

PTA General Meeting Notes
May 9, 2013
Mantua Elementary School

The president called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

Present at the meeting were:

Executive Board: Lesley Kowalski, Teresa LeMair, Carolyn Stephen, Shannon Murphy, Julie Middleton

School Representatives: Jan-Marie Fernandez, Tina Tingler, Amy Alley

General Membership: Amy Halstead, Nicole Armstrong, John Nicholas, Janet Sottolano, Wendi Mays, Karen Gaughn, Margaret Scheele

Passed the minutes

President's Report: I wanted to take the time to thank our volunteer webmasters, Nicole Armstrong and John- Nicholas. They deserve to be publicly thanked for the time and effort they have put in to the Mantua PTA website. They are also the recipients of my monthly FUNGI award.

The Mantua/Camelot Faculty Basketball game was great. There was tremendous support from the community. Winning the game was just the icing on the cake for Mantua.

I wanted to express my sympathy to the Griffith family. During this difficult time our thoughts and prayers are with them.

The PTA is looking for Auction & Carnival Chairs for next year- these are our two biggest fundraisers of the year. Mrs. Fernandez has also suggested the PTA try the Laps for Learning fundraiser that many local schools here. Also, in case you are interested, Colvin Run Mill is in a contest to win preservation money. If you are a baseball fan, there is a PTA event with the Nationals in July. It's very popular and sells out fast.

And finally, I wanted to say thank you to my fellow board members Jennifer Epley, Teresa Lemair, Carolyn Stephen, Shannon Murphy and Julie Middleton. Lesley read a nice poem that she composed to the Board.

Treasurer's Report (Carolyn Stephen): We are getting close to the end of the year and we still have some programs that will be spending money. We spent slightly more spent on the PTA directory than planned. So far, we have made \$1600 from Amazon. We are hoping to get new basketball backboards bought before the end of the year. We still have the 6th Grade party to hold and we have the Spring after-school

enrichment program expenses. Despite the fact that we still have expenses, I still anticipate net income that can be used to purchase items from the Principal's wish list.

Potential PTA Donations List:

1. Distance Learning Center (GMM) Renovation (these expenses are part of a larger renovation of the GMM room)
 - ≡ Teleconference system- \$6,720
 - ≡ Professional Digital Switcher (infrastructure)- \$16,000
 - ≡ Video Stand- \$1,500
 - ≡ Smartboard with LCD built in - \$5,698
 - ≡ Cameras- \$8,000
2. 2 Document cameras for the 4th grade- \$500 each
3. Additional Books for the Mantua Reading Specialist- \$360
4. Fit Desks (stationary bike with a desk attached to be used for students who need movement while they are learning)- 250-\$300 per bike.

Principals' Report: We had a very nice Literacy/Heritage night a few weeks ago. On that same night, Ms. Tingler accepted an education award for Mantua from the state. Thank you for the wonderful gifts for our administrative assistants. Participation in our Family Fitness night was small, but the participants were enthusiastic. We have purchased new fitness equipment such as weights and bands. The Teacher Appreciation Luncheon was great, as usual.

Members of the Mantua faculty attended the Brain and Learning conference. There were many wonderful speakers. The research presented reinforced the concept of play in the early years and the importance of movement in learning. There was also research presented about executive functioning, ADHD and anxiety. There is a lot of concern about the amount of testing that kids have to take and the high level of scheduling by schools and parents. These things are resulting in a high level of stress and anxiety among kids. Another exciting area of research is the use of exercise in learning. We are very interested in purchasing something called a Fit Desk for the school. The Fit Desk is basically a stationary bike with a desk. We have been discussing purchasing the desks with the distributor. We can buy them through Amazon. They are also finding that early math skills help kids learn how to read. The research is showing that understanding patterning and early math skills (visual and spatial skills) helps with language arts.

We have a lot of activities coming up: Band Concert, Teacher Appreciation Week, Raccoon Run, Spring Choral Concert (please see agenda for dates). Also the 5th grade is doing a work on Global Awareness. We have the Agnes Meyer Nominee Award on May 29th (Ms. Grice)

Mrs. Sottolano mentioned that the 5th grade went to Hemlock Overlook for a field trip. She said that it was an amazing experience for all of the kids. She feels that there wasn't one kid that didn't grow from the experience.

On May 15th, Mrs. McCabe will be hosting a session on Foundations and why we use it for language arts in the early grades.

I wanted to announce that Dr. Dale, the current superintendent, is in the hospital. He had an Aortic Aneurism, requiring emergency surgery. It's very fortunate that he survived. He will likely recover over the next few months.

I have continued to hear many wonderful things about Dr. Garza. She is very personable. For example, she has already sent handwritten notes to educators in the county who have received awards.

Ms. Ally announced that SOL testing starts Monday. If kids are absent, we'll make up tests that they miss. All tests will be taken in the morning and kids have as much time as they need to take them. The science and social studies tests are on Mondays because they are quicker to finish. The administration is looking at reducing the testing for next year.

Ms. Tingler mentioned that it was nice to represent Mantua at the education awards ceremony.

Report of First Vice-President for Programs (Teresa LeMair): Enrichment programs going well for the Spring. Next year, registration is expected to be online. We are going to be soliciting feedback- good and bad about classes. The kindergarten orientation materials are now online and Parent Resource Library is up and running. Monica Cameron is working to spend the remaining funds for the library.

We still have a number of open positions that need volunteers such as the Parent Education and Flex Foreign Language coordinators.

I'm getting ready to send out an email for Field Day regarding the need for volunteers for open shifts. The 6th Grade award ceremony is in the morning on Friday, June 14th and the party is in the afternoon. Amy Halstead mentioned that the 6th Grade t-shirts look nice. Type to Learn program will be available next week. It will go home in the Tuesday folder.

Report of Second Vice-President for Fundraising (Jennifer Epley): In Jennifer's place, Lesley announced that due to our successful fundraising efforts we will have some extra funds to provide to the school for specific items. We have provided you with a list of items we are considering donating to the school. Other wish list items- need to know by May 31st – in order to get it ready for the June 7th meeting

Old Business: none

New Business:

If you would like to vote in next month's election of the PTA board, you need to be a paid member. If you would still like to be a member for the 2012-2013 year, you need to pay by May 17th. We have to provide the state PTA organization with a list of our members by June 1st.

List of Nominees:

President: Jennifer Epley

First Vice President of Programs:

1. Laszlo Pentek
2. Teresa Willebeek-Lemair

Second Vice President for Fundraising and Membership: Meri Farling

Treasurer: Carolyn Stephan

Secretary: Julie Middleton

Teresa asked Mrs. Fernandez how many Fit Desks do you need/want? Mrs. Fernandez responded that, theoretically, we would like to have a few bikes in the back of the classroom and kids would cycle when they need movement. We are planning to buy one with school funds. A lot of kids like to stand when they work and we are looking into standing desks. Another idea is to have stationary bikes in the classrooms without the desks. Perhaps there are people in the neighborhood who would want to donate their bikes to the school. Let's not make kids who have high energy become a discipline issue- have them get their energy out before they become a discipline issue. We are just trying to think of creative ideas for dealing with kids with high energy issues.

The links between exercise and brain development are undisputable and it's important that we stay current with the research. Exercise keeps anxiety down—it's better than drugs. I am happy to do a parent presentation in the Fall on these issues.

Mrs. Fernandez mentioned that there are presentations from the science club on display in the library. The children in the club made presentations to the administration about their projects.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM