



General Meeting Minutes for the 2009 – 2010 Academic School Year

October 13, 2009 @ 7:00 p.m.

AMS Library

PTA Members in attendance: 15

Co-Presidents: Gillian Smith
Jennifer Boucher
Vice President: Denise Alderson
Secretary: Sharon Campbell
Treasurer: Michele Donoghue
Board Member at Large: Gretchen Pyles

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

President's Report

- ❖ Pledge of Allegiance

Secretary's Report

The minutes from the September 2009 meeting were reviewed at the meeting. Sharon Campbell requested a motion to accept the minutes. Cathy Leighton moved to accept the minutes. Gillian Smith seconded the motion. The September 2009 minutes were accepted.

Treasurer's Report

Copies of the Treasurer's report for September 2009 financials were reviewed at the meeting and copies were available to all that were present. Sharon Campbell requested a motion to accept the financials for September and a second motion was made by Porter Dodge to accept.

Principal's Report

Gerry St. Amand ~ Clark-Wilkins School

- Students who missed any sessions of NECAP testing in reading or mathematics are completing make-ups this week.
- Students in grades Kindergarten and one are continuing the pilot administration of the DIBELS mathematics.
- Second grade students who were absent during computerized NWEA assessments are completing make-ups.
- All staff worked in small groups during the in-service day to address areas they believe need improvement across the district.

- Topics for the in-service day ranged from the connection between physical activity and learning to basic mathematics fact mastery.
- Our professional development during the “Late Start” morning focused on “differentiated instruction” facilitated by the six Clark-Wilkins coaches: Barbara Bellipanni, Becky Ladeau, Gail Polio, Maureen Lessard, Franna Eaton, and Melissa Pollak.
- The “DI” coaches divided the staff members across the six groups and facilitated activities such as “I have, who has...”, in addition to using a “3, 2, and 1” processing protocol.
- Amherst firefighters visited both schools as part of Fire Prevention and Awareness Week.
- We have conducted a “pilot” test of Global Connect, our emergency notification system and are now updating those phone numbers that showed up on our report as invalid or unable to reach.
- A School/Community Crisis Information Session related to the recent Mont Vernon homicide is scheduled for Monday, October 19 at 7 P.M. at Souhegan High School for parents and citizens.
- On October 19, 2009, consultants from the New Hampshire Disaster Behavioral Health Team will be available between 3 and 6 P.M. to meet with individuals or in groups with parents (with or without children).
- Members of the Behavioral Health Team along with school and police officials will present and answer questions at the evening meeting.
- Teacher Appreciation was greatly appreciated!
- Clark Wilkins School Improvement Plan was presented at the last school board meeting, part of proposal is to bring in Math Support for at risk students in Grades 2,3 &4 before and after school

Porter Dodge ~ Amherst Middle School

- There will be a parent forum regarding the Mont Vernon incident and it is open to all parents, the intent is to be more informative and dispel rumors. Thurs Oct 15th is at the Mont Vernon Village School, the Amherst forum will take place on Monday Oct 19th at the Souhegan High School Auditorium from 7 – 8pm.
- Magazine Drive – very large effort at AMS to get additional kids to participate, for example if they at least sell 1 magazine they get a chance to try to dunk Porter Dodge, this has been very successful in encouraging participation
- Finished the NECAP testing and there was a lot put into the NECAP preparation – thank you to the parents for taking this seriously. The preparation was integrated into the regular teaching. NECAP sends information to help kids understand how to take the test is as important as the content. The school started this process last year and ramped it up this year, it was tied into grade level equivalency and expectations through the date of the test. As the NECAP’s will be every year, there is a focus to the individual child level to make sure the school is meeting all of the needs.
- Talked about the importance of attending meetings like the Alternative Start Meeting October 20th at 7pm at Souhegan – these meetings give the opportunity to hear about the proposal to give the middle school and high school an extra ½ hour for a later start to the day.
- Project Safeguard for Grade 7 will be Friday October 23rd, speakers are germane to that age group, the parents talk about drug issues, safety online, SRO’s, etc.
- Environmental Schools – there has been concerns about the safety of the children, the Schools are very safe and very closely managed. These are the week long ecology / environmental schools for education that fits into the curriculum for 6th and 8th grade.

School Board Report

❖ ***No School Board Representative or Report***

Committee Chair Reports

Bellringer ~ There is no January Bellringer so keep in mind the deadlines for material that needs to go in before or after.

Curriculum Enrichment ~ **AMS** – no current report, team is on track, on schedule, and on budget;
Wilkins - CE programs at Willkins School are in the final planning stages for each grade. Wingmasters will be presenting next week to 2nd grade. I (Jil Romano) will provide an article for The Bellringer in January about it, including who is coming in the new year.

Family Math Night ~ Collecting new materials, Monday night Feb 1 will be K – 2nd, and Tues night Feb 2 will be 3rd and 4th grade. There is a good list of volunteers.

Family Science Day ~ Science Day planning is going well, there are some new committee members with great ideas. Our theme this year is “Hands-On Health”. There will be two sessions on Saturday, November 7th: 10:00am – 12:00pm and 1:00pm – 3:00pm at Wilkins. Please remind people that this is not a Science Fair, it is a set of hands-on experiments geared toward elementary school children and their parents (siblings welcome!). No registration or pre-work required! If anyone has any teenage children that would like to help, we could use a few volunteers at each session to answer questions, keep things organized, etc.

Holiday Story Time ~ everything is on track for the December 4th event.

Magazine Drive – Susan Shaw gave an update on the success of the magazine drive, stating she has great volunteers but more hands are always welcome on this committee to help. Wilkins was done and AMS just started collections. Gerry St. Amand compliments the way that the kick off was done with the kids at lunch.

Membership ~

Family \$10 membership	435	
Teacher Family \$10 membership	17	
Teacher Individual \$5 membership	52	This brings total membership to 504

These will be uploaded to OMDR within the next week or so.

The directory is in the process of being proofed and will be going to print within the next week. Delivery to the classrooms will be during the last week in October. All available advertising slots have been filled.

Original Art ~ For the Art to Remember fundraiser, the committee work has not started yet, but Kate and Leslie expect to complete some preliminary work over the coming weeks. As in the past, students at Clark will complete their artwork at school and the art original art will be sent home in the packets for

families to purchase. packets will also contain extra paper for other members of the family to use should they want to participate.

This year, first graders at Wilkins will also complete their art in the classroom and follow the same process as Clark. For the 2nd to 4th graders, we have been working with Mary Prescott-Niness at Wilkins to test a proposed process that would allow us to photograph existing art that Mary chooses from the art completed in art class during the year. The print-outs of these images will go home in the sales packets along with extra paper should the student want to create a different image or should other members of the family want to participate. We should complete this test, finalize the process and the schedule and reach out to our committee during the next few weeks. The real work for the Art to Remember committee starts in January.

PTA Play – this year's play is Children of Eden, auditions will start in January so keep your eye on the Bellringer!

Staff Appreciation ~ I just wanted to fill you in on the first Staff Appreciation event of the year. I received the list of volunteers midway through September and then proceeded to sort out who could supply which school. I utilized an email service (Vertical Response) to create separate email lists for the schools, and organized the volunteers that way.

We had breakfast for all three schools:

AMS: Friday, October 2 / Clark: Wednesday, October 7 / Wilkins: Thursday, October 8

I had a good response from the volunteers, and had one person helping me with the setups at AMS and Wilkins. The teachers really appreciated having this done for them!

For the remainder of the year, I would like to do the following: **December:** Holiday baked goodies (cookies, etc.) ; **February:** Supplies (Purell, wipes, tissues, staplers, pencils, etc...and maybe a bunch of Hersey kisses for Valentine's Day) ; **May/Teacher Appreciation week:** Lunch.

In the past, they have done things for three days that week. I can see if the volunteers are willing to supply things for the other two days. We just don't have the budget to buy things for more than the lunch.

Reflections ~ This year's theme is "Beauty Is..." ; Entries are due at your school office by January 4, 2010. Collection boxes will be in the offices by the end of October. All entry forms and rules are now on the Amherst PTA website. This year we will be having an Art Show/Open House instead of a ceremony. This will be on Saturday, January 16, 2010 from 1-4 pm at the Clark school multi-purpose room. Snow date will be the following Saturday. We had our first committee meeting Sept. 30th. We assigned members of the committee to be "in charge" of each category. We are currently in the process of getting judges. If anyone knows anyone in the fields of film, dance, music, photography, literature or visual arts who might be interested in judging, please contact: Shelly Kayser (skayser@hughes.net) 673-6457 or Wendy Conway(mconway0427@comcast.net) 672-5679.

New Business

- Online auction as PTA Fundraiser is being explored – more to follow.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Gillian Smith to adjourn the meeting at 8:40pm, and the motion was seconded.

Submitted by:

Sharon Campbell

Secretary

Next Meeting: October 13, 2009 @ 7 p.m. AMS Cafeteria

Contact Information

PTA Board ~ ptaboard@amherstpta.org

Bellringer Newsletter ~ ellenbr68@alumni.umass.edu