

Amherst PTA General Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 14, 2006
Third Meeting of the 2006-2007 Academic Year
Next Meeting: January 9, 2007

PTA BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Co-Presidents:	Beth Hurd
Vice President:	Krista Hanks
Treasurer:	Anna Rego
Secretary:	Kristin Gaughan
Advisor:	Kristin Desborough
Absent:	Eileen Peters

PTA MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: 31

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7.35pm.

Secretary's Report

The committee chairs received copies of the October minutes via e-mail a week prior to the meeting. Copies were also available at the meeting. The October minutes were reviewed. Robin Hefflefinger moved to accept the minutes. Porter Dodge seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted.

Vice President's Report

Krista Hanks reported that PTA publicity is going well, and current publicity is focusing on the Amherst PTA's new award – the New Hampshire PTA of the Year.

Treasurer's Report

Anna Rego reported that she has closed out the spring grants. The October financial statement was read. Porter Dodge moved to accept the October statement. Denise Jacobs seconded the motion. The October financial statement was approved.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Mary Athey Jennings, Superintendent of SAU 38

Dr. Mary Athey Jennings welcomed an audience of about 30 parents, teachers, and administrators and discussed her activities since her superintendent tenure began in July. Dr. Jennings said that she has been meeting with PTA members, teachers, focus groups, and leaders of all the groups within the district. She will be presenting her summary to the school board at the end of November.

Currently, Dr. Jennings is working on three major areas. First, efforts are being made to make the district more seamless in its curriculum. This includes not only transitions between the grade schools, the middle school, and the high school, but also coordinating the curriculum to make a smoother transition from the Mont Vernon schools.

Second, she is seeking to establish a more specific standard of behavior for the entire district. Dr. Jennings would like to see coordination of discipline expectations and behavior values uniform between the schools so that students aren't getting different messages at different schools within the district.

Finally, Dr. Jennings is working on creating a strategic plan for the district. The School Board approved the process to set up a five year strategic plan. This process will include parents, teachers, administrators, and citizens and will come up with an action plan to go forward three to five years. This strategic plan will include facility planning to know what is happening in the buildings over the next few years so that the schools, district office, and the community will all be aware of site changes and needs. The strategic plan will also strive to coordinate all the testing in the district, including how the test results will be explained to staff and parents and how the results will be used in the schools. The strategic plan will also seek to get a feel as to how the parents will use the testing information: what value to parents place on the different tests given and what expectations do parents have on the efforts placed in the classroom.

Dr. Jennings stated that the biggest challenge in SAU 39 is that the district is such a high achieving district that many think that everything is fine. Dr. Jennings hopes that the district will take some risks to achieve even greater results.

The PTA thanks Dr. Jennings for sharing her time and expertise and looks forward to continued dialogue with her. Dr. Jennings can best be reached at mjennings@sprise.com or by calling the Brick School.

Principal's Report

Clark School / Wilkins School

- Meg Trainor, Assistant Principal at Wilkins School, offered congratulations to the PTA on their award. She said that the PTA's efforts directly benefit the kids and make the staff feel supported.
- NWEA Testing for grades 2 and 4 has just finished. The test will be re-administered in the spring and results will be compared to look at individual growth.
- Clark and Wilkins Schools will dismiss at 11.50am on Friday for Parent-Teacher Conferences.
- The PTA targeted funds will be used for playground equipment at Clark and Wilkins Schools.

AMS

- Porter Dodge clarified the NWEA tests. The students take this test in the fall and the spring. The test is a computer program has no ceiling so it better reflects the exact level a student is at. The fall and spring results are compared to show growth.
- NECAP tests are completed.
- The Environmental Schools are done. It was a great week for the 6th graders. This is the last year for the 7th graders. A committee will be looking at the all the environmental camps and put forth a recommendation for the future of the camps.
- Porter expressed his congratulations to the PTA and enjoyed being a part of the awards ceremony.
- A draft of next year's budget will be presented to the school board.

Cricket Bouchard, New Hampshire State PTA

Cricket reported that the Amherst PTA won this year's PTA of the Year out of 118 units in the state. The Amherst PTA was recognized for its outstanding efforts in fund-raising, membership numbers, and out reach community programs, such as Family Math Night. The board wants to recognized that it was the writing efforts of Kristin Desborough and Paula MacClellan that made this recognition possible.

Teacher Reps' Report

Clark

Sally Harrington was pleased to see so many parents at the meeting and extended her congratulations and thanks for the support of the PTA. The Clark School students enjoyed the program from P MEC, and the teachers felt the program was very hands-on and age appropriate. Local author and illustrator Mary Cocoa-Leffler read to the students. The Kindergarteners are learning about the Pilgrims and the Native Americans.

Wilkins

There was no report.

AMS

- Mary Westwater brought thanks from the staff for all the grants.
- The grades 5 – 8 testing went well and brought a great level of respectfulness and attentiveness.
- The 8th grade environmental school brought a good bonding opportunity between the students and teachers.
- The 7th grade is beginning a humanitarian project where they will look at different humanitarian groups worldwide.
- *The Music Man* is the AMS play.
- The teachers and staff will be having a Thanksgiving meal on Thursday.
- 7th and 8th grade basketball tryouts are going on.

School Board

Nancy Head reported that the school board is focusing on the master plan, goals, and budget. The primary goal is for safe and healthy schools that support the curriculum for now and thru the next ten years.

The school board is also debating as to what to present on the spring ballot. The master committee members had different opinions and have decided to vote on one of the following options:

1. recommend one of the options presented,
2. phase in the master plan by putting forth part of the option to the voters in the spring and continue to investigate, or
3. wait and re-evaluate next year.

On Monday, the Master Committee will present their option to the school board and make plans as to what to do in March.

PTA / PTSA

There was no report.

Bellringer

The November Bellringer came out electronically. The deadline for the December issue is November 15. Submissions should be made to Ellen Roos-Unger at: ellenbr68@alumni.umass.edu. Please cc Krista Hanks for all Bellringer articles. She is working to make sure that all committees and events are covered.

Committees

Membership

Jennifer Devine reported that membership is cleaning up the loose ends and lists are being prepared for the donut parties.

Magazine Drive

Parents are reminded that they can renew their magazine memberships at any time during the year at QSP.com, and the school will still get the benefits.

PTA Directory

Karen Oates reported the directory is at the printers

Family Science Day

Scheduling is still pending.

Reflections

All the Reflections contest information can be found on the PTA website.

Family Math Night

Planning is going well. The event will be held January 29 and 30.

PTA Play

The PTA play will be held April 12 – 15, 2007. Proposals are being taken for the 2008 play and forms are available on the PTA website.

Health Fair

The Health Fair will be March 10, 2007.

Original Art

The Original Art committee has decided to use the same vendor as last year. The committee is in touch with the art teachers at Clark and Wilkins. The artwork will be sent home in March and the products will be delivered a month later.

Attic Resources

Attic Resources is an opportunity for teachers to receive donated items that they need for their classrooms. Teachers contact Laurie Coppola and the requested items are printed in the Bellringer. Anyone who would like to donate an item can then contact the requesting teachers directly by calling the school or using e-mail.

Grants Committee

Robin Hefflefinger reported on the \$4000 fall grants. \$2000 will go to Clark and Wilkins Schools for security equipment, and \$2000 will go to AMS for their Life Skills program.

Last spring there was a surplus of \$17,000. The Grant Committee proposes that distributing \$9000 to Clark and Wilkins for a future playground. The committee requests that Gerry St. Amand spend the money by June of 2008.

Out of the \$9000, baseball hoops and a four square will be installed in the spring. \$8000 will be distributed to AMS, with the following breakdown of monies:

- \$954 for a refridgerator for the Life Skills program

- \$3500 for LCD screens for the message bulletin boards with one in the foyer and two on the each level in the new areas
- \$2000 for theatre lights in the cafeteria
- \$1500 for a sound system, speakers, and amps for the cafeteria

The committee requests that Porter Dodge spend the money by March 1, 2007.

Anna Rego moved to accept the Grant proposal. Ellen Roos-Unger seconded the motion. The Grant proposal was accepted.

Curriculum Enrichment

Michelle Caraccio reported on upcoming curriculum enrichment events at Wilkins School.

1. Jim Parks of Wingmasters presented his program "Birds of Prey" to Grade 2 students on October 20th. The feedback from teachers continues to be positive and they have expressed an interest in rebooking Jim for next year.
2. Dan Grady Productions will be at Wilkins School on November 30th to do a Marionette performance for Grade 3 students (broken down into 2 sessions). Dan makes his marionettes and integrates a lot of music and interaction in his performances. This is the first time that Dan will perform at Wilkins and it should be lively and fun.
3. Tom Wahle from Techsplorations will be returning to Wilkins School on January 12th. He will be doing one program for Grade 4 students on Simple Machines in the morning and then doing 3 Weather workshops throughout the rest of the day for Grade 3 classes.
4. Barbara Medlyn from Medlyn Monument has been confirmed for Grade 2 classroom presentations on Rocks and Minerals. She will be at Wilkins on March 14, 15, 16, 21, and 22.
5. We are working out the logistics to bring the Journey Back in Time group to Wilkins School for their Pioneer Living Program for Grade 2. This subject was a request from Grade 2 teachers. We are hoping for a January or February date. This is an interactive presentation with students going to various learning stations.
6. I have requested feedback from Jan Scagnelli and Grade 4 teachers regarding any additional program interest areas. We likely will have enough money for one more ce program in this budget year.

Barbara Bowman reported that Beaver Brook will be presenting to the 1st graders.

Hospitality

There was no report.

PTA Website

The PTA Website is up and running, and is all new. Check it out!

Staff Appreciation

There was no report.

Old / New Business

Old

There was no old business.

New

- The National PTA is mandating that beginning with the 2007 – 2008 school year all membership dues are reported on-line. This is a data entry position and the PTA is looking for someone who wants to participate but needs to work from home. Cheryl Forster has volunteered for the job.

Adjournment

- The next PTA meeting will be on Tuesday, January 9, at 7.30pm at the Wilkin's School Library.
- Kristin Desborough made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Krista Hanks seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9.15pm.

Submitted by

Kristin Gaughan
Secretary