



## Cottage Street School PTO Membership Meeting Minutes from September 11, 2014

Meeting began at 7:02 p.m., adjourned at 9:00 p.m.  
51 people present

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Approved May 2014 meeting minutes by voice.**
3. **Treasurer's Report:** Elizabeth reviewed income and expenses, report distributed.
4. **Committee Updates:**
  - a) **Membership & Directory:** The soft deadline for membership forms is September 19, 2014. We will use whatever number of forms we receive by that date to order the directory. Encouraged members to spread the word.
  - b) **Room Parents:** Explained the role of room parents to new families. There are still some openings for room parents for classrooms who need a third, including Mrs. Houle, Mrs. Simpson, Mrs. Sellers and Ms. McLellan. In terms of Room Parent help at Fun Fair, the volunteer process for that will be changing to include only one parent volunteer per time slot.
  - c) **Programming:** Jen Brown explained how programming works for the new families. Each grade has its own programming teacher liaison who helps decide on programs, which are tied to the curriculum. Programs are organized by grade with two all-school performances. Because of our increasing population, have had to do three performances instead of two.
  - d) **Playground:** Mark Nelson reported that he fixed some rotting wood on the benches outside. We will be purchasing some additional tether balls. The stage installation is going forward and will be located in the spot where the old sandbox currently sits. In the process of getting prices, but the size will be approximately 16x12 feet and will likely be installed in the Spring.
  - e) **Back to School Lunch:** The teachers very much enjoyed the lunch and found it a great way to come together after the summer break.
5. **Principal's Report:**
  - a) The School has welcomed a lot of new staff this year, including teachers, administrators, an office assistant and specialists.
  - b) This year, we are transitioning into the PARCC assessment test, which will now replace the MCAS for English Language Arts and Math. The test will be administered two times per year and will be done entirely on computers.



Because of that, all schools in the district will have to coordinate to determine their respective test dates so that we don't overload the system. Test dates TBA.

- c) There will be a new “breakfast with the principal” event happening four times during the school year. The first one is on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8:00 a.m. Location TBA and kids are welcome.
- d) **Cafeteria Seating:** The school will be implementing a new policy in the cafeteria whereby children will sit with their respective classes at assigned tables during lunch. This policy is being implemented to address the time issue at lunch, namely that kids are taking too long to find a seat sometimes and not having enough time to eat. Furthermore, it will allow more efficient evacuation in the event of an emergency. Parents expressed concern about the new policy, and made suggestions for addressing the issues at hand (more time during lunch, closer look at how lunch is served, etc.). Mr. Madden indicated that he would further discuss these concerns with the teachers before implementing the policy.
- e) The school has begun the process of naming our library after Joan Wernick in honor of her many years of teaching at Cottage. There will be discussions about a plaque and location of such plaque, as well as an unveiling ceremony in the future.

## 6. New Business

- a) **Back to School Nights:** 9/17 and 9/18 are the designated open house evenings, and PTO will be holding its book fair at that time. Looking for volunteers to help set up the day before and also run the fair at night.
- b) **Cougar Gear:** We will have a table with Cougar Gear at the Book Fair during open house nights and will need volunteers to sell cougar gear at that time, as well.
- c) **Back to School Cookout:** BBQ is taking place on Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup> and we are still looking for volunteers for that event.
- d) **Lunch Bunch:** Irina Gott described the program to new families and reviewed policies re: not bringing younger siblings or outside food to lunch bunch dates.
- e) **Birthday Books:** Jen Cooperman described the program for new families.
- f) **Yearbooks:** We have a new yearbook vendor this year and discussed assigning volunteers to specific classrooms for the purposes of taking pictures. Yearbook will be 52 pages and will cost \$20 for a soft cover and \$25 for hard cover.
- g) **Library Volunteers:** We now have one full time librarian in our library and she could use a lot of help shelving books. There will be an information session next Tuesday at 8:45 am for those interested in volunteering.



- h) **Coupon Book:** Books will come home on 9/29 and must be paid for or returned by 10/10. Teachers will each receive a box to keep in their classrooms. Books that are not purchased will go in the box and PTO volunteers will collect the boxes on 10/10. Also looking for a co-chair this year who will step into the role of committee chair next year after the current chair is no longer at Cottage.
- i) **Popcorn Friday:** Popcorn Friday will be starting on 10/10. Volunteers are needed for 7:30 a.m.
- j) **Procedure for Approving Flyers:** Any flyers that committees wish to distribute to the school community must first be sent to the PTO Presidents (Meg and Liv), who will then send them to Mr. Madden for approval. Once they flyer is approved, they can be distributed and emailed to Tom for inclusion on the PTO website.
- k) **Committee Vacancies:** There are a number of committee vacancies this year, with many committee chairs leaving Cottage next year. Members were provided with sign up forms at the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.