

PTSA GENERAL MEETING: 9/16/09

The meeting was called to order, 9:13 a.m. President Isabel McBrayer thanked Cindy Lerner, Mayor, Pinecrest, for attending.

Principal's Report: Principal Howard Weiner reported that there was a wonderful turnout at Senior Parent Night last night (Sept. 15). Parents were given lots of information about the college process and are probably on information overload. He said the process may appear frightening, but Student Services, led by Bonnie Hannemann, will help. All questions about this process should be directed to them.

Principal Weiner explained that they continue to work on class size to comply with the state statute that mandates an average of 25 per class. He said that the new budget, which comes out Monday, will probably allow him to hire two new teachers.

Regarding H1N1, Principal Weiner explained that doctors are mostly swabbing the nose to determine whether a child has influenza, and that test is only 70% accurate. When a student returns to school with a note stating that he/she has Influenza B or A, he tracks this in a database, looking for a cluster (3 or more in same class or club). Clusters are reported to MDCPS Comprehensive Health Services, who in turn reports to the FL Dept. of Health, and then to the CDC. Principal Weiner relies on students to report this information. Symptoms include fever, heaviness on the chest and a cough. Parents should contact a doctor if their child has symptoms, and report the diagnosis to the school with a note upon the student's return. To date, Principal Weiner has received only 15 reports of the flu and two clusters. He added that personal hygiene is the best way to limit the limit spread, and Tami flu helps if taken within the first 48 hours. .

Open house is scheduled for Monday, September 21 starting at 6 p.m. with a resource fair and classroom visitations at 7 pm.

Principal Weiner expressed his grief about the "horrific" incident at Coral Gables High. He said that he cannot guarantee that such an incident will never happen here, explaining that we live in a society where there are random acts of kindness and violence. He encourages parents to talk openly and honestly to their kids about how to handle conflicts, how to walk away, and how to report known conflicts. He added that the administration is always re-evaluating security. Many have asked about using metal detectors, and he said that they can only be effective if you adopt the process of the airport model.

When asked about class leveling and whether a student who moves to a different class will be with the same teacher, Principal Weiner explained that the changes are made with the least amount of disruption to a student's schedule—not to accommodate kids who do not like their teachers. The state mandates an average of 25 students in math, science, language arts, social studies and foreign language classes.

A 12th grade parent asked who would be handling transcript process and what should parents do to make sure transcripts are sent on time and received by the colleges on time? Principal Weiner said he will personally ensure this happens. He went on to explain that Ms. Trish Maggio should be in the position of doing this for the remainder of the year. However, the school will handle it whether Ms. Maggio is here or not. Principal Weiner encouraged parents to find the dates in advance along with the type of transcript that is needed. He noted that in the Florida system, transcripts are sent electronically. For those schools requiring paper transcripts, a lead time of 5 to 10 days is necessary for processing. The earlier a request is made, the earlier they will be processed, he explained. Transcripts are not produced by the school, he said, but by the MIS system and someone's lack of planning should not be the school's emergency. Cecilia Prah noted that one hold up to getting transcripts is grade or schedule changes. According to Principal Weiner, the school has three people who can change grades—the principal, assistant principal and the registrar.

Principal Weiner also announced that when Mrs. Bonnie Hanneman retires at the end of October, Mrs. Carol Mallard will become the department chair. Mrs. Jean Brown who is working on a temporary basis, will take over Mrs. Hannemann's position. If you want a recommendation from Mrs. Hannemann, he urged parents to ask for it now and not wait.

Debbie Fox invited everyone to take some coffee, and if anyone wants to bake, let her know.

Roxy Lancellata made motion to approve the minutes from the Aug. 26, 2009 meeting. Cecilia Prah seconded and all voted in favor.

Treasurer's Report: Hal Rosenfeld reported that the PTSA has \$61,878.03 in the bank account with \$42,522.44 in checking and \$19,355.59 in savings. The membership and donation program has generated \$10,864 to date. .

Programming: Randi Trazenfeld stated that she is busy planning programs—both new and historical. Tomorrow (Sept. 17) school board member Dr. Larry Feldman will speak at Palmetto Middle School. All are welcome.

On Oct. 14th, the PSAT will be given to every 10th grader. Any 9th or 11th grader, who wishes to take it, must sign up at a cash cost of \$13 paid to Ms. Maggio in the office. The test is administered in school. Eleventh graders may take it for national merit or scholarship—9th graders for experience. When asked about difference between PSAT and SAT, Ms. Trazenfeld explained that the PSAT is a practice SAT, which triggers college/scholarship opportunities for those who do very well. Asked whether there is a downside to taking PSAT if child doesn't do well, Ms. Trazenfeld explained there is not. Ms. Trazenfeld announced that a Practice

SAT will most likely be offered on Oct 17 through Kaplan. The PTSA will charge \$5 for this test. Once the date is firm, Anne Orsillo will initiate the sign-up process. The FCAT academy is scheduled for Oct 3, 10 and 17 for those who need to retake the FCAT. SAT dates are: Oct 10, Nov 7, and Dec 5. The dates are posted on the College Board site and in the PTSA newsletter. Ms. Trazenfeld added that the next PTSA meeting on Oct. 21 will have a program on sexting. She said that all schools are under state mandate to educate their students and parents need to know what kids are learning in school. Ms. Trazenfeld would love other programming suggestions. Lastly, in an evening program on Monday Oct. 15, Robert Franek, author of "Best 371 colleges," will talk to parents about his new book. The evening is free of charge.

Old Business:

Reading Celebration Funds: President McBrayer explained that last year, through special projects, a teacher went over budget by \$178.21 with an incentive program. She noted that the issue was discussed at the board meeting, and the consensus was to reimburse. Looking forward, this teacher has included inflation in her budget for this year. Cecilia Prahll made a motion to move \$178.73 from unallocated special projects to allocated special projects. Randi Trazenfeld seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

New Business:

Book Sale: President McBrayer announced that the book sale is underway and open through the end of the week. She encouraged parents to visit and purchase the required reading books.

President McBrayer said that a request for an FCAT Academy Breakfast was made for Level 1 and 2 students who have not passed. The students come a few scheduled Saturday mornings and the department needs \$300. Cecilia Prahll made motion to support the breakfast. Nancy Harter seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

According to President McBrayer, a request was made to purchase academic calendars for teachers. Usually, the principal purchases them. The cost is \$560 and can be covered by the staff breakfast budget. The calendars would include a note stating that they are a gift from the PTSA, as well as an application for PTSA membership. Mercedes Sorensen made motion to approve and Conrad Coke seconded. All voted in favor.

VP/Committee Reports:

- 3rd VP, Nancy Harter, needs someone to help with Book Sale next year. If you are interested, please speak to this year's chairs.
- Membership, Mercedes Sorensen—the current membership is at 934, which is a little lower than last year. Donations are also slightly down at \$13,000 as are teacher memberships.
- Susan Montensino, 2nd VP is looking for a legislative chair.
- Julie Shestopalov, media center volunteer coordinator, is still in need of volunteers.
- For other volunteer positions, the contact is Elaine Quartin. The College Fair is in need of volunteers. President McBrayer recommended that Ms. Quartin bring a volunteer sign-up sheet to the next meeting.

Announcements:

The Citizen's Coalition for Public Schools advocacy group meeting is Tuesday, Sept 22 at the Public School Building. "Building Leaders for Tomorrow" workshop is Oct. 3, Coral Gables High School. The next EESAC meeting is Oct. 20. Nancy Harter said the Education Advisory Council meeting is Sept. 30 at 9:30 a.m. at the Village Center. She noted the importance of having school representation at the meeting. All principals, Dr. Feldman, and PTA representatives usually attend according to Mayor Lerner. Mayor Lerner noted two programs, which have come out of this subcommittee: After School Enrichment Program at the Community Center and tutoring and academic support. She explained that tutoring is free every Saturday at Pincrest Library. Also in the works is an after school study hall program at the high school and middle school. She added that there will be a need for fundraising dollars to support it. Honor Society students will provide the tutoring and in turn receive community service hours. Mayor Lerner said that the City of Pincecrest will be entering into a contract with Dade County Public Schools to determine how to assist Pincecrest area schools, and input is welcome. Ms. Harter added that the Pincrest Community Center is open to people in the general community outside of Pincrest.

Ms Genevieve Coggins, reading coach, announced that Level 1 and 2 students need bus transportation. Mayor Lerner said the Village just approved a feasibility study for a trolley. She explained that one idea is to have a trolley pick up students at the various schools and take them to the library, the community center, parks and the busway. In addition, the trolley could help to reduce morning rush hour traffic by picking up students who live outside the two-mile range. She noted that Palmetto Bay has a trolley system that was not well used when first introduced, and Pincrest would need to make sure it is worthwhile for its residents. Mayor Lerner encouraged citizens to give her their input.

John Feheley asked how to make computer donations to the schools. He is a pilot for Homestead Air Force Base, and has a great number to give away. President McBrayer suggested that Mr. Feheley speak with Principal Weiner.

Lastly, President McBrayer thanked Debbie Fox for the providing food. The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 am.

Respectfully submitted, Sheila Quint, Recording Secretary

