

Mamaroneck Council of PTAs Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2016
Chatsworth Elementary School

- I. The meeting was called to order at 9:15.
- II. Chatsworth's Principal, Ms Katie Andersen, and Assistant Principal, Ms Emily Macias-Capellan, welcomed the members of the PT Council, and gave a brief introduction on their "Book of the Month" program. Each month, teachers get a gift of a book that focuses on themes such as perseverance, encouragement and others that they would like to teach the kids. The samples of the books were displayed.
- III. The minutes of the meeting on December 14, 2015 were approved.
- IV. Our Treasurer asked for the documentation for the check to cover the District-wide speaker program. Current balance in the PTC account as of 1/11/16 is \$12,204.63.
- V. Report from Dr Shaps
 - The vote for the Physical Education Bond is tomorrow. He thanked the members for their support in the process.
 - As the budget process continues at the State level, there is considerable confusions around Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR). A set of new laws were introduced to replace the existing law regarding APPR, but the new law does not lay out all the details and instruction. The Districts can no longer follow the old laws and are left without clear guidance under the new law. The utter lack of awareness by the Board of Regents in Albany of the confusion at schools compelled the Regional Superintendents to come out with a strong request for a permanent moratorium on APPR.
 - Another point of discussion around State budget is the full restoration of Gap Elimination Adjustment, a form of State aid that had been suspended. Support for struggling school districts has been restored, but full restoration is now needed.
 - As the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is forecasted to be zero, the tax cap for the school budget will be challenging, as the tax cap formula sets the cap to be 2% or CPI whichever is lower. To have 2% to be the actual cap is the ideal.
 - Regarding Common Core standards, there is now a delay in using tests for students' and teachers' evaluation until 2020-21, but the challenges remain to make the standards work for actual teaching.
 - A question on how the "opt-out" movement penalizes the District was raised. The Federal Act still stipulates that those States/Districts which fall below the 95% participation rate lose the Title One funding from the State. New York State is one of those States in danger of losing aid. His personal opinion is that "opt-out" movement is not going away, so they need to work with those with the strong voice in "opt-out"

movement. There will be some changes in the testing, however. For example, the actual testing time – “seat time” will be less.

- Dr Shaps reported on the progress on Smart School Bond. In 2014, a state-wide bond of 2 billion USD was passed to provide investment in building technology infrastructure throughout the State with the goal to implement on-line testing. Mamaroneck received a grant of 535K as a result.
- Prior to getting this grant, the District implemented the first phase of technology infrastructure improvement which was to install an improved server for wireless connection in the high school.
- Extreme, which is a technology company with an extensive and applicable experience whose products are lower in cost than Cisco, has been selected to install the new IT system for the District.
- Second phase of the project, planned for this summer, will be to completely replace the server at all elementary schools and middle school, along with other accompanying improvements.
- In February, there will be a public hearing where this issue will be presented. It is an example of how the tax payers’ money is coupled with State funds for critical and smart investment in our schools. For example, with the new system, a number of servers will be down to 18 from 28, resulting in a considerable savings to the District.
- There is now a shift to “Google” environment, moving away from the “E-chalk” platform to “Google Classroom” platform, which is much more user-friendly, integrated and free. The transition is well-received by the teachers. Seventh graders will be receiving Chrome Book, as have the current 5th and 6th graders.
- Registration for in-coming Kindergarteners will begin in February. There will be one central registration at the High School.

VI. Board of Education (BOE) Update

- Melany reported that at the next BOE meeting, which will take place on the following night, the Board will learn about math instruction and interventions for struggling students in 1st grade.
- For the Bond vote, it was noted that it is not too late to obtain absentee ballot by coming to the office in person.
- The Bond election will be the first election using the computer-based system.
- As for the future BOE meetings, they will discuss an update on systems challenges, with a focus on initiatives addressing poverty on 1/19, and on 2/9, they will discuss personnel issues including recruitment and mentoring.

VII. SEPTA Report

- Sandy passed out informational flyer on two upcoming events: workshop on dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and on a new multi-sports after-school program that will be offered at Murray, in partnership with Backyard Sports.

VIII. Communication Update

- A plan for email blasts to remind voters to vote on the PE Bond was shared. Each PTA units will be responsible to send out a “remember to vote” email with relevant information such as time and place at the following timing:
 - 5:30am: MHS
 - 6:30am: HMX
 - 8:00am: Elementary schools
 - Noon: SEPTA
 - Sometime in the PM: PT Council
- It was suggested and agreed that Debbie would provide data on voters turnout at mid-day to assess if additional reminders should be sent.
- (Dave predicted the turnout of 497; Debbie 750...the actual turnout was more than 1000!)
- It was proposed that the communication from PT Council should not only be about Budget and Bonds but should also include other issues and topics that are of interest to our members.
- It was suggested and agreed that a communication on the Smart Bond Act would go out. It is a positive message which should be welcomed by the members.

IX. Report from Co-Presidents

- The contract for the District-wide speaker has been signed. Since this is a District-wide event, coordination is asked across schools.
- The Nominating Committee needs to be formed to nominate the officers of the PT Council: Treasurer, Secretary and In-coming President. Melanie Kraut (Chair), Lisa Sommella, April Lewis, Pam Buchmueller, and David Seigerman have volunteered to serve on the Committee and were approved with thanks.
- It was requested that all PTA units send Pam/Kim a copy of their updated by-laws. It was also noted that all Exec members of the PTA units should have a copy to the by-laws as a matter of practice.

X. Other Business

- Jenny Ransom presented that there are tickets available to attend the live taping of “Meredith Vieira Show” and anyone who is interested in going should contact her.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30am.

In Attendance:

PT Council

Pam Buchmueller, President
 Kim Tucker, President-Elect
 Keiko Tannenbaum, Secretary
 Miran Robarts, Treasurer

David Seigerman, Communication
Gail Julie, Legislation

Unit School PTAs

Joan Capaldi, MHS PTA President
Jenny Ransom, MHS PTA President-Elect
Tina Maresca, HMX PTA President
Jackie Emmet, HMX PTA President-Elect
Krista Williams, PTA Central President
Melissa Perez, PTA Central President-Elect
April Lewis, Chatsworth PTA President
Jackie Shurslep, Chatsworth PTA President-Elect
Melanie Kraut, Murray PTA President-Elect
Lisa Sommella, MAS PTA President
Sarah Coady, MAS PTA President-Elect
Sandy Wu, SEPTA President-Elect

District

Dr Robert Shaps
Melany Gray, Board of Education Liaison
Debbie Manetta, Director of Communications

Chatsworth PTA Board

Bonnie Weinbach
Carolyn Lee
Karen Hall
Amy Nafael