

*Minutes of the  
Roosevelt School PTO Meeting  
February 11, 2009*

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m. Board members present were Co-Presidents, Giovanna Spinale and Susanna Zysk, Vice President Betsey Benagh, Treasurer Kathy Nottingham and Secretary Rosemary Rossi.

**Principal's Report:** Mrs. Clery stated that we welcomed incoming Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade parents at the Roosevelt's open house last week. There were 3 tours of the school. We had a large number of visitors. MCAS tests are coming up they start on 3/31 for grades 3, 4 and 5. Mrs. Clery indicated that the Social Studies MCAS is being taken away indefinitely. We will get the formal notice in February. It was by far the most difficult MCAS test. It doesn't count and the 5<sup>th</sup> graders are spent after the test. They have announced that the test is being dropped and the Dept. of Education did not put it on their schedule.

Mrs. Clery announced that she will be at the Winthrop School on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday the week after vacation because of the absence of the principal. The School Committee was presented with the School Improvement Plans by the principals. Some key points that are common among the 5 schools are having teachers become more trained in differentiated instruction, building on our inclusion model to get more sped students into classrooms for those who can be serviced in the classroom. We are looking to reorganize with the staff we have. Mrs. Clery further talked about the fact that we are aware that the district has taken on a gifted and talented program and we will be putting students into clusters next year and getting creative in our classrooms. Question: Are you going to have gifted and talented students taught by one teacher in multi grade? Answer: no that would be tracking and we cannot do that. The cluster groups theory is that a small percentage of students at each grade level can feed off of one another. When you are making heterogeneous groups, it is difficult to spread those students out. It is suggested that those targeted are placed into one class and their needs can be addressed and they can work with each other. Question: what about having those students introduced into each classroom and then set aside time for those students and then other students who are not identified as gifted and talented can get the same. Answer: That is the thing with the clusters and flexible groupings. Teachers teach the same subjects at the same time. One teacher can have students go into the gifted class and work with them. Students can be pulled together in flexible groups. It does not mean that every teacher in the entire district does the same thing from 1:00 to 2:00. It means that within each school, grades would work on the same thing at the same time. Question: Will the placements be made only on the outside screenings? Answer: Yes. This year we are evaluating students for further screening either by parent or teacher. Question: Are all students being screened or only those screened before? Answer: All students who were not screened and who would like to be. There was a discussion about what gifted and talented looks like. What some parents think might be normal others would think are gifted. How do you really figure out what students should be screened? Answer: Teachers will have the opportunity to refer student as well as parents. On February 23 someone from Triton Regional will be presenting to parents at the Middle School exactly what to look for in a truly gifted and talented child. There are many students who are very bright who are not gifted and talented. Question: Will all others be placed equally among the classes and not all bright students placed into one class? Answer: All others will be placed equally. Question: What about children going into the 6<sup>th</sup> grade? Answer: it is being addressed at the Middle School level. Question: Is

this the reason you're waiting until August to send out the class notices? Answer: No it is because of so much moving over the summer.

**Regarding Arts Update:** Lenore Gauthier-Smith gave a background on the Regarding Arts program. 4 years ago she requested funds for the program. The PTO generously gave \$500 to \$600 per year to buy prints. Every year after that we got additional funds for a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade set of prints. The school now has a wonderful library of prints and there is no cost to anyone now. As the coordinator of this program – we have 2 presenters at each grade to present once each month. It is basically an art appreciation class. We talk but mostly have the kids observe and talk about the pictures. It is a well-received program by teachers and students as well. It is personally enriching to study artwork and share that knowledge with the kids. We have 2 openings next year for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Lenore is moving up with her child to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. We have 2 openings, it requires a bit of studying if you are not familiar with the art. Lenore has information for those persons who are interested in doing the program. You go in once a month for about an hour. It is also very much enjoyed by the presenters, who learn quite a bit. The kids really appreciate what they are learning. It's a great opportunity to get into your child's classroom. If you know anyone who might be interested, please give him or her Lenore's information. It takes about 4 to 5 hours a month to become familiar with the information and then coordinate and present. All information is given to presenters. Also, you can get information on line.

**Auction Update:** Betsey Benagh gave the auction update. She said that in case anyone is unaware the Auction is March 20 and the theme is Denim and Diamonds. We have some auction items but need more. If you know anyone who has something to donate please have them contact Betsey. We had someone who works for Hearts On Fire Diamonds but it fell through. We sell tickets for a big ticket item by raffle. The same man won 2 years in a row. If you have any fabulous ideas, please let us know. We are going to have a special cocktail party and sell tickets to be held in an art gallery. We sent home notices to room parents about class gifts so you will see things soon. Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> we will be having the invitation stuffing party at Sam vanBeever's house. The wine and beer is being done by Greenwood Liquors and A Hot Dish caterer is doing the food. Lenore Gauthier Smith is taking care of the Kurig coffee. We are thinking of a DJ this year rather than live music. We can always use more volunteers, talk to Betsey or Sam vanBeever. We are looking forward to a fun event.

**Play Update:** Sue Boomhower gave the play update. She indicated that things are going well. Children have been showing up and there are no problems with anyone. We have a lot of great singers. Rina is working with them on the blocking, Patty and Sue are going over the lines and scenes. We will not have a new schedule out until after vacation, probably for March and April. The children got booklets, which are the property of the school. They were told they can write in them and put their names in them, but they must be returned to the school. If they lose them they have to pay \$12 for the lost booklet. We are talking about pre-selling the tickets. June 12 is the evening and the 13<sup>th</sup> may also be the evening. Is another weekend available? Giovanna indicated that she reserved the gym and cafeteria for all day Saturday and Friday night. Mr. Sheridan must be here to open the doors and he will be paid for that. We are looking for 2 evenings and possibly a Sunday. Sue let the parents know to email them with questions or concerns. They are trying to accommodate everyone's schedules. Mrs. Clery asked if it might be a problem if parents assumed that there would be 2 shows and then are told that there are 4 shows? Sue said that they were told up front that there could be more than 2 shows. Mrs. Clery said that in the future she would like the dates set before anything begins. Mrs. Clery asked about how the students would be

placed into the shows. Sue said that the cast is divided into two for the purpose of the shows. Question: Do you think that the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend in June would work better, so that it doesn't change from year to year? Sue – that would probably be better. Comment: Maybe you should start sooner so as not to interfere with other sports. Answer: That could work too. When you sign on to do a play, it is a commitment. I haven't had any problems yet. Comment: I was caught off guard by the possibility of 4 shows. Answer: We never said 4 shows to any Roosevelt parent. To have only 1 show would not be right. There is a lot of learning. Question: How long is the show? Answer: About 2 hours with an intermission. Question: Could this be done for the students during school one day? Answer: possibly. Giovanna Spinale talked about going to a play where at the end all cast members signed a board with the name of the play, etc. and had it on the stairs or something like that. Maybe we could consider something like that. Karen McCarthy – even a poster with everyone's signature. Lenore Smith - when the building was built there was a lot about not putting things on the walls. It would have to be discussed. Beth Walsh – a good auction item – maybe a cast picture or something like that. Betsey Benagh – if you want anything put on the website, I can put it on. Sue said that she sends something out every week. Betsey offered to put everything on the website to save some work and always have somewhere parents can go. During vacation Rina is going to work with some of the kids with their vocals, if they want to.

**Treasurers Report:** the only expenses this month were for the Auction. We paid the City of Melrose \$120.90 for the police detail and liquor license and there were volunteer expenses of \$220.06 for flyers; Also \$2,100 went for Winter Wonderland 2009.

**Citywide:** January there was a question about the ink cartridge recycling. Cartridge World will pick up and pay cash for the empties. We use Empties For Cash. They send Fedex labels and they send us a check. There was a little talk about Gifted and Talented. The name has been changed from Gifted and Talented to Gifted and Advanced. The Superintendent wanted it to include more children. The annual screening will be conducted. We talked about Connect Ed and about how many numbers you can be reached at. The form said please fill in all numbers and yet everyone receives the message at one number. Some get email and a call. It was said that you can have 2 numbers – one for regular numbers and another for urgent messages to the 2<sup>nd</sup> number. Apparently they are looking at sending out a clearer form. There was information about the Early Childhood Center and Kindergarten and Grade 1 open houses. There was a concern at another school that their 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are not attending E-camp with their students. The Roosevelt teachers are attending E-camp.

February meeting: There was a presentation given by the Garden Club. They are holding a forum at Memorial Hall on 3/29 on environmentally healthy lawn care and ground care. Chip Osborne is a nationally known horticulturist and it is free. We are trying to make Melrose green and that means that all open spaces are not treated with pesticides. He has worked with Marblehead and Swampscott and they have gone 100% chemical free. Karen Burnett spoke about the fact that the SPED pack would like to show the movie Including Sam. She was looking for help on how to secure a site and get the word out. Community Reading Day is March 8 and they need the PTO to have coffee and refreshments ready at 8:00. The Bridge Volunteer Appreciation is on April 30 in the evening (Thursday) a half-day. Another parent shared information about the animal control officer's blog. The Middle School PTO President is moving up to the High School next year and the co-president has stepped down and they are in need of a President for next year. The time commitment is less than elementary school. Contact Peggy Sorrentino. ECC was able to accept all Melrose students who applied and will be notified by March 30, on ECC, K and grade 1. They are trying to get the Connect Ed to a single form and eventually get it to an online form. The first time you

fill in all of the information, the second year, you make changes and then eventually online. They got it down to one piece of paper for Kindergarten and Grade 1 registration. Last thing talked about was the budget for the upcoming school year. There are no cuts but a freeze. They were not ready to talk to us about next year.

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Recognition:** Doreen Cincotta gave the update information. The committee has completed its fundraising. We raised \$3,828 between cookie dough and wreaths. We met to discuss how we are going to apportion the money. It is pretty well in keeping with what's been done for the last 4 years. We need to know that it is fine. Do you have a date yet? The hall is available on June 3. Pending Mrs. Clery's approval, June 3 is our first choice and our venue is available that day. Our guest list at the moment is uncertain. Question: Are siblings invited? Answer: No. The guest list is still loose. Food went up \$100.00. We don't know who we are using yet. We can't do anything until we know how much we have. The thing that varies a lot from year to year is if you have someone in your class who gets things done for cost or a little more than cost and then there are years that you don't. Giovanna Spinale will donate the cake. The kids are looking forward to it. It is a great day. I need approval so we can spend some money and get reimbursed.

Motion to accept budget that Doreen Cincotta has brought forth for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Recognition, seconded and passed.

Ellen O'Neill – do we want to do another Spinners fundraiser? We secured August 30. Tickets are \$10 each. They are playing the Mets' farm team. Notices will be coming home. We have only 120 tickets and the notices will be going home soon. It will be a fundraiser this year.

Motion to accept the minutes from January's meeting, seconded and passed.

Motion to adjourn, seconded and passed. Adjourned at 8:26 p.m.