

**DISTRICT PARENT COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2004**

Present: Karp, Hill, Carpenter, Fletcher, Tengi, Weeks, Kley, Seitz, Krisulewicz, Kahme, Bruno, Stevens, Doran, Facompre, Gustafson, Nichols

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 AM by Judy Karp

OPEN DISCUSSION:

A. Student Directories:

- ◆ A meeting will be held sometime mid-May between PTO representatives and district staff to discuss the production of the 04-05 Student Directories. (Judy Hill will e-mail exact date as soon as one is determined)
- ◆ It was agreed upon by all PTOs that the production of the directory should remain as a PTO function and that PTOs have the ability to collect and verify data for the directory directly from parents.
- ◆ Each PTO will determine whether they will follow the “opt in” or “opt out” process. It was agreed upon by most PTOs that the “opt in” process may be the best method to assure that a parent has received notification and reviewed their data. It would also be less confusing for parents if all PTOs followed the same “opt in” or “opt out” option.
- ◆ It would be the PTOs preference to limit the district’s role to providing PTOs with enrollment lists, teacher/team/homeroom assignments, and pertinent student data for verification purposes. This request does involve privacy issues and will be discussed with district personnel as to the best way to achieve this overall goal.

B. 2004-2005 DISTRICT CALENDAR:

- ◆ All PTO’s should provide Joann Meyer, **by May 28th**, a list of PTO/School events, which are to be included on next year’s calendar.
- ◆ These calendar dates should be coordinated and reviewed with each school’s principal before submission to Joann.
- ◆ The same format as the 03-04 District Calendar will be followed.
- ◆ It was suggested that Election Day and the Referendum Election be included in next year’s calendar.

C. PROJECT DEMOCRACY:

- ◆ The Program was well received by students, parents and administrators.
- ◆ This year, Project Democracy had 436 more student voters than last April did.
- ◆ This is an increase of 33% in the number of total students voting.
- ◆ Number of voters per school: CHS: 227; TMS: 418; BT: 283; HES: 329; SB: 283; TG: 222; **Total Student Voters: 1,752.**

ITEMS DISCUSSED WITH SUPERINTENDENT:

A. DEBRIEFING ON SCHOOL BUDGET

- ◆ The goal was to get out 2000 “Yes” votes. Actual “Yes” votes were 2,108 and “No” votes were 1,720. The 04-05 budget passed by 388 votes. Total percentage of those who voted was 27.4%.
- ◆ This budget will allow the district to Lease/Purchase 427 new computers. The average cost of each computer, including software, will be about \$1,600.00. The new computers for CHS’s science lab may cost a few hundred dollars more due to sophistication of the software required.
- ◆ All existing academic programs will move forward.
- ◆ Class sizes will be maintained.
- ◆ The Supervisor/Athletic Director’s position will be split into two positions, one person in charge of K-12 Health/Wellness/Physical Education (they will report to Kiki) and one person for 6-12 Director of Athletics (Kiki Enderle).
- ◆ This budget did not fill the position of Director of Technology.
- ◆ It shifted teachers to other teaching positions. Some non-tenured teachers could be bumped if tenured teachers who are out on maternity leave choose to come back.
- ◆ It reduced the number of paraprofessionals district-wide by four.
- ◆ It reduced the number of custodians by four district-wide.

- ◆ The projection for this year’s 03-04 budget is that when we pay off all existing outstanding bills, about \$800,000 will be left for the remainder of the school year to pay all other expenses.
- ◆ The district did not cancel field trips for the remainder of the year. However, parents may be asked to help pay for any field trip that had not been previously approved.
- ◆ If the state would fund Special Education up to 40%, as had been promised, we would be in a much better financial position. However, superintendent is not optimistic that the state will help fund state mandates any time in the near future
- ◆ If referendum passes, we will have CAP Waivers to put money back into the budget for construction. Up to 40% of any building projects would be funded by the state.

B. FEEDBACK ON UPCOMING REFERENDUM

- ◆ **Should a Marching Band Program be included in the referendum?** A Marching band would include a Drill Team, Band members and Color Guard. A marching band would play at school athletic events; however, their main focus would be to participate in Marching Band competitions.
- ◆ Should a band “pep squad” be recommended as the first stepping stone to work towards a Marching Band Program in the future?
- ◆ Should we try to seek out funding for a Marching Band Program through other outside means: grants, etc.

- ◆ **There will be at least one open public meeting in early May to discuss what programs/items should and shouldn't be included in the finalized referendum proposal.** The exact meeting date is yet to be determined. (Judy Hill will e-mail notification to everyone of date when it is finalized). **PTOs should encourage parents to attend this open meeting and have their voices/opinions heard.**
- ◆ The proposal to include a multi-purpose room for dance classes and wrestling will be coming out of the referendum. The area will remain as two woodshop rooms.
- ◆ The referendum will include the ability to offer "honors" music programs.
- ◆ The superintendent thought we might need about 2500 "yes" votes to pass the referendum.
- ◆ Time should not be spent on convincing the "no" voters, but on ensuring that the "yes" voter comes out.

C. INCIDENT AT HOPEWELL ELEMENTARY

- ◆ A pink fluid that is currently being used as a coolant, and which runs through many pipes in the HES building, has been found to be toxic, but not illegal.
- ◆ The school district did have a previous engineer's report that stated: the coolant is the type of fluid whose "toxicity" is minimal.
- ◆ This fluid has been found to be leaking out of some valves in the HES school.
- ◆ A first grader did see the fluid on the bathroom floor and was intrigued by it, thereby, tasting it with her finger.
- ◆ Child was taken to the hospital and given a charcoal drink to counteract the fluid ingested.
- ◆ Experts have been hired to come into the school to have the fluid removed from the pipes and replaced with a known non-toxic coolant.
- ◆ Custodians have been alerted to check for leaks and leaking valves.

D. ANNOUNCEMENT OF HS PRINCIPAL AND HES PRINCIPAL

- ◆ Joseph Mangiaracina will be the new HS principal as of 7/1/04. He is from Poughkeepsie, NY.
- ◆ Christine Lacquidara will be the new principal of HES as of 7/1/04. She is currently Vice-Principal at HES.
- ◆ Why was there an announcement of the individuals who will be filling the positions in the paper before the actual board meeting to approve these candidates?
 - ◆ By law, the school district is required to post to the public the date, time and place of every public meeting as well as the agenda for that meeting.
 - ◆ The school district posts on the web-site the Thursday night before the Monday Board meeting, the date of the public meeting and the agenda to be covered. This gives the public a chance to voice their opinions before a decision is made. Based on the public's comments, a decision can be changed or tabled.
- ◆ **It was agreed that the Parent Interviewing Feedback form should be revised. Denise Nichols will coordinate disseminating to all PDC members the current**

verbiage/questions on the feedback form and ask for suggestions and/or changes. She will coordinate and refer suggested changes to Rich Lang.

E. SPECIAL EDUCATION LETTER

- ◆ The superintendent shared with us a letter being mailed to all parents and guardians of Valued Special Needs Students regarding the retraction by the Times, which stated: A remark was incorrectly attributed to Celeste Curley in a story regarding special education that appeared in the Times April 14. She did not use the phrase “a few parents from hell.”
- ◆ 15% of our student population is special education and the unfunded state mandates are breaking the budget.
- ◆ We need to continue to try to do a better job at highlighting the positive relationships we do have with our special education children.
- ◆ It was suggested that more parents become involved in the Garden State Coalition whose mission is to continue to put pressure on Trenton to begin funding the unfunded state mandates. **Kim Bruno will send out, via e-mail, more information regarding the upcoming events being sponsored by the Garden State Coalition.**

F. SPRING SPORTS

- ◆ The superintendent has requested that all coaches be consistent with their message about our athletic code.
- ◆ The superintendent has required that a 4-day window (time without scheduled games) be included in the Spring Break week for family vacations. Quality family time is important to the district.
- ◆ Students are excused from games due to religious reasons, i.e. no penalty for Passover, etc.

MAY 10TH AT 7:00 PM – OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ON STRATEGIC PLAN

District personnel will present a brief overview of the updated strategic plan.

At this meeting, the public will be invited to participate in interactive, small groups, to share their opinions about the goals/action plans of the various strategic planning areas: Communication – Resources – Students – Program – Staff.

All PTOs should encourage parents to participate in this process to help develop the framework by which all school district decisions are made.

More information should be following from the School District regarding this important upcoming meeting.