



## Cottage Street School PTO Membership Meeting Minutes from May 1, 2014

Meeting began at 7:03 p.m., adjourned at 8:45 p.m.  
24 people present

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Approved April 2014 meeting minutes by voice.**
3. **Treasurer's Report:** Elizabeth reviewed income and expenses, report distributed.
4. **Committee Updates:**
  - a) **Yearbook:** Yearbooks are expected to be delivered during the week of 6/14. The committee thanked everyone who submitted photos- they had a record number of photos submitted this year.
  - b) **Teacher Appreciation Week:** Will be 5/5-5/9. The committee has planned a breakfast on Monday, flowers for teachers on Tuesday, a luncheon on Wednesday, classroom supply donations on Thursday, and an Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt Bar on Friday. Volunteers are needed on Tuesday between 8:30-9:00 am to monitor the hallways and cut flowers. Fifth graders will help distribute the flowers. Please see committee co-chair Tina Melpignano if you are available to help.
  - c) **Mother's Day Plant Sale:** Will be on 5/9. There will be 1700 plants from Wards and every student will be able to pick out at least one plant for a cost of \$1.00 per plant. There will be a limit of five plants per student this year to ensure there are enough to go around. Wards will be delivering the plants to CSS this year for a charge of \$30. Volunteers are needed to unload and bag plants at 3:30 in the CSS gym on 5/8, and to work at the sale between 8:30-12:00 on 5/9. Please contact Beth McLaughlin if you can assist. Plastic supermarket bags are needed for carrying the plants home and can be sent in with students to school.
  - d) **Spring Book Fair:** Will be from 5/6-5/8. It will be open to students during the school day from 9am-4pm and again during Art Night on 5/7. Volunteers are needed for setup, to work during the Fair, and for breakdown.
  - e) **Art Night:** Will be on 5/7 from 6:45pm-8:15pm. Every CSS student will have at least one piece of artwork on display. Ms. Biddle is still in need of volunteers to mat and hang artwork. Please contact her if you can assist.
  - f) **Screen-Free Week:** Will be 5/5-5/11. Screenfree.org has information about the event and activity ideas for families. There was discussion about possibly



holding it during a different week next year since there are so many other events occurring during the first week of May.

## **5. Principal's Report:**

- a) Joan Wernick was acknowledged for her membership in the CSS-PTO for over 25 years and service as secretary and treasurer. Tonight was Mrs. Wernick's last PTO meeting since she will be retiring this year. PTO is very grateful for the many wonderful years Mrs. Wernick has been a part of PTO!
- b) Teachers are working on class placement for next year. Parents can provide input regarding placement by emailing or sending a letter to Mr. Madden. Parents cannot request specific teachers but can have input regarding learning style, preferred environment, etc.
- c) The School Council is working on a draft of the School Improvement Plan. This is based on the results of the School Council Survey that was recently conducted. The School Improvement Plan will be presented by the School Council by June. Mr. Madden also described the Massachusetts Tell Survey, a survey completed by staff/faculty about the school system addressing issues such as school climate, professional development, communication with Administration, and parent involvement.
- d) Mr. Madden reported that students seem to be doing well with the MCAS and PARCC assessments. CSS will continue to be part of the pilot program during the 2014-15 school year. It will be up to the state to determine if the PARCC will replace MCAS.
- e) The format for Step-Up Day is still yet to be determined.
- f) The new math program for next year has been selected and it will be "Math Expressions." Information will be disseminated to parents soon. It is less teacher-directed and requires more problem-solving, group work, and creative thought by students. This program is heavily favored by teachers and they are finding that students are understanding math concepts at an earlier age.
- g) A question was asked about dissention among parents who did not get a lottery spot at CSS for kindergarten. Mr. Madden described how the over-enrollment is being handled and noted that the kindergarten spaces may fill up at the other elementary schools as well.
- h) A question was asked about the theme for 2014-15 and Mr. Madden replied that a theme has not been chosen yet. A recommendation was made to explore joining "Green Schools," however there is a fee associated with it.
- i) A question was asked about the status of the Greenhouse Project. Mr. Madden reported the students have collected enough bottles and are currently cutting them. The ground-breaking is planned for 5/17 and an announcement will be made soon.



- j) A question was asked about the status of the music program. The current plan is to have 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders alternate weeks between chorus and instrumental instruction. It is also being considered to have students pick up their instruments in June rather than September. The only staffing change will be Linda Cohn's retirement and the reduction of her replacement's hours from a .3 FTE position to .2 FTE.
- k) A question was asked about the CSS basement and if it can be cleaned out. Mr. Madden commented that the basement space is used by the entire district for storage.

## 6. New Business

- a) **Election of officers:** The following Board members were voted in for the 2014-15 school year: Co-Presidents- Liv Van Dyke and Meg Dussault, Treasurer- Elizabeth Theiler, Co-Secretaries- Irina Gott and Betsy Strauss.
- b) **Ice Cream Social:** Will be on 6/10. An Evite will be sent out soon.
- c) **Directory:** Collection of information for the directory will be different for next year. Directory information will be collected separately from membership information and will happen at the end of this school year. There will be a month-long PTO membership drive in September. As always, anyone can be listed in the directory at no cost but only members will be given directories. Non-members will have to pay for the directory (unless they speak to the PTO President about financial hardship).
- d) **Teacher Appreciation Week:** Will be May 5-9. The committee thanks all who have donated. They are in need of volunteers to assist with flower arranging and distribution of school supplies. Please contact Yully Leonardi if interested in volunteering.
- e) **Staff Retirements:** There are three teachers retiring this year- Joan Wernick, Leslie Shapiro, and Linda Cohn. They will be acknowledged by the PTO during the assembly at Step-Up Day.
- f) **Committee Vacancies:** The Yearbook Committee needs a chairperson as Eric Norman will be stepping down. A chair person is needed for the Family Nights Committee. The responsibilities of this committee have been pared down as many of the events are being coordinated elsewhere. This committee will likely only need to organize Halloween Bingo and a game night. The Diversity Committee was in need of a chair person but Angela Wynder volunteered.
- g) **End of the Year Gifts:** VOTE APPROVED. The following gifts are being bestowed upon the school from the PTO (total amount not to exceed \$10,000)  
:
  - \***Water Fountains-** to be installed on remaining two fountains, and allow water fountains to be filled, thus cutting down on the amount of plastic bottles.



**\*Ellison die cut machine-** upgrade the current equipment, to include more stencils and accommodate a larger capacity and paper size.

**\*Sound equipment-** complete update for stage

**\*Restricted savings-** for drama program

**\*Restricted savings-** for playground reserve (not to exceed \$5000).

**\*\*This will be the last PTO meeting for the school year. An end-of-the-year wrap-up will be sent out in June. Please contact the Board with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your support during the year!**

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.