



Cottage Street School PTO Membership Meeting Minutes from February 6, 2014

Meeting began at 7:05 p.m., adjourned at 8:20 p.m.
22 people present

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Approved December 2013 meeting minutes by voice.**
3. **Committee Updates:**
 - a) **Iron Chef Night:** Will be held on Tues. 2/11 from 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm in the CSS cafeteria. Attendees will be able to vote on their favorite homemade dish in the appetizer, entrée, and dessert categories. Store-bought food is welcome but won't be considered in the voting. Iron Chef Night is organized by the Diversity Committee in order to celebrate the many cultures represented at CSS. There will also be multi-cultural music, a geography quiz, and prizes for the children. The Diversity Committee is always looking for new members who want to facilitate learning about various cultures.
 - b) **Broadway Cougars:** Ms. Murphy thanked Mrs. Bolgen for her assistance with Broadway Cougars. She also requested more parental assistance after school during Broadway Cougars' rehearsal, especially on Feb. 24th -26th . Parents who volunteer can bring younger children with them. Ms. Murphy can also use a parent volunteer to help with distributing T-shirts for students. Broadway Cougars will be presenting "Willy Wonka Jr." on Feb. 27th and 28th.
 - c) **Fun Fair:** The volunteer request sheets went home with students and volunteers are needed in multiple areas. Betsy Strauss acknowledged that the Fun Fair requests may seem overwhelming and encouraged people to contact one of the co-chairs with any questions. She noted that the room parents are not getting as much in classroom donations as expected and asked if people could please contribute if possible. She also encouraged people to approach clubs, businesses, etc. that they are affiliated with and ask for raffle donations. Wendy MacArthur, Raffle Chair, asked that she be notified if anyone is soliciting a raffle item to prevent duplication.
 - d) **Programming:** Programming Chairs, Jen Brown and Beth McLaughlin, reported on the PTO-sponsored programs that have occurred recently such as yoga for the kindergarteners, a yo-yo presentation, and Geodomes. Upcoming programs are Crazy Tracy, Abraham Lincoln, and States of Matter by the Museum of Science.



- e) **Yearbook:** Please send any photos taken at CSS events to the Yearbook Committee (link on the PTO website). The Yearbook Committee has a list of children who do not have permission for published photos and will remove photos as necessary or contact the parents. The Yearbook Committee is always looking for more volunteers!
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Elizabeth reviewed income and expenses, report distributed.
5. **Principal's Report:**
- a) Kindergarten registration occurred and there are more students registered this year compared to last year.
 - b) CSS and other Sharon schools are piloting the "PARCC" student assessment tool as a potential replacement for the MCAS. There will be two 3rd grade classes and two 5th grade classes involved in the pilots. The PARCC assessment has more focus on the thought process and less on rote memorization. Students will not be notified of their scores on the PARCC. Letters will be sent home shortly to parents whose children are in the pilot classrooms.
 - c) Mr. Madden discussed some of the changes that are in the proposed 2014-15 budget for the entire district. These include: 1) the addition of a second grade class in order to preserve the Multiage classroom, 2) the addition of a full-time certified librarian, resulting in the presence of only a certified librarian working with students and no more library assistants, 3) a .6 FTE reduction in the music teaching staff and a proposed new model in which students in grades 4 and 5 will have general music and have to choose between instrumental and chorus, resulting in more core classroom time, 4) the addition of a .5 FTE literary specialist, 5) the increase of a special education position to full-time, 6) an increase in the hours of the math specialist to a 1.5 FTE position, and 7) the school assistants' hours are being reduced and only one will have clerical responsibilities. Mr. Madden addressed questions about the "Instructional Coach" who is employed by the district and Mrs. Kinney gave examples as to how she has been helpful to the teachers. There was discussion about how the needs of students functioning above grade level are addressed.
 - d) Activities for the 5th graders such as a day at Everwood and the promotion ceremony are currently being planned.
 - e) In the end of February, representatives from "Safe Routes to School," including members from the police department and DPW, will be evaluating the pick-up/drop-off process. They will make recommendations for safer and more efficient practices, if any. Discussion ensued about the condition of Cottage St. after the last snow storm and how it affected pick-up/drop-off. It



was clarified that kindergarten parents are not supposed to wait in the pick-up line since kindergarten is released earlier and the teachers are supposed to see the parents at dismissal. Kindergarten parents are supposed to park at the church and walk to the school entrance.

6. New Business

- a) Mrs. Wernick requested “an amount not to exceed \$150” for refreshments for the 1st grade Pajama Party on 3/3. Vote held and request approved. Meg noted that beginning next year, this will be a line-item in the budget since the request is made and approved every year.
- b) The 2nd Annual Seed Sale is underway and is being organized by Liv Van Dyke. Seeds can be ordered from High Mowing Organic Seeds and a percentage of the profits will go to the CSS PTO. Order forms can be found on the CSS PTO web site, and emails will be sent out with links to the forms. Orders are due by Mon. 2/24 (the day we return from vacation).
- c) It is the time of year to hear from those who would like to chair a committee next year or run for a Board position. This will allow for those interested to shadow current chairs and/or Board members.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.