

**Attendance:** Teresa Hanrahan, Claudia Scalia, Karla LeClaire, Christine Stewart, Brenda Kramer, Claudia Kuthoore, Michael Snopkowski, Angie (and Stella) Houghton, Greg Worthington, Laura Frangiadis, Karen Lamson.

**Minutes:** The August 17, 2009 minutes were presented and amended on the third page under "Reading Incentives/Author Visit" to read as follows:

It was noted that Edward **Bloor**, the author of Tangerine, will be the visiting author for the upcoming 2009-2010 school year.

Christine Stewart motioned to accept the August 17, 2009 minutes as amended; Teresa Hanrahan seconded the motion.

### **Principal's Report:**

Angie Houghton, Vice Principal, reported that Christine Stewart had been helping provide breakfast for the teacher inservice days while there was no money budgeted for this expense. She wanted to thank Christine and stated that it meant a tremendous amount to the teachers to be acknowledged in this way.

Mike brought up the issue of technology and asked for specific feedback on the PowerSchool program that has replaced InTouch for students' grades, attendance, etc. Karen said that it took her a little while to figure out that clicking on a grade would show all the detail associated with that grade; she did not find that to be intuitive. Teresa asked for family e-mail notifications rather than per-student notifications resulting in multiple e-mails going to the same family with several students. Karla said that she would like one family login rather than a separate login for each student, but Mike confirmed that the system is currently set up for individual students and that this cannot be easily changed.

Concerning the new telephone voice messages from the principal, everyone liked the reminder messages. Mike said that Elaine Greer (school secretary) reported far fewer students forgetting to bring in money for Picture Day after a voice reminder was sent the night before. Karen reported a small glitch in the voice system that resulted in the beginning of a message being cut off when the call went to her home answering machine; others reported experiencing that same problem.

Mike said that the new Smart Boards for core content classes are wider and taller and that the teachers love using them. Now that the school budget issue has been resolved, the Special Education classes will be getting the larger boards as well.

Mike brought in a new system called Activexpression for the PTO meeting members to try out. Everyone was assigned a numbered hand-held unit which could transmit their True/False or text answers after hearing a proposed question. The system compiled the data answers and provided feedback to the group leader. The middle school has two sets of these systems that can be used by the teacher and students in the classroom. Examples of what this system can provide are privacy and anonymity for student responses, immediate feedback from students to teachers, information on how well the majority of students understand a particular topic, etc. Everyone at the meeting was favorably impressed with the system's capabilities. Mike's goal is to acquire six more sets within the next three years so that each middle school team has access to a set, plus two

more sets for the Art Cycle classes, for a total of ten sets. He hopes to purchase one set from his technology budget each year.

The Activexpression system was used to make decisions on two PTO budget items. Teresa made a motion to put an extra \$300 into the Assemblies budget to pay for Rachel's Challenge, an anti-bullying program that was deemed excellent last year. Using the system, this motion was passed unanimously. Teresa also moved to spend \$195 from the Special Requests budget money for Brainpop, which can be used by five different teachers in the building at the same time – everyone agreed to this as well.

Mike reported that construction within the school was continuing and actually ahead of schedule, with crews working 8-hour shifts from 3:00pm to 11:00pm. He is now hoping that the construction will be completed by the end of July 2010 instead of August 2010. He is receiving positive feedback from teachers about the "livability" factor, and he reports that the school is becoming a more efficient building with a different (better) smell and less dampness.

Mike also reported that the Governor finally signed the school budget document on October 9, 2009, although the middle school does not yet know the specific amounts for grants and per-student allocations.

**Treasurer's Report:** Karla LeClaire distributed copies of the Balance Sheet, Banking Summary, and Cash Flow for review.

- Cash and bank accounts total \$24,674.41.
- Liabilities total \$53.80 in sales tax payable.
- Overall total is \$24,620.61.

#### **New Business:**

Brenda Kramer, who is currently in charge of the school newsletter, discussed providing and updating a web page in lieu of the hard copy newsletter. In terms of changes, Mike would like to see the News and Events section contain more current (next 2-3 weeks) information. He'd also like the PTO to have a more prominent location on the web page. The goal is to have people feel more comfortable using the website, with better visual clarity and ease of access for the community. In the interim the website will stay mainly as it is, directing users to links, pages and resources. Brenda would like to update the PTO page on a monthly basis as part of the newsletter function. Mike will speak with Karen Norris, the Technology Specialist who assists teachers with their web pages, and ask what her recommendations are for the website. One goal is to have parents accessing the website (as they are already doing with PowerSchool) instead of receiving e-mail notifications. Teresa asked if the PTO can have a Wiki page the same way teachers do, and Mike will check on that option.

Karla raised the option of selling college logo T-shirts for each team, and this idea was positively received by the meeting members. It was reported that Mr. Hanna and Mr. Schemmer are looking for ways to increase team unity, so Karla will contact them with the T-shirt idea as a way to build momentum. Teresa said she would check into pricing.

#### **Old Business:**

Teresa reported that the results of the Restaurant Coupon Sale were somewhat disappointing. Currently \$15,540 was made on this sale, of which the PTO recoups

around a third. This resulted in about \$3,000 less than what was budgeted for this year. Coupons are still available if anyone is interested in buying more before their expiration.

Peggy will start the Entertainment Book flyer sale, to be finished by the beginning of November. Both the Delaware and West Philadelphia versions will be included.

Teresa reported that the PTO lost about \$300 on the Book Cover sale. There are still some left to sell next year, so hopefully the money will be recouped. She also reported that the School Store is doing well this year, which may hopefully even things out. None of the logo Book Covers were ordered, as these turned out to be too expensive to be sold in separate colors.

With regard to the 915 Board Policy Update, Teresa reported the change was made that only one person signing checks is required to be a non-district employee.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Box Tops**

Christine Stewart distributed lists showing how the classrooms are doing collecting box tops. She reported that the first check, coming around the end of December, should be around \$700.

#### **Book Fair**

The Book Fair will be open during parent/teacher conferences in November. Kim Brendle brought up the One For Books program, where kids bring in loose change to raise money for teams, library school books, selected charities, or needy families. Scholastic will match the amounts raised by kids, to be given to the charities that Scholastic supports. Local business can also be asked to keep cans for loose change at their registers.

#### **Holiday Luncheon**

Diana Lagana was not present at the meeting, but it was reported that she did a great job last year. She will be getting together with Angie Houghton to begin planning this year's luncheon.

#### **Basketball Fundraiser**

There are currently nine classrooms without a parent volunteer to work on the class basket.

#### **Reading Incentives**

It was decided that the reward would now be pretzels and water each quarter, as the kids really liked that the best. Students will also be chosen to receive E. Bloor (this year's Visiting Author) books, which can be signed when he visits the school.

### **Upcoming Dates:**

- Entertainment Book Sale: October 19
- Next PTO Meeting: Wednesday, November 11, 9:30am
- Fall Book Fair: November 19-24
- Staff Holiday Luncheon: December 22

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm.**