

PTO Meeting
September 8, 2008
7:00pm
Blessed Sacrament School Library

Present at the meeting: Nels Benson, Valarie Warburton, Ellen McCarthy Hannah, Jean Hersey, Maureen Schweers, Jennifer Dougherty, Christy Simon, Maddy Mitchell, Jan Turkevich, Dave Fenimore, Anne Hoffman, Stephanie Hurd, Myleen Lankford, Mary Gately, Cesarina Berrigan, Michelle Ramchard, Sunil Ramchard, Valerie Garcia, Kelly Brinley and Joe Ferrara

Meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by PTO President Joe Ferrara with an opening prayer by Principal Valerie Garcia.

New Board Members for the 2008-2009 school year were welcomed by Joe Ferrara.

Meeting Minutes – two changes were made to the way that minutes are distributed:

1. Instead of reviewing the minutes at the next meeting, minutes will be sent out via email to all PTO members for their review. They can make any changes to the minutes by replying to PTO Secretary Myleen Lankford at myleenlank@yahoo.com. If PTO members do not present any changes to the minutes, that indicates that PTO members are OK with the minutes presented.
2. Once minutes are finalized and approved, they will be sent to TJ Chipres to be placed on the PTO portion of the BSS web site and available to all parents to read.

Principals Report – Presented by Valerie Garcia

- Back to School Night (Grades 5-8) occurred on Thursday, September 4, 2008 with good attendance
- Back to School Night (Grades K-4) will be on Thursday, September 11 at 7pm
- Back to School Night (ECC) will be on Thursday, September 18 at 7pm
- Congrats to Ellen Hannah on a great New Families Dinner
- Congrats to Sarah Knezevich on a great PTO Wine and Cheese reception
- All the new teachers are working out well and the teachers in the upper grade are working really well as a team already

- Fran Shea will be leaving as secretary. The new secretary, Raelene Sok, has been coming in a transitioning into the position. She will be starting full time on October 1. Plans are in the works for a good-bye celebration for Fran.

ECC Report – Presented by Kelly Brinley

- Monday, September 8 was the first full day and there were no tears
- There are new teacher in the Fuzzy Bears and the Bunnies classes and they are all doing great.

Overview of Key Activities – Presented by Joe Ferrara

- During Back to School nights, Joe makes a presentation to parents regarding the need for volunteers for various events that take place at the school throughout the year
- Two areas where volunteers are needed is Chess Club (which requires parents to receive veritus training and a criminal background check) and a chair for the Annual Gold Tournament which takes place in May
- With regards after school activities, a question was asked about tennis for grades 1-3. Tennis is starting for the older students but there was no information about tennis for the younger students. Joe will ask the tennis coordinator about this
- Track was suppose to start this past Saturday, September 6 but because of the weather, it was postponed to this week
- A plan is in place to have a speaker come to at least 1-2 of the PTO meetings during the year to present a topic that will be of interested to BSS parents. Joe asked that any ideas be given to him and he will share with Valerie

Publicity – Presented by Nels Benson

- Over the summer, Nels communicated with former Publicity Chair Diane Bonilla
- Both agreed that there is an opportunity for BSS and ECC to build on publicity by sharing all the good things that are happening at BSS and the ECC
- There needs to be an increase in how we are letting people know these things including using newspapers, local businesses and creating an advertising budget
- We need to remind people early and often about upcoming events at the school
- There needs to be a unified message between administration and the volunteers that we stick to

- We need to figure out how we as an organization want to publicize what we do and make sure that we are sticking to diocesan guidelines
- We need to drive more people to the PTO portion of the website and also make sure that we are getting more and more people to visit the web site frequently
- We need to insure that parents see that the PTO is doing more than just what comes home in the folder
- We have two audiences – our internal audience within BSS and the ECC and our larger external audience which includes local papers which we can use to notify of upcoming events as well as feature items on the good things happening at school
- Nels will find out who these local newspaper editors are and invite them to our events by offering free tickets and such to their families
- More information about upcoming events on the web site and it needs to be put out much earlier than it is currently being put out. Also, we should be sharing more good news.

Status report on playground enhancements

- At the last meeting at the end of last year, many felt strongly that money needed to be put aside and used immediately to update and improve the playground
- Improvement of the soccer field is also being looked at
- \$20,000 was put aside for the playground from the PTO budget
- The playground committee consisting of Valarie Warburton, Ellen Hannah, Stephanie Hurd and Nels Benson looked at the playground as a long term plan:
 - Soccer field
 - Playground
 - Pond Area
- We will need additional funds as well as parish involvement
- The playground committee investigated a company called Learning Structures:
 - Learning structures has been used by St. Rita's to create their playground. St. Rita's playground cost \$37,000
 - The concept is that the company comes in and helps you come up with a design that meets the needs of all.
 - They meet with the students as well as the parents to come up with a design plan which can be build in stages according to financial needs. The cost of the initial consultation with parents and students is \$800
 - The structure is built from scratch. The company helps you find local lumber companies that will donate wood and other materials.
 - They purchase what we need

- The structure is then built by volunteers (parents, parishioners, others in the community) with Learning Structures overseeing the building process
- What will be on the ground below the playground structure has yet to be determined
- This will need to be reviewed and approved by Father Cregan. The committee will create a proposal to present to Father.
- We will also ask Learning Structures about the turf field
- According to local people that have been spoken to about the pond, it appears that it will not be a problem to dispose of it. More research needs to be done
- The committee suggests that as soon as we get Father Cregan's approval, we set up a planning day which will take place on a school day so the company can meet with the kids during the day and the parents at night

Establishment of an Endowment Committee

- Now that the School Endowment has been established, we need to appoint a committee to manage it and facilitate contributions
- An announcement was made in the bulletin for people to volunteer for the committee but there was no interest shown. A few parents have expressed an interest in serving on the committee
- Father Cregan would like to do as much as possible to increase the size of the Endowment
- Father Cregan does want the proceeds of one fundraising event to go towards the endowment
- One suggestion was the Golf Tournament which everyone present felt was a good idea

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm by Joe Ferrara