

McMurray Elementary PTA Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 11, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 9:20am.

President's Remarks - Karen Bovalina explained that the Safety Audit Committee is working to assess and improve safety procedures in our school district. They have conducted interviews of the high school teachers and have had unidentified observers enter the building to make safety assessments.

Lisa Smith is the chairperson of the Membership Committee. Our PTA received three certificates this year. They are framed and hanging in the PTA room.

After investigating the issue, the board has decided not to have the playground sliding board flipped to the rock-climbing side. The labor cost was \$500 and it is thought that turning the board may compromise the integrity of the bolts that hold the board in place. There have been regulations proposed by the state that may change high school graduation requirements. One of the changes is that all students be required to pass 11th grade PSSA exams. Our School Board is opposed to this regulation. Karen passed information regarding this at the meeting.

Shelley Belcher is the new Communications Director for the School District. She replaces Karen Zanella.

PTSD Superintendent Dr. Timm Mackley has announced that he is resigning.

Karen asked for a motion to work outside the by-laws to form a Nominating Committee to find a slate of candidates for next year's McMurray PTA. Lisa Smith made the motion. Carol Planitzer made the second.

There will be a program regarding Internet safety at the PT Library called Safe Surf on Tuesday, March 25.

Principal's Remarks- Dr. Freado announced that Character Counts will feature a program called "Character Building in Sports" with Tunch Ilkin on March 27 at 7pm at the high school. Deb Antonucci asked if teachers were distributing the flyer regarding the CHIPS program, which is being completed this afternoon at the school.

The Student Council arrived at the meeting and teacher Kim DiSalvo introduced the students. The Student Council PTA committee member liaisons are Kylie Marshall, Max Lindsey and Addison Winterhalter. Jennie Cashman spoke about the Student Store, which the Student Council wants to open during the mornings, lunch and recess hours to sell school supplies and healthy snacks. She asked for a \$300.00 loan from the PTA to get the store opened. Deb Antonucci made the motion. Mary Pat DiRenzo made the second. The motion carried.

The minutes of the January PTA meeting were approved without correction.

Treasurer's Report – Sarah Lindsey asked for a motion to pay this month's bills. Judy Lupori made the motion. Carol Planitzer made the second. Recess Relief needs to create a fund to pay for jump ropes for the playground this year and for the future. Sarah

suggests \$300.00 in this fund. Lisa Smith made the motion and Lisa Anderson made the second.

New Business – We are required to update the by-laws every 5 years. Michelle Dawson is reviewing the by-laws and will speak at the next meeting.

A motion was made by Linda Van Newkirk to form a Nominating Committee to present a slate of officers for next year's McMurray PTA. Sue Ralston made the second. The Nominating Committee Chairperson is Deb Antonucci, along with Kathleen Lawlor, Geeta Weldon, Judi Lupori, and Diane Lioon.

We had 88 children participate in the CHIPS program.

Guest Speaker – Betsy Somerville, Director of Special Education, PTSD gave an overview of support programs available in our school district. There are 13 disability categories in our student population, with 393 students requiring IEP's. Our program highlights inclusion of the special education student in the regular classroom and begins at the Kindergarten-6th grade level at each school. All students are included in the RTI (Response to Intervention) Framework. For example, students who need tutoring (but do not have an IEP) can visit the newly formed Academic Center at McMurray for support. The Center had 900 visits last semester. She explained that the state now calls the "Gifted" Program Chapter 16. She is looking into creating a new type of "Gifted" program at the high school that would highlight e-mentoring and internships. She credits the school district with their support. Next year there will be two full time speech therapists, one at Bower Hill and one at Pleasant Valley Elementary. There will also be a social worker available five days per week. There is a new Autistic Support Center at Bower Hill Elementary. This has been very positive and has kept these children, who would otherwise attended special schools, in the school district.

4th Vice President's Report- Beth Buzzelli stated that Community Service chairperson Karen Cashman has placed a box for collection of used music books and dance costumes in the school lobby. They will be sent to the Washington Arts this Friday. The Pajama Drive collected 854 pairs of pajamas and 566 books. Seven different local charities received the donations. The next School Board meeting is March 18. Beth is looking for a person to chair the Fundraising Committee next year.

3rd Vice President's Report – Lynn Soika announced that Laura Brannen will run the Talent Show on April 1 and 2. She has 30 acts to perform the first night and 40 acts the second night. She could use help copying the programs on March 27. Lynn would like to sponsor a team from McMurray for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life on May 31 and April 1. Please contact her if you are interested in helping organize this event.

2nd Vice President's Report – Lois Maggs thanked Lynn Cory Roberts for running the Teacher Appreciation Grab-n-Go Breakfast. We had such a great response that there was extra food for the bus drivers. Thanks to Coffee Tree Roasters, who donated the coffee.

March 27 is the next Teacher Luncheon with a Spring Break theme, with grilled hamburgers and hotdogs and ice cream on the menu.

McMurray day is Friday, May 30. Rain date is Monday, June 2. A motion was made by Linda Van Newkirk to increase the budget for McMurray Day from \$2,000.00 to \$3,500.00. Joanne Malstrom made the second and the motion passed.

Peter's Township students took 33% of the Regional awards at this year's Reflections contest. We won 5 places at the State level. Next year's theme is "WOW"! There will be 6 categories, with video and dance added.

1st Vice President – Gina Wells reported that the 4th grade won the Easy Cash competition. They will get popsicles later in the year. The Spirit Committee requests another \$100.00 for prizes. Joanne Malstrom made the motion and Linda Van Newkirk made the second. The motion passed. The money will be taken from the Student Directory Fund. Spirit Days are March 28, April 25 and May 30.

Lisa Anderson asked the membership if there was interest in an educational program entitled "Home Alone" given by Children's Hospital for parents and students.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 am.

These minutes were recorded by Diane Lioon, Recording Secretary, McMurray PTA.