TH) to expand to Mondays and/or Fridays. Michele Sanford operates the sales tracking and operations and notes the following: offerings of school supplies went very well as some parents purchased their entire list; T-shirts sales are down this year because of offerings by SCA and Excellence in Action camp. Will offer Boos in October (i.e. a card that can be placed in lockers saying “You’ve been booed” to be redeemed at the store for a pencil).
- **Hospitality** – Breakfast was served to teachers and “Hope your first week went Smoothie-ly” event for teachers & staff for last week’s thanks. Volunteers are fewer this year (from 100 to 76), so consider helping in any way you can (it is not a requirement to commit for every month). A schedule for events for each month’s offerings for teachers and staff was distributed. October - Halloween Treat, November – Take home pies, December – Take home Cookies, January – Soup and Salad Luncheon, February – Valentine’s Treat, March – Italian Luncheon, April – Spring Treat, May - Teacher appreciation week, treats on (4) days and luncheon on one day, June –Ice cream treats. A 100 cup coffee percolator was purchased on-line for the school’s use for \$103 to replace the current one.

6. **Treasurer’s Report** Nancy Socher presented the budget, highlighted the \$10,905 in PTA contributions & Membership.

7. **New Business**

- On-line PTA Payment options were presented to the board for consideration by Carey Sienicki (attached documentation).
- After Action Report forms were introduced to the board for consideration by Carey Sienicki (attached documentation).
- Science Fair was introduced to the PTA via e-mail by the science teachers. A meeting with them will be scheduled for further investigation. Contact Gay Campbell if interested in assisting with this program.

8. **Announcements**

Landscape Day – Saturday, October 24th

PTA General Membership meeting Monday, October 27th at 7:00pm in the Lecture Hall with Iris Beckwith presenting an

Internet Safety discussion emphasizing “Sexting” and Social networking issues

Class Events: 7th grade dinner – November 19th; 8th grade event – November 10th

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Submitted by: Carey Sienicki _____ **Approved:** _____