

January 2010 PTSA Meeting

The January meeting was called to order at 9:45. In attendance were: Kim Breda, Jean Tompkins, Lauri Harder, Candy Wood, Reghan Diaz, Stephanie Belleveau, Jen Wastrom, Pam Robey, Jennifer Bodurtha, Julie Gorman, Cathy Gombos, Alice Smith, Joan Winter and Colleen Joyce. From the Administration and Staff: Mr. Tom McMorran, Ms. Anne Kipp, Ms. Mary Ann Sheehy, Mr. Henry Delangelo, Mr. Paul Hamlin, Mrs. Mary Atkinson and Ms. Gina Pin.

Kim began the meeting by introducing our first guests for the morning, two of the new Region 9 BOE members, Mr. Leon Karvelis and Dr. William Baker. Each gentleman shared information about his background/personal history and what he plans to focus on for the year in his new role on the BOE. Everyone attending the meeting introduced themselves. The group was able to ask specific questions of both guests. Questions concerned the status of the practice fields, communication about BOE issues, and "middle kids" (academically speaking). Mr. Karvelis and Dr. Baker were very receptive to our questions and ideas.

HEAD OF SCHOOL REPORT

Mr. Tom McMorran started the business portion of the meeting at 10:30 with his report. Monday January 25th will be a staff day if we don't get any more snow days off before then. He spoke briefly about the "Senior Synthesis" paper and was very pleased with the fact that the vast majority of seniors were able to complete and hand in the paper on time. He also spoke about the junior class students working on their "Writing Portfolio" which is a graduation requirement, and is due on January 26th. The sophomore class is working on their "Speak-Outs." Mr. McMorran also reported that the incidence of H1N1 flu in the school has been diminishing.

Minutes of the December meeting were approved. (Belleveau/Breda).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Staff Luncheon: Wednesday, January 20th is the date for the winter staff luncheon. Steph Belleveau said that they are in really good shape. They will be using O'Neill's as the caterers and the menu is set. They will be sending out reminders/thank yous next week. Steph and co-chair Candy Wood asked the staff attending the PTSA meeting for any new ideas or suggestions and it was brought up that it may be a good idea to put PTSA Membership Forms (specific for teachers) on a table during the luncheon. Also, that a vegetarian entrée should be included in the lunch selections.

Reflections: The deadline for submissions was last Wednesday, January 6. No updates at this time.

FOCUS: The deadline for the next FOCUS is January 22nd and it will be published on or about January 29th. Kim reported on Diane's behalf that Diane would be happy to get any photos and school news for the next issue. A question was raised about printing an article about Jean M. Tompkins' passing in the FOCUS with info as to where to send money in her memory. The group decided against that idea because such information was readily available elsewhere. We discussed ideas of donations in her memory, and Tom McMorran suggested we purchase a bench for the courtyard. Kim will check into the price, as well as other ideas, and we will discuss further at the next meeting.

At 11:00 am we took a break from our business meeting to allow Mr. Tom McMorran to introduce our next guest, Dr. Michael Cicchetti, our new district superintendent. Dr. Cicchetti shared his background with us and gave us an overview of his priorities and a list of issues he feels are important to support. He said, at this early time in his tenure, he is "in learning mode". He is relying on the administrators while he is trying to learn the history and culture of the schools in Region 9. He is very impressed so far with our community and the schools and has attended many different meetings with various groups and is also looking forward to getting into the classrooms to "watch the students learn." We introduced ourselves and he was very responsive to the various concerns presented. We then had some photos taken by Jen Wastrom for Focus and local newspapers.

Arts Foundation: Kim reported that the Troupe de Jour event at the Redding Community Center on January 9th was a big success and the proceeds from the performance will go to PTSA Arts Foundation projects. Under consideration is the replacement of the auditorium piano, or perhaps a new sound system in the theater.

Mini- Grants: Colleen reported for Reghan that a mini-grant request was received from Julie Givoni for \$250 for a portable microphone system for the Music Department, specifically for use during the monthly Coffee Houses. It was suggested that we research this a little and see if we can find a system that can be shared by several groups since others have also showed an interest in this. Kim will look into this and report back at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Kim said that a PTSA "Calendar of Events" is now online on the JBHS website.

Colleen Joyce gave a review of the "Gap Year" presentation that she organized and was held at the Mark Twain Library the evening of January 7. This was the first event in a series (sponsored by the PTSA) on the topic of "Alternatives to 4 Year College". She said that it was very well attended and they may present it again, perhaps in Easton. Ian Cieplik of the Multi-Media center was phenomenal in helping provide video support. We hope to be able to make the recording available through the Barlow web-site.

TOPIC, COMMENTARY, QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

A discussion was started on the topic of guidance counselor feedback and how the process of the student making his/her class schedule is intended to go. Do the counselors get to know the students and suggest classes that would interest them? Are the parents supposed to be involved? Do we take college into consideration while making the schedule? Perhaps we should bring up this topic for a PTSA meeting in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55.

The next meeting will take place February 9th from 9:30-11am. The Guidance Department will present "Alternatives to 4 Year College."

Respectfully submitted,

Lauri Harder
Recording Secretary