

## **PTA Meeting Minutes**

Thoreau Middle School

September 23, 2014

In Attendance: Principal Hood, Jane Miscavage, Anne-Stuart Kirkhorn, Kathy Rusinski, Laura Schmorrow, Mary Williams, Amy Masters, Rossana Ciunciolo-Carney, Hafsa Ali, and Corinne Bowen.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

### **President's Report** – Jane Miscavage

Expressed gratitude that her children go to this school. This is her first year with a middle schooler and she is so impressed with the school staff and the community support. Her two goals this year are: # 1 – welcome in and involve parents who aren't currently involved and # 2 – as the renovation moves forward, look for currently unknown ways for the PTA to help.

### **Principal's Report** – Mr. Hood

We are having a great start to the school year. 60% of students attended **Excellence in Action**. 90% of students/parents came to the **Open House**. The **First Day** went very smoothly.

**Back-to-School Night** (BTSN) was well attended. Teachers were allowed to park at the church next door and shuttle buses were used at two locations to ease parking. Both positive steps to help with the renovation parking issues.

Concerns for future years – could teachers have more presentation time? (Hard to do without making the entire event too long.) Do we keep it early? (People complain that it is hard to get there that early, but are so happy when it is done that they still have a night ahead of them. Probably can't please everyone.) Could teachers stay 30 minutes after to be available for parents who may have a question that wasn't addressed? (Again, that makes for a long evening and it is hard to answer one person's specific question when other parents are waiting as well.) Could Touching Bases be brought back (a time for mini parent-teacher conferences)? (Has been talked about, but there are many opinions on the value of these.)

**Annual Report** handed out at BTSN (printed by Navy Federal Credit Union) was thought to be a success by parents and of note was the gender gap from last year.

**Portrait of a Graduate** – a handout was distributed by Mr. Hood so that we could be aware of what was coming down the pipe from the county level. The district is training teachers to prepare students to compete in a changing world by making sure they are well-rounded individuals with more than just academic skills.

**ESOL** students – Thoreau is seeing them enter at higher rates and with less formal schooling behind them. The staff is focusing on how to support them. We currently have a full-time Spanish parent liaison.

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**Renovation** – set to be completed by August 2016, although Mr. Hood is losing faith in the timeline. Currently using Gym 1 and locker rooms, Gym 2 is almost ready. Most of the work this year will be on the outside of the building.

**Keep in Touch** – will only be used when necessary and has been used once this year due to a need to Secure the Building, (US Marshals had a warrant for someone). Know that the main priority is to be sure the problem has been dealt with and that the students are safe. A delay in hearing from the school is not due to lack of concern, but precisely because they are dealing with the concern first and informing parents after.

**Finances** – Where middle school is only two years long, it is often hard to get money to support the needs of staff morale. A small portion can be earned by renting out the building (which hasn't been happening due to the renovation.) It is getting harder to find good staff since it is cheaper for people to live/work farther out. Mr. Hood appreciates all that the PTA and community do to help keep the teachers happy. He referenced a book titled – If You Don't Feed the Teachers, They Eat the Students.

### Committee Reports

**Hospitality** – September - Smoothies / October – Halloween Treats / November – Pies?

**Membership** – 430 members so far. There are 830 students, so we need more to join. We need to tell nonmembers of the benefits of joining the PTA and encourage them to join and to participate in the no-fuss fundraiser. Links on website to join and donate.

**Parent Programs** – Six great meetings planned, including principal and counselor coffees, social media savvy, managing stress, depression, and understanding the teenage brain. More information on all programs is on the PTA website.

**School Store** – Had projected to earn \$ 6,000.00 for the school year. They have already made more than that. A lot of that is due to the “crazy awesome” committee chairs who sold “supply bundles”. Looking into allowing families to preorder for next year.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade Dinner** – scheduled and being planned by a new, excited volunteer

**Directory** – Already at the printer (yeah...Stephanie). Navy Federal covers printing!

**Garden Club** – Tons of fun, they'd love new volunteers.

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**Other** – Do we need any other committees? Are there grants we should be applying for? Besides buying bricks for the courtyard renovation, are there fundraisers we should be looking at? Possibility of a faculty basketball game versus another school? Car Magnets - decision was made to give one free to each family.

Minutes from April 2014 PTA meeting were approved as written

Proposed Budget for 2014-2015 school year presented and approved.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:13 p.m.