

**PTO Meeting**  
**October 6, 2008**  
**7:00pm**  
**Blessed Sacrament School Library**

**Present at the meeting:** Nels Benson, Valarie Warburton, Ellen Hannah, Maureen Schweers, Maddy Mitchell, Dave Fenimore, Natalie Mulrooney, Sue Knight, Kimberly Soutuyo, Myleen Lankford, Mary Gately, Michelle Ramchard, Valerie Garcia, and Joe Ferrara

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

**Principals Report – Presented by Valerie Garcia**

- School was honored by being given the Blue Ribbon award in September.
- October 20 and 21 is the official award ceremony and Valerie Garcia and Sue Knight will be attending. Among other items, the school will be given a Blue Ribbon school flag which will be hung below the American flag
- November 17 – 21 will be Blue Ribbon School Week at BSS with a number of events planned and others still in the works. Among the planned events:
  - The Bishop will be coming to celebrate mass on Thursday, November 20 at 8:30am. This will be followed by a formal assembly in the gym. There will be many people invited to attend including former teachers, VIPs and others.
  - If you have any celebration ideas for Blue Ribbon School week, please contact Valerie Garcia
- The new secretary, Raelene Sok, has been transitioning into her position. She is learning quickly but as there is so much information to learn, Valerie asks that all parents please use the web site for information when applicable versus calling the school. Also, please schedule all playdates and pick-up changes earlier rather than later. Thank you!
- Our Spanish Teacher, Bridget Laroche has just learned that her husband is being transferred. Announcement will be going out soon searching for a new teacher.
- The Diocese is taking on a new initiative which will allow schools to take their lesson plans and allow other Diocesan schools to share their plans with other schools. More information to follow as the training sessions for the curriculum mapping team have just started and will be continuing over the next several months.

### **ECC Report – Presented by Valerie Garcia (for Kelly Brinley)**

- Mulch day will be held on Saturday, October 25, 2008
- Pumpkin patch day will be on Halloween, October 31
- Tadpole club will be beginning soon. This unique opportunity for young children to explore the ECC is open to parish children with or without a sibling attending the ECC. Children who attend will receive a stuffed frog, come to the Thursday assembly, see classes in action, do an activity in Quinn Hall and finish up with snack.

### **Diocesan Update – Presented by Mary Gately**

- Meeting was held on September 27, 2008 run by Sister Bernadette who is the acting superintendent.
- The Diocese is looking into a Natural Gas Co-op for all schools which will reduce the heating costs for the schools
- The Diocese is also investigating getting text books at the same price as public schools
- They are enacting an emergency phone calling system which will allow schools to record one message and then all emergency contact numbers (home, cell) will be called with the emergency message. \*\*\*\* Please check all contact numbers on the directory on the school web site to insure your information is correct
- The Terra Nova scores were discussed – Diocese is in the 85 percentile while the Nationwide the percentile is 50%
- The Diocese is beginning a marketing initiative to insure that the schools are able to keep enrollment up. Among items discussed is a template web site for all schools to use. The planning phase will be this year and implementation will be next year.

### **Fall Festival – presented by Kim Soutuyo**

- They are still looking for more volunteers and vendors
- A note will be going home shortly reminding parents of the 2 hour requirement for the fall festival
- A new attraction this year will be the Velcro ride for children 8 and up. An extra parent will be there to insure that the age rule is followed
- A suggestion was presented about bringing back the baskets? Many people have stated that they miss having the baskets at the fall festival
- Currently, there is no chair for the used uniform sale. Again, this is another part of the festival that the parents really like. However it was discussed that it should be a straight sale with all proceeds going to the school versus a consignment because the prices were found to be too high when it is held as a consignment sale.

### **Alumni Association – Presented by Joe Ferrara (for Stephanie Hurd)**

- A registration form for all alumni was created on the web site
- The hope is for alumni to post updates about themselves and also for events to be posted for alumni to attend
- The current struggle is that there are two databases with alumni information – one from the early 90's and one from 2004 to the present time
- Announcements will go out in various publications encouraging alumni to register on the web site
- Stephanie is in the process of talking to St. Thomas More and St. Rita's – both who have established alumni groups
- Two suggestions were made: one was that an announcement go out in the bulletin to all alumni and a second was to have alumni call classmates and get their information

### **Publicity Update – Presented by Nels Benson**

- Nels is working with officials in the City of Alexandria to get some publicity over our being named a Blue Ribbon School
- A resolution from the city is being prepared
- It is hoped that someone from the city will present the proclamation
- Also, several other key political officials from the Commonwealth were also contacted with the hope of getting proclamations from them (though most won't be available until January)
- 11x17 posters are being prepared to advertise the fall festival

### **Playground Update – Presented by Joe Ferrara**

- Joe thanked Valarie Warburton, Ellen Hannah, Nels Benson and Stephanie Hurd for all of their work thus far looking into the playground
- The three key components of this project are: upgrading the playground equipment, upgrading the field and what to do about the retention pond
- We know that we can not do all at once but we want to do something to show progress
- All information was sent forward to Valerie Garcia and Fr. Cregan. A meeting will take place in the next 2 weeks to discuss in detail.
- The design planning day will be discussed next once and if all plans are approved by Fr. Cregan and Valerie Garcia
- The next step will be to make sure that the parents are fully aware and involved in the entire process. They will be notified about the planning day, a plan (road map if you will) will be developed to show the parents in detail where we want to go with this project and how much money it will take to get there.

- What will also be discussed is if we want to start and do a little bit with the money we have or to wait and do it all together so that we insure that we are doing it right.

### **Other News and Notes**

- Track Team
  - The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders participated for the first time in track and field this year. The younger kids raced on Saturday, October 4 and the older kids on Sunday, October 5
  - Many shout-outs were given to Warren and Michelle Payne for running the track team and doing a fantastic job
- Girls on the Run
  - Girls on the Run is lead by Mrs. Knight and Mrs. O'Neil
  - The girls have been working very hard
  - They are training for a 5k run which will take place the Saturday after Thanksgiving

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