



PTC President's Meeting

April 22, 2010

Minutes (Elementary School PTOs)

Six elementary schools were represented by one or both of their PTO presidents (KT Murphy, Northeast, Stark, Stillmeadow, Toquam and Westover).

SPS Budget Recap/PTC

Although Mayor Pavia keeps saying he is not able to make changes on the Board of Ed's budget, his Director of Administration, Fred Flynn, sent an email to the Board of Representative members advising them of areas of the school budget to cut, and the suggested amounts. It is important for parents and concerned citizens to contact the BoR members on their fiscal committee, and in general, to let them know that you believe the school budget should be left as is. Typically the BoR in general will vote (May 4) as the BoR fiscal committee votes (April 28).

If cuts are made, and you choose to address the BoE in their meeting in June, remember that it was NOT the BoE who made the cuts, they are just allocating them. Direct your comments to areas where you think funds should not be touched (and your reasoning), and also to areas that could be cut.

CCJEF (the CT Coalition for Justice in Education Funding) plans on holding a forum with Stamford's Board of Finance and Board of Representative members to discuss ECS funding. PT Council has been asked to be a co-sponsor, along with SPEF, and SEA. More information to follow.

Our next PT Council meeting is May 19th at 7:30pm. PTC is putting together our Board for next year. Anyone who would like to nominate someone (or themselves) should contact any board member (see website StamfordPTCouncil.org).

Planning for next year's board (budget, schedule/events)

Reminder to follow your school's by-laws when filling board positions for the following year. Also, be careful not to let folks get burned out. Switch positions,



take a year off, and if co-position do divide the duties so each person truly handles only a part of the overall job requirements.

Are schools struggling to fill their board positions? YES!

For schools who have already been successful – helpful suggestions. Start early! February is not too early to start gathering names of interested parents. Ask the classroom teachers to recommend parents. Nominating Committee can then follow up, first with a letter advising the parent they have been recommended by their classroom teacher, then a phone call to discuss further.

Each school has some form of event where names are taken, and then people are contacted to see if they would like to get involved: i.e. Parent coffee, playground play date for incoming kindergartners, orientation day. Toquam has a phenomenal parent facilitator who is really helping to make parents feel comfortable. She translates ALL flyers and she is in the school building a lot to be available to parents. Stillmeadow also has a phenomenal person in this role. It really helps when the parent facilitator is also a parent at the school!

Discussion was held on how each school handles the transition between old and new boards. Most schools try to fill chair positions before the end of the year. (Suggestion: Approach grandparents to volunteer). Most schools have a breakfast or other event in beginning of year (or open school night) where tables are set up with each event listed in chronological order for volunteers to sign up for. Ongoing events were placed on a separate table.

Very effective: Week at a Glance email sent out. This keeps parent community abreast of all activities.

There was a general request that perhaps the PT Council could create a “Local Preferred Vendor ” list on our website. PT Council could get low negotiated rates for all schools to benefit from.

Many schools state that input from teachers in budget meetings and at general PTO meetings is extremely valuable to the PTO. It is very helpful for the PTO co-presidents to meet with teacher grade level leaders to get an idea of what they might want for the following year (activity and budget). This way the budgets for grade level field trips and enrichment activities are better targeted.

Stone Soup



Regan Allen handed out flyers about the next Stone Soup event, scheduled for October 2, 2010 at AITE. Stone Soup is a resource event open to ALL Stamford residents. Workshops, "Midway" activity booths and arts performances are geared for all ages from birth to seniors! Please refer to the two attached flyers for more detailed information. Sponsored by SPS, PTC, PLTI and Domus, the Stone Soup Committee is looking to have the PTO from each school provide one person to act as the Outreach Coordinator for their school. The primary duty is to communicate the event to their school community. This position would be a good stepping stone for a parent that is just beginning to get involved since it is a low key position. Regan Allen would like to come to each PTO either in May or June to make a ten-minute presentation explaining what Stone Soup is, and how parents can volunteer. There are many, many types of volunteer opportunities for this event.

Effect of Economy on Fundraising and Family Involvement

Success ranged from okay to bad. Events that did well were movie afternoons on early release days, a pasta dinner with a Chinese Raffle, Spring Book Fair, and California Pizza Kitchen Night. If your school pursues a Barnes and Noble event, be sure to link it with a school performance for better participation.

Question about having one movie license to cover all schools. Problem may be that since all our schools have a different ein we cannot hold one license, we are all considered individuals by the movie license company.

The company "Think Recycle" is easy to work with. They provide all flyers and collections can bring in around \$100 per quarter.

Dan Colleluori, Supervisor of Solid Waste and Recycling for Stamford is interested in making presentations at our PTO Meetings to explain Stamford recycling, and to push for higher participation by residents. He also offers a 35 minute tour of the waste treatment plant. Comments from meeting participants who have experienced this tour felt the solid waste section was very nasty (diapers are like roses in comparison), whereas the water portion seemed to be okay to stomach. Overall, the verbal presentation was rated as "very dry", and most likely would not entice parents to come back for another PTO presentation!

GE offers a 'Plant a Bulb' Program.

A&E Clothing Corporation. Over a two-hour time span school holds a collection of clothing, toys, stuffed animals, bikes, strollers and small household items. The



school is paid by the pound, and A&E Clothing ships everything to countries outside the US. Nothing is shredded; they are used by folks in other countries.

We finished off our discussion with suggestions on how to increase participation at PTO meetings. Schools find that using the Parent Link one week before hand to remind folks, and then the night prior as well, does help attendance. Most schools skip December meetings since there is so much going on with holidays for all. Most try to get a speaker in, and that does attract more parents. Recent successful speakers include Stamford Science Curriculum Associate, Beth Eiseman; a psychoanalyst discussing the right balance between sports and school; and a nutritionist, Vicki Kobliner, MSRD .

Other Business

Stark and KT Murphy are exploring magnet status (part of federal funding) and whether or not to institute a dress code with uniforms (casual).

Tidbits:

Have PTO Secretary send birthday cards to each staff member. This can be done on the computer, either email, or print off a birthday greeting and put in mailbox at school.