

Minutes of the  
PTO Meeting  
September 8, 2008

The first PTO Meeting of the 2008-09 school year was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Co-President, Susanna Zysk. Present were Co-Presidents Giovanna Spinale and Susanna Zysk, Vice President Betsey Benagh, Treasurer Kathy Nottingham, and Secretary Rosemary Rossi.

The attached Agenda was passed around to all members present. Co-President, Susanna Zysk, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the school year. She introduced the board members and Principal Kerry Clery, all sitting at the board table.

**Principal's Welcome:** Susanna welcomed Principal Clery, indicating that she would be first to speak. Mrs. Clery spoke of the good start of the year due to great students, staff and parents. She talked about some of the new initiatives from the district. All of the Melrose principals met over the summer to work on agendas so that all schools would be doing the same things thereby students in the city would receive a Melrose education rather than a Roosevelt education or Lincoln education, etc. She spoke of the Gifted and Talented Program being in the beginning stages. She indicated that everyone is very excited about the prospects of this program. The desire is for all teachers to be able to teach to all students. Mrs. Clery said that in our school specialists have changed. Kindergarten will receive gym, music, art having Art two times each week; Grades 1 and 3 will get gym, music, art, and LMS (Library Media Specialist) a position that is new to us this year. Grade 2 has gym, music, art, and health. Grade 4 has music, art, chorus, and gym; Grade 5 has art, music, gym, and Italian. Mrs. Clery announced the new staff members Beth Harrison in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. She was a student teacher in Mrs. Ingram class last year; Erin Hogan is the new 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. Ms. Hogan taught last in the Norfolk School District. Tracy Scrima is our new music teacher. Marie Nylan will be teaching Italian. There was a question from the floor as to why Italian is the foreign language. Superintendent Casey introduced himself and answered the question indicating that we worked with the Italian government to secure grant funding. Last year we brought Italian in and this year we are continuing. We are not favoring one language over another, it was a good opportunity and we took advantage of it. There was another question from the floor as to why it was started at 5<sup>th</sup> grade – why not younger? Mr. Casey answered that we were striving to get 3 years in a row so that beginning at 5<sup>th</sup> grade they can carry it into middle school. Then students could possibly begin another foreign language in high school.

Mrs. Clery indicated that the new literacy program is being implemented at Roosevelt as well as throughout the district. We have adopted Harcourt in pre-k through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. It is a structured program but allows ability to teach to all reading levels. We are moving away from a "one size fits all" to a program that allows one teacher to teach to various levels in one room. Question – The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade has had a different program each year since they started school. Will this effect the outcome? Mrs. Clery said that it would not because the skills that are mandated by the DOE (Mass. Frameworks) must be taught each year as stated in the standards. Question – which program was chosen? Harcourt Story Town. Mrs. Clery

opened up for questions from the floor. Where did you come from? I was the Assistant Principal at the Tyngsboro Elementary School. The Roosevelt feels very manageable after being at the Tyngsboro School. How many students are here? 365. Is that an increase or decrease? 379 last year with preschool. How many in Kindergarten? 41 (20 and 21) ½ 15 and 15. What about class size? Do you have a number that you try to target? 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is rather large. What do you feel about class size? Mrs. Clery said the smaller the better but that is decided at the district level. If all have 23 in their classes then we get any overage. What are the numbers for grade 3? 24 and 24. Question: What is 3 tiered? Answer: 3 teachers and 3 grades at each grade level. 1<sup>st</sup> grade 21, 22, 20. Question: someone paid for full day Kindergarten and then was reimbursed by the DOE later. Mr. Casey answered that would never happen again. ½ Kindergarten day is free and here at the Roosevelt. We do not charge the full cost of a full day program. Question: What do they get more out of the full day than the ½? Answer: More experience. Question: More specials? Answer: specials are divided in the morning and afternoon programs. When they switch in January, they will have the other specials. There were various Gifted and talented program questions. Mr. Casey answered as to how the gifted and talented program began to be looked at in the city. He explained what has been going on over the last few years in looking and implementing new curriculum. We then worked with a group of parents who were very interested in implementing a gifted and talented program. We administered the SAGES last spring to students in the city. He sent out a connect-ed message to parents of students who were tested that they would be contacted in October. Elementary level – principals created instructional blocks at each grade level so that all students in each grade are working on the same subjects at the same time. We have given the assessment through the middle school. We will tell parents what they said. We are bringing on experts to help us. We are also looking at what teacher methodologies are necessary to work with these students. We are pursuing a grant to get more funds for gifted and talented. Wakefield got a grant. Question: What grades? Answer: Kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Question: What if the student was not here last year? Answer: We will do the assessment again. Massachusetts is not a state that focuses on gifted and bright. We are moving forward. Question: What is the timeline? Answer: We will contact parents at the beginning of October. Question: When will it start, this year or next? Answer: We're moving towards the structured building of the program. Question: Why did you choose SAGES? Answer: it looks at different variables. The consultants from the State Dept. said that it was a good beginning instrument. If you have a child who was assessed and you did not get a call from me, then please call or email me and let me know. Question – how are children chosen to test? Answer: That is a voluntary piece. Parents and/or teachers put children forward. Question: why are there such differences in MCAS scores between districts? Answer: children's ability to master math and literacy. We have put a reading program and math program in place to help our students be the best learner they can be. Your child is a participant in his or her own learning. They must be actively engaged in their own learning. Read at home. Question: connect-ed, is this a common way of communicating with us? Answer: yes. We typically send out connect-ed messages at 7:00 at night. If you do not want to get the phone calls you can opt out.

Someone asked if the library was going to be handled the same way. Answer is yes. Library only on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Are read alouds done in every grade? Yes, read alouds are important at any grade level.

**Room Parent Update:** Sara Martin, the room parent coordinator for PTO spoke. She indicated that room parents are one of the most important volunteers in the school. There are 4 in Kindergarten. Notices went home on Friday. She received 15 on Friday alone. Some people get discouraged because they work and feel that they cannot go. Sara indicated that there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes, copying, emailing, etc. If you are interested and have questions, let her know. Please sign up. It is a great way to get in to the classroom to help with parties, voting day, teacher appreciation, etc. Giovanna Spinale, Co-President, said that anyone who wants to volunteer as a room parent must be CORled and must fill out a Bridge volunteer form and use their badge. Fill out a Bridge form and bring in your license. Every 3 years you must renew. Every year must renew and every 3 years must register.

Sara Martin spoke again, she indicated that Emily Rubinstein, The Bridge Coordinator, will come to a meeting with all information about those CORled, etc. Election day is next Tuesday and coverage needs to be coordinated. We do not have room parents on board yet. We are asking those who are registered and have an active CORI to ask people to cover lunch coverage for Election Day. Question: How long does a CORI take? Mr. Casey answered that it takes as short as a few days and as long as a few weeks. Question: When do you know when you are all set? Answer: Keep checking to see if your name is in the box outside of Mrs. Collins' desk. Questions about how much time is involved in being a room parent. The members gave various responses based upon their own experiences. Once room parents are chosen there will be a room parent meeting. Question: Can you bring younger siblings when volunteering? Answer: It depends upon what you are coming in for. Work it out with the teacher but depends upon what you are doing. Lunch coverage is very flexible. Emily Rubenstein will be here for open house. If you are interested, fill out a form then.

**Genevieve's Update:** Ellen O'Neill explained the Genevieve's fundraiser – gift-wrap, candles, etc. she also brought some items to show. We will be sending the envelope home on Wednesday. We will have a kickoff on Wednesday here at school. The Genevieve Booklet was passed around. Kids can get prizes and they are cumulative. Question: What is the percentage that comes back to school? Answer: 50%. Question: is there an on-line component? Answer: yes, 2184 is Roosevelt's account number for on-line. You have to pay shipping but it comes directly to your home so the kids do not have to carry it home. Last year we made \$7800.00. Ellen's contact information is on the front of the envelopes.

**Treasurer's Update:** Kathy Nottingham gave the treasurer's report. Melrose PTO We became a 501c3 organization. All PTO dues are now tax deductible. We are now an umbrella group. We kept our individual bank accounts. Kathy presented last year's budget. There were some Enrichment expenditures over the summer. Next month we will set the budget. If anyone wants any funding, please see a board member. \$25.00 for dues is now tax deductible.

**Task Force Update:** – Giovanna Spinale spoke on behalf of Liz Fousler. Giovanna went over the traffic task force rules. 7 to 10 no parking on right side of Brunswick Park. Morning drop off – loop at front of school. Drive in and parents will let kids out of your car. Children should be seated on the right hand side. No left turn coming out of drop off area. We need volunteers for Brunswick Park. 15 minutes per day. The crossing guard comes and relieves you. We also need morning volunteers. You can do it as frequently or infrequently as you like. You are able to drop your child off and he or she can wait outside. Liz Fousler will be doing the scheduling for the Task Force. There will be sheets at open house for sign up.

**Slush Update:** Betsey Benagh spoke. She restated that if you ever want to come into the classroom for any reason or want to go on field trips you need to be CORled.

We need volunteers for all events that are run. You can volunteer a little or a lot. Sign up sheets at the open house. Putting your name down is not a commitment but just says that you are interested. Contact any of us at any time. Slush Party – welcome back September 19, 5 to 7. Tables are on blacktop and it is free slush for kids. We need people to scoop, setup and clean up.

Mrs. Clery spoke about the upcoming Open House. She indicated that we staggered times for lower grades and upper grades. First grades k-2 then at 7:00 grades 3 to 5 parents.

Christine Thorsteinsson: Oct. 25 is the Halloween party. We have crafts, games, and food. We need lots of volunteers. Notices will be sent out next week.

Doreen Cincotta: The Roosevelt directory is a phone book of all families in the school. We do not list you if you do not want to be listed. There are class lists at the beginning of the directory for every grade. PTO packet went home last week. Forms are due back Friday. The directory usually comes out late Sept. early Oct. Directory is for use by families to set up playdates, call other students, etc. It is not to be used for business solicitations, only for school related items. Comment from the floor: It would be helpful if things could be put on the website. Giovanna Spinale said that our Webmaster stepped down. If you would like to be Webmaster, please let us know.

Directory forms – it s OK to send them back without a check. We need information for the directory. The Directory is invaluable. You receive one directory per family.

Enrichment update: Anne Moore was unable to attend. The first enrichment is scheduled for Wed. Sept. 17. It is an Anti-bullying and Teambuilding activity. Anne is looking for a committee of volunteers to be an enrichment committee. Please contact her if you are interested in helping out.

Roller World – family night at Roller World \$5 per person to skate. Bring your own skates or this covers rental of skates. It is an extra \$3 to rent in-line skates. The date is 11/19. The

night is only for Roosevelt families. Everyone is welcome. It is 6 to 8 p.m. They have chicken fingers and other food items. Carla McAree will coordinate.

Liz Peart 5<sup>th</sup> grade – Coffee Pond yearbook. We switched photographers. Class pictures will be taken on picture day. Outdoor pictures will be taken. If they are not able to take them outside they have great backdrops. We could not do a yearbook with them last year because of the time of year it was when we listed with them. They have been in touch this year so we can begin. Traditionally, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade has done a yearbook for just the class. What Coffee Pond can do for us is just a 5<sup>th</sup> grade yearbook or an entire schoolbook featuring the 5<sup>th</sup> grade or just an entire schoolbook. We do not yet know what the 5<sup>th</sup> grade wants to do, but the PTO should decide what it wants to do. The cost for an 80-page yearbook (put together by parent volunteers, using Coffee Pond software) is \$25 to 30 depending on how many are sold. Smaller books just for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade would be about 24 pages for about \$20.00. Last year the yearbook we put together cost about \$23 for 70 pages. We did not charge parents we raised money. It is open up for discussion as to whether parents want to pay for a school yearbook. We would need to get volunteers from each grade level to put a yearbook together. It has become a tradition for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade to have its own yearbook. There are no pictures of anyone else in their yearbook. There is a whole page dedicated to them.

Motion made for 5<sup>th</sup> grade to keep its own yearbook. Seconded and passed.

Motion to accept June Minutes. Seconded and passed.

Principal Kerry Clery spoke to the members present thanking everyone for coming and telling them that her door is always open.

Motion to adjourn. Seconded and passed. Adjourned at 8:55.