

Southeast PTO Meeting

November 1, 2010

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Attending: Julie Brown, Erin Ballou, Andrea Lennon, Kimberly Clark, Cyndi Wells, Diane Hutton, Jessica Higham, Margherita Balsamo, Michael Kelly, Suzanne Kelly, Karen Mitlitsky, Maryann Olson, Norma Fisher-Doiron, Laura Corsini, Celine Demers-Schiffler, Michele Boskovic, Patty Braithwaite, Silvia Dorado

New Items:

Patty Braithwaite – started the PTO meeting off on a discussion about nutrition at Southeast School. She explained that the school is now doing a “Thinking Thursday” day where a child can purchase a ticket for 50 cents and buy a healthy item from the a la carte table. She mentioned that she has a flyer and there is also a paragraph in the school’s handbook describing this to parents. She then opened the floor looking for questions to ask the Board of Education because they are going to have a meeting on school nutrition.

Julie Brown – believed that having events like the ice cream social and telling parents to have non-food celebrations may confuse the school nutrition issue. She believed that the school should choose to either allow unhealthy options to continue or eliminate all unhealthy food events.

Suzanne Kelly – thought that non-food celebrations became a rule last year. It was explained that currently it has only been a suggestion and currently there is no official rule on this.

Jessica Higham – already sent a letter as a suggestion to the Board of Education asking if they would allow the children to pour their own beverage if the child chose the white milk option at school lunch. She believes this would give the children incentive to choose the healthier option. She has been told that removing flavored milk as a choice from school lunch would be a loss of revenue. Jess believed adding gluten or dairy free options would help with donations and boost revenue because people who have food allergies would start purchasing school lunches. She then mentioned that parents can e-mail any questions or comments on nutrition to the Board of Education.

Patty Braithwaite – stated that parents can e-mail her with any questions or comments they would like her to bring to Board of Education meeting.

Norma Fisher-Doiron – Stated that they have treats for the ‘Moving On’ ceremony and many parents would not want these treats to be banned from the school. Norma mentioned that they also offer fruits and cheeses for this ceremony. Norma stated that some parents have complained to her about being limited on food options they can bring for their child’s celebration at school.

Diane Hutton – believed that eliminating treats from the yearly international potluck would be very difficult as some of the foreign dishes are sweets.

Patty Braithwaite – mentioned that once her daughter’s classroom had several cupcake celebrations and her daughter didn’t eat lunch for three days. She was concerned that no one told her that cupcakes were going to be served on these days.

Norma Fisher-Doiron – mentioned the political side of banning treats from schools, explaining that some parents believe the school should not enforce to them the school’s beliefs.

Diane Hutton – explained that many parents think “what is one cupcake” but it is not just one cupcake. They are not thinking about each of the students doing the same thing and other parents thinking the same way.

Kimberly Clarke – stated that this topic has been discussed often in the past and unless the school is going to make this a policy it won’t change parent’s behavior.

Margherita Balsemo – stated that getting the kids to understand not to bring unhealthy food to school will stop parents from having their children bring unhealthy food to school.

Jessica Higham – explained that yes telling parents not to bring snacks like this to school might offend a family but bringing unhealthy snacks to school might offend some families as well.

Patty Braithwaite – mentioned that parents could bring in t-shirts for celebrations as an alternative

Suzanne Kelly – stated that not all families can afford t-shirts for the class but maybe the school could make an announcement over the speaker in the morning to celebrate the child’s birthday as an alternative to sweets.

Kimberly Clark - asked the PTO if we should participate in the ‘adopt a family’ program this year and if we should only choose families from Mansfield or just work with WAIM as we have done in the past. Kimberly described to the PTO how the program was done last year and that it was successful. The PTO decided to choose 3 families from Mansfield and 2 from WAIM.

Norma Fisher-Doiron – felt that the donations should not be collected by classroom and should be done school wide.

Kimberly Clark – stated that the donations were made by grade level last year and doing it school wide would make keeping track of the donations difficult.

Julie Brown – stated that if the teachers don’t collect the donations from their students the students / parent can drop the donation at the boxes by the office.

Kimberly Clark – will fill out the application to participate in the ‘adopt a family’ program

Diane Hutton and Karen Mitlitsky – will do the bulletin board for the ‘adopt a family’ program to be displayed outside the office.

Kimberly Clark – stated she is still working on getting samples from Equal Exchange and the PTO would like to run this fundraiser the same as last year as it was fairly successful.

Andrea Lennon – stated she still needs two volunteers to take over the pie fundraiser and she is looking for a volunteer to take over the book fair.

Jessica Higham – will coordinate the book sale and Erin Ballou will sit on the day of the bake sale. Kimberly Clark will give Jess the start up money for the bake sale.

Jessica Higham – mentioned that on November 21st there is a Walk for Warmth-a-thon being held in Willimantic. She explained that it cost 20 dollars to participate in the walk and you will see parts of Willimantic that you might never have seen before.

Jessica Higham – mentioned she received a letter from a parent complaining that the parking lot during the parent pick-up is dangerous. Norma Fisher-Doiron will send another reminder to parents about the rules of picking up the students.

Mike Kelly – mentioned that the town of Mansfield is evaluating how to handle policing the town and there is a survey available on the Town of Mansfield's website.

Jess Higham – brought up of the items she would like to do differently next year for the auction and it was decided that she would set up a later meeting to discuss her list due to the time left in the PTO meeting. Some suggestions she had were to have the auction in the gymnasium rather than the Sports Bar, start gathering donations in January, don't have an admission fee, and have it the same day as the carnival.

Principal's Report:

Norma Fisher-Doiron – reported that there are now 267 students at Southeast School and they are still within class size guidelines. First grade classes right now are slightly higher than the preferred class size numbers.

President's Report:

Julie Brown – told the PTO that there will be no PTO meeting in December

Vice President's Report:

Andrea Lennon – reported that the Ice Cream Social was a big success and thanked all who helped with the event.

Julie Brown – stated she will be working on a game night at the school and it will consist of Bingo and many other board games.

Jess Higham – suggested using Twister for game night and thought the PTO should asked parents to donate games this year.

Andrea Lennon – wanted to thank Jess Higham and Karen Mitlitsky for all the hard work they did for the silent auction and she wanted the PTO to know that it was a great time.

Smartboard Discussion:

Julie Brown – stated that the school was looking for about \$4,000 from the PTO to buy a Smartboard. Cost for the Smartboard does include the installation cost but this is only an estimate. They need Smartboards for the Music classroom, Art classroom, and kindergarten class.

Kimberly Clark – suggested buying two Smartboards for the school.

Andrea Lennon motioned to buy two Smartboards and Kimberly Clark seconded the motion.

Mike Kelly motioned to accept Treasury's report and Julie Brown seconded it.

Jess Higham motioned to accept the meeting minutes from last meeting and Margherita Balsamo seconded the motion

8:55 pm the PTO meeting adjourned