

**PETERS TOWNSHIP AREA COUNCIL PTA MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING, January 25, 2008**

**Call to Order:** The January 25, 2008 meeting of the Peters Township Area Council PTA, Inc., was called to order at 9:19 A.M. at the District Administration Office Building. President Sue Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance. She presided, and Marcia McCracken recorded the minutes in the absence of the secretary.

**President's Report:** Sue Smith summarized a PTA Healthy Children initiative and PTA position against the state's newly adopted graduation test requirements. She passed around written material about these issues. She distributed PTA membership awards to schools who had not yet received them. We had discussed the possibility of having Sally Ride speak to students in the district, but discovered that the cost was prohibitive.

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes of the November 29, 2007 meeting were approved as written.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mary Sternweis could not attend, so Sue Smith presented the treasurer's report. There was one bill in January, which Karen Bovalina made a motion to pay. The motion was seconded and passed.

**ADMINISTRATION REPORTS**

**Superintendent, Dr. Timm Mackley:** Reported for Dr. Zetty who was away at a conference. She is currently developing a four-year curriculum cycle, where one year will be spent researching curriculum, one doing a pilot program, one fully implementing new curriculum, and one spent assessing it. The focus right now is on Language Arts. The newly adopted PE and World Language curriculums are working out well. In response to a question about whether current 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders would get any foreign language exposure, Mrs. Hamrick said that 3<sup>rd</sup> graders would be doing a Spanish culture activity by e-mailing Spanish students sometime in the spring.

Anticipating eventual state mandates for security audits, the Safety Committee has appointed a Safety Audit Committee. This Committee will conduct a safety audit and report their findings to the district, which can then address any safety deficiencies.

Dr. Mackley distributed copies of the newest proposed school calendar for 2008-2009. This revision addresses previous concerns by allowing for a graduated school start, rather than beginning with a full week, and by eliminating mid-week days off. Any questions about the new proposal can be directed to him, although he is already aware that many parents wish school could start after Labor Day.

**Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Lyn Logelin:** She is working hard to replace Cara Zanella. They had 50 applications for the job and hope to present an excellent candidate to the Board at the next meeting. Building nurses had an in-service on diabetes management in children done by Children's Hospital. She and the Board Policy Committee are reviewing all personnel policies, now that they've completed updated the student policies.

**Director of Special Education, Betsy Somerville:** She would like to speak at each school's monthly PTA meeting in the next couple of months about changes that will occur in the Instructional Support and Gifted Programs.

**Technology, Toni Sulkowski:** Spoke to the HS PTSA about Internet social networking sites such as My Space and Facebook. Taped a *Let's Compute* segment on this subject which will be aired soon on channel 19 or can be borrowed from the public library.

They are moving to Power School grades district-wide. Parents can get access codes in their building offices *with identification*. She is still working out some glitches and trying to find another way to provide some of the content that used to be available through Edline.

At the high school they are looking at providing some on-line course work to prepare students for on-line college courses. The librarians are trying to use podcasting at every school, but Mrs. Owens is making the most use of it right now.

## UNIT REPORTS

**Mrs. Hamrick (Pleasant Valley):** Bought on-site license to use Earobics for remedial reading and phonemic awareness. Need PC's to use it, and all the school's computers except for teacher laptops are Macs. Ms. Sulkowski is overwhelmed with other technical demands, but technicians are going to get some stored computers up and running for the program. Elementary schools are busy budgeting for next year. The first 2 Fridays in February they will have Donuts for Dads, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday is the Winter Carnival. The Monday after that will be the Principal's Reading Challenge, and celebrity readers will come in to school. At the end of her report she made a surprise announcement..... She just got engaged and will be Mrs. Yavelak next year.

**Lisa Anderson:** February will be PV Hero Month where students will be nominated for awards for performing random acts of kindness. February 5<sup>th</sup> will be the 100th day of school, with many activities planned.

**Beth Gamble (Bower Hill):** Held Bingo Game Night in January which was a huge success; over 400 people attended it. February 8<sup>th</sup> will be Family Fun and Fitness Night, and they are also planning a celebration for 100<sup>th</sup> Day on February 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Dr. Freado (McMurray):** Are using *Write to Learn* software which gives students quick feedback on their comprehension of a written selection. It can be adjusted to the student's level, and also gives prompts for essay-writing. The science teachers have prompted them to initiate "Going Green," with increased emphasis on reducing waste and recycling as much as possible.

**Dr. Hobbs (McMurray):** Started a small Academic Center last year to provide flexible, ongoing support for any student. Teachers loved it, so it has been expanded this year to a larger room with more frequent staffing (including paraprofessionals and high school students). Teachers can send any student there who needs individual help. Dr. Hobbs also described the next Neighborhood activity, Winterlude, on January 30<sup>th</sup>.

Teachers chose some passion or hobby to share with students, such as guitar, yoga, or knitting. These neighborhood activities allow 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders to develop a sense of community.

**Karen Bovalina:** Thanks to the high school PTSA, which donated about 30 leftover games for McMurray students to play during Indoor Recess. They will be doing the CHIP program during student free periods with permission from parents. This provides identifying information in case the child runs away from home or is abducted.

**Dr. Monsour (PTMS):** *Bits of Lit* magazine won an award as the best school literary magazine in the country. Construction Update - opened the B wing after the holiday; now have moved on to the next phase. Mr. Sutherland moved upstairs and the Band Room is closed. After this is complete, the LGI Phase will be next. PTMS printed report cards one last time because they saw a lot of issues with the on-line grades. They experienced some printing issues. February 11-13 will be Grade 8 PSSA Writing Testing. The MS visited the McMurray Academic Center and loved it; will implement something similar next year.

**Jodi Hannah and Carol Aurin:** The newsletter is now on-line and that's working well. Registration for 9<sup>th</sup> grade classes will take place next month. High school counselors will meet with 8<sup>th</sup> grade students on February 4<sup>th</sup> and will meet with 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents that evening from 6:30-7:30 P.M. Just like last year, letters about this evening meeting went out to parents of parochial and private school 8<sup>th</sup> graders, but NOT to parents of students at PTMS. A few PTA parents just happened to hear about the evening meeting and are trying to spread that information as much as possible. March 12<sup>th</sup> will be the Student/Faculty Basketball Game.

**Mr. Galloway (PTHS):** Will investigate the issue of notifying PTMS parents about the evening scheduling information session. Scheduling will be done on-line this year through Power School. The state champion soccer team will be presented with an award tomorrow, February 26<sup>th</sup>. The Snowball Dance will take place February 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Sue Yundt:** The PTSA meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup> will be the annual Curriculum Scheduling Meeting, with department facilitators each describing the progression through their subject area over the course of high school. This meeting is extremely helpful for parents of current 8<sup>th</sup> graders who will be doing high school scheduling next month. All district PTA's are sponsoring the pajama-drive fundraiser. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, the PTSA will sponsor Drive to Stay Alive for the whole township – a driving skills enhancement opportunity especially aimed at new drivers. There was insufficient interest in Chinese for the district to pursue a part-time teacher.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Cultural Arts/Reflections:** Linda van Newkirk is home with a sick child. Lisa Smith reported that schools are having assemblies to recognize winners.

**School Photos, Lisa Smith:** Reported in Michele Bittel's absence. Two companies have expressed interest in providing our school photos. Karen Bovalina made

a motion, which was seconded, to continue with Spellman Studios for the 2008-09 school year and investigate other options for the following year. Discussion: The other photographers' charges would be about the same as Spellman's, so there would be no cost savings by switching. Since a contract has already arrived from Spellman for the 2008 school photos, and the sooner we sign it the sooner we can choose the best days for our schedule, it seems reasonable to go ahead with Spellman. We have been satisfied with their services and there is no clear advantage to choosing another company. The motion carried. Lisa Smith will compile information from all three photographers so an accurate comparison can be made to evaluate the companies for future reference.

**Character Counts, Sue Ralston:** Reported that the Committee is investigating sponsoring a speaker for the month of May. *Peters Township Magazine* will now carry a Character Counts column each month. They are looking into putting more programs on the local origination channel.

**District Directory:** Passed around a sign-up sheet for people to help plan and recruit for next year. Marcia McCracken will again coordinate the process next year, but it will be her last. We need to recruit people to oversee various aspects of the directory and to learn the process.

**Membership:** No report.

**Area Council Directory:** Cathy Luzier is not present. Some question as to whether a final copy of the Area Council directory was ever distributed. Sue Smith will check with Cathy.

**Scholarship:** No report.

**By-Laws:** Dawn Pustay will have a February meeting for all units needing to update their by-laws this year.

**School Board Report: Diane Ritter:** At the last Board meeting, the PTA was acknowledged for the technology we contributed to the schools. February 4, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. there will be the annual Joint Meeting with Peters Township Council. February 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:15 P.M. there will be an Education Committee meeting. Test results, including SAT, AP tests, PSSA, and Stanford, will be presented. The regular School Board meeting will be at 7:30 P.M. on February 19<sup>th</sup>.

The HS Girls Lacrosse coach resigned; and they are still looking for a volleyball coach. The Board asked for an update on the K9 program at the high school, as well as for a comprehensive plan to deal with the MRSA issue. The district will apply for "Classrooms for the Future" grant from the state – this is the last year to apply.

At the January 14<sup>th</sup> Education Committee meeting, Mrs. Somerville talked at length about the Special Ed program. The committee received updates on the Health, World Language, and Language Arts curriculums. They will set up a dual enrollment committee to apply for grants, headed by Mrs. Ritter. Some policies were eliminated because they were replaced by new ones. Board Clearances policy had its first reading.

A counselor was hired to replace Jay Thornton. Debra Reynolds was hired to replace Terry Wagner. Paul Homer will leave to take a federation position and there is no replacement for him yet.

A question was raised about Mr. Hvizdos' request that the Board to look into whether the district can discipline students for crimes committed outside school (by removing them from a sports team, for example.). This issue will be addressed by the Policy Committee and the District's solicitor.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Ms. Sulkowski is handling the Internet Safety concern.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Question raised about appropriateness of publicizing a fundraiser by a local company for an orphaned student, where the business donates 10% of their profits to a fund for the student. Since the business is actually keeping 90% of the profit, there was general agreement that PTA support for this particular fundraiser was inappropriate. In this case there is a fund established where all contributions go to the child, which would be more appropriate to publicize.

Another issue was raised about Holiday Mart now occurring on Saturday. Some would prefer that it take place during the school day when more children can participate, but the administration has stated that it takes away too much instructional time. Already an hour of English time has been taken by the Spanish World Language curriculum.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:44 A.M.

In attendance on January 25<sup>th</sup> were: Sue Smith, Lisa Smith, Jodi Hannah, Lisa Anderson, Sue Ralston, Sheril Wilson, Marcia McCracken, Diane Ritter, Carol Aurin, Karen Bovalina, Betty Kradel, Debbie Smith, Carol Planitzer, Beth Gamble, Suzanne MacKay, Linda Jewison, Sue Yundt, Julie Ann Sullivan, Bethany Frizzel, Ferial Shahdadian, Timm Mackley, Lyn Logelin, Betsy Somerville, Toni Sulkowski, Mary Hamrick, Bob Freado, Nancy Hobbs, Tony Merante, Mary Monsour, and Paul Galloway.

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
Marcia McCracken, Acting Secretary