

Minutes of the  
Roosevelt School PTO Meeting  
September 16, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. Board members present were Co-Presidents Beth Walsh and Kelly LeComte, Vice President Christine Richards, Treasurer Heather Keegan and Secretary Karen McCarthy.

Beth Walsh called the meeting to order. The new board introduced themselves. The mission of the new board will be to assist in the relationship between staff, families and children and to help provide a good experience for staff, students and families. PTO does a lot of fantastic work to keep the school great. We will address our mission through fundraising as well as building in recognition - "Roosevelt Rockstars" - where we will be recognizing a student, parent and staff member each month. We have a great staff and generous staff and we are happy to support them.

Our philosophy is work hard/play hard. Everyone will have a good time, while meeting our goals. Door prizes will be given out at the end of each meeting! Come help us work on creating and meeting common goals.

**Principal's Report:** Principal Clery welcomed the large crowd! Thanks for coming - shows your dedication to your school and children. Welcome to the new board. Welcome back luncheon was fantastic.

Noted that we are off to a great start this year. She is thankful to the supportive staff, wonderful children and families.

Discussion on flexible grouping - this is not really a new concept, but there will be a strong emphasis on it this year. It is essentially grouping students based on a skill strength or a skill area where a child is needing assistance, and grouping and regrouping them as skills change. There will be lots of evaluating and shifting into groups. This is being done on a small scale already. Homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping will both be used. No one type of grouping is bad, it only is bad if one type of grouping is used exclusively - this was called "tracking" in the past. In past, leveled classrooms were used and children generally stayed there throughout the years. This model was found to limit the students and may have been detrimental. So, classrooms went to "whole group". All classrooms were mixed. Problem with that is one teacher ends up with a classroom full of all different types of learners. Flexible grouping is designed to address all learning needs, but doesn't label students as part of any particular group. This is the "Best of all worlds" when done correctly - it will meet needs of all learners.

Guided reading is a current model - students are leveled based on their reading ability. Teachers address smaller guided reading groups. Groups are shuffled when children's skills change - if things are too hard or too easy, day to day or week to week these groups will be assessed, looked at and regrouped. This is happening already.

New this year - math and ELA are scheduled at each grade level at the same time of day. This will help teachers to work across grade level with groups. Gifted and talented cluster may be provided with extension activities. Regular curriculum will be given to children at the appropriate level. Another group may be working at getting foundational skills up for children who are struggling with any concepts. This will be across all classrooms, not just in one class. This model is more conducive to targeting students' needs better without labeling.

It is important to remember that this is new, so we are going to be moving at a fairly slow pace. Teachers needed to buy-in and it must be manageable for them. It is a work-in-progress. Teachers are currently coming up with a plan that works for them by grade level. This model may be used daily or less frequently, such as one time per week.

Questions from attendees:

- q. What kind of professional support has been/will be provided for teachers? - a. model started with push for G&T, but we are doing this to improve instruction to address all students. Last week, professional development was conducted for teachers, including how to identify G&T students and how to identify clusters. a lot of professional development offered over the summer was imbedded in flexible grouping, and more throughout the year will be offered.

- q. how often will the groups change? how will it be done? - a. average - weekly for groups among classrooms, daily for flexible grouping within classroom. end of unit assessments might be given first in math to determine kids' levels and what they need to know. reading has benchmarks in place teachers can use (directed reading assessment's).

- q. can math coaches be used? a. professional development has been offered in math to learn concepts beyond the curriculum. Pat Muxie purchased math materials for advanced math, as well as Ms. Clery.

- q. how, when, why are groups used? a. depends on objective of the lesson. explicit teaching of a particular skill - homogeneous grouping may be used. other skills may benefit from heterogeneous grouping.

- q. where is the time to teach if teachers are always doing assessments: a. formal assessments are only one piece, informal assessments (one-on-one interactions) are not as time intensive and very valuable.

- q. flexible grouping - will teachers not only be looking at skill level but also the type of learner they are? math/ela would be more homogeneous (but flexible) while social studies/science may be more heterogeneous.

- q. How many children in the school have been identified as gifted and talented through screening? -a. 26 total across school, as identified by screening. More children may be "gifted" but not have screened that way, but if that strength is identified by a teacher, those children will be provided the same extensions/higher curriculum.

- q. Enjoying learning is important, we should not forget that and not add stress to students and teachers. a. Feedback is encouraged. Reevaluating will happen if added stress is identified. However, the children are already fairly comfortable with a school day that is a constant flow of students in/out of classroom for sped, speech, etc.

- q. Can more things be put online? Has there been professional development for that? a. We have to take our time, that is not a priority for this year. Some teachers, like Mrs. Jones do it already, it will catch on, but it may be at a slow pace.

**Treasurer's Report:** Heather Keegan - this budget report is all activity through end of June. The treasurer transition is still happening - reports will be reconciled over the next 30 days before next month's meeting where we will be finalizing 09/10 budget. Dues will be updated on next report.

Heather Keegan made motion for to approve transfer of funds into principals' fund - \$1500 - prior to 09/10 budget being passed, at the request of Mrs. Clery, seconded and passed.

Beth Walsh made motion to accept treasurer's report, seconded and passed.

**Traffic Task Force:** Liz Foulser - the mission of the traffic task force is to promote good traffic behavior and safety. They are looking for volunteers - 2 are needed each morning at Vinton, 1 at Brunswick curb in the morning and 1 at Brunswick curb each afternoon. The shifts are short and can be flexible - 1 time per week or month, tailored to your needs and availability. A number of the current volunteers have older kids and will be leaving the school next year, so looking for new volunteers with younger kids. It is fun - you often receive positive feedback, they are short shifts, the kids and parents appreciate it! Also looking for a new coordinator to take over Liz's position next year - they would work with Kerry Clery and police, and organize volunteers.

There has been preliminary interest in a walk-to-school day. Please sign up. If pto and community is comfortable with this idea we will pursue it.

**Citywide:** Ellen O'Neill - city wide meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of every month. Representatives from every school are there. It is a great way to see if all pto's are on same page and to share ideas. The first meeting was 9/8. It is a group run by Emily Rubenstein. Emily wants to remind all volunteers that they will need to re-register for BRIDGE every year. Every 3 years volunteers need to have a new CORI check. See Bethany or Emily with your driver's license to get that completed. Call Emily at the BRIDGE to check your status.

Message from Joe Casey - the opening of schools went well, big concern right now is H1N1 - information is on Melrose Schools web site regarding this. There will be clinics in nov., vaccinations will be provided in Melrose Middle School and Wakefield. Practices of good handwashing, coughing into sleeve should be emphasized.

Technology Council is beginning. This group will be working so all staff will be coordinated. Better communication (connectEd) methods will be worked on. Also, this group will be working on reducing our carbon footprint. Technology safety will be addressed (internet safety).

Note - new Anti-idling law - \$100 ticket if you idle in a school zone.

**PAC Update** - Karen Burtnett - special ed PAC, group of parents that come together to support and provide outreach for all parents, not just those with special needs. Teachers who are good with children with special needs are often good teachers for all children. List of workshops (usually 4th Thursdays) have been set up - flyers were distributed. To get involved - come to the next meeting, contact Alaine Breen, our school rep, go to the link on our web site, fill out flyer from the beginning of the year info packet. The PAC would love to have more people involved.

**Room Parents:** Laurie Mistretta is the coordinator of room parents. She expressed thanks to all who have volunteered. This volunteer position does not take a lot of time and teachers greatly appreciate your efforts. All the tools needed for this position are online, no re-inventing the wheel needed!

q. Are there any suggestions for raising funds throughout the year?  
a. strategy might be to ask one for one lump sum (with an explanation of what that donation is for) that might cover all the parties.

**Genevieve's Fundraiser:**

Purchases can be completed online (and those are delivered directly to your house) - delivery is usually around nov. 1st. Suggestion was made that the exact time of pick-up should be specified.

Motion to approve the minutes from June meeting, seconded and passed.

Motion to adjourn, seconded and passed.

Meeting adjourned at p.m.