

Minutes – PTO Meeting  
February 2, 2015, 6:30 p.m.  
Manhattan Middle School Library

Those in attendance: Kari Albright, Libby Black, Jennifer Dingman, Trina Faatz, Loli Hudson, Meena Keuer, Peggy Livingston, Michele Marshall, John Riggs, Stephanie Spencer, Karen Urbanowski, Deana Zimenoff, and Jamie Zimenoff.

**I. Welcome: Michele Marshall**

Michele reported the following:

- We had a wonderful winter social on January 27<sup>th</sup>. We are planning to reward the 360s who worked on the event with an ice cream social on Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>.
- We are getting an African dancing and drumming club. Ms. Corson and her husband are starting it. The group will start meeting as soon as his background clearance goes through. On March 5<sup>th</sup> there will be a dinner at California Pizza Kitchen, including a performance at 6 p.m., to raise funds for the club.
- We raised \$31,600 through the Magic Phoenix campaign and have distributed \$28,840 to teachers.
- We received \$10,199.40 from the Whole Foods bag credit program. We will need to figure out the best way to spend this money.

**II. Spring Art Event: Meena Keuer**

Meena has started a committee to look into holding a fundraising event, probably in the spring. She is proposing of something like the big spring fiesta that she previously organized for University Hill Elementary School. We discussed various ideas: having performances by African and Aztec dancers; inviting the neighborhood; setting it up like a carnival; having a jumpy slide or water slide; having a silent auction, possibly with parents acquiring the items to be sold, as they did for the Uni Hill event; having a raffle, with prizes that would possibly include opportunities for outings with teachers (to the extent middle schoolers would go for this); selling tickets; and inviting someone to teach participatory folk dancing. Meena also will talk to Mr. Johnson about music at this event, especially because this year there is no music palooza planned.

The group did not set a firm date. Some suggested having it at least two weeks before the end of school, so as not to interfere with finals. Others suggesting having it in the fall, when the weather may be more predictable; even though it would tie in nicely with Cinco de Mayo, that time of year has been rainy. We will likely have the event in the open area south of the school, with the option of going inside if the weather gets bad.

### **III. Principal's Report: John Riggs**

Mr. Riggs thanked the PTO for the wonderful winter social.

The on-line signup for the February 19<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> parent-teacher conferences started on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Thus far, 562 conferences had been set up, out of over 2,000 available slots. All teachers have some meeting time remaining.

February 3<sup>rd</sup> is the deadline for spending Magic Phoenix money. Some teachers are getting extensions. All money will likely be spent by March 1<sup>st</sup>. A lot of technology has come to the building as a result of the Magic Phoenix funding, and the teachers are excited about this. This year the funding structure has changed. Schools are no longer required to provide a certain portion of their funds to other schools with less money. Previously, Manhattan has been on the receiving end of funds from this arrangement.

Some parents pointed out that the school website no longer showed all staff members, and Mr. Riggs's office is looking into this.

A parent climate survey has been mailed out to Manhattan families. This is a yearly survey.

In answer to a question about how often parents choose not to have their children take the PARCC/TCAP/CSAP test, Mr. Riggs said that the District has had an opt-out procedure in the past. This year, if parents do not want their children to take the test, the parents will need to pick up the students from the school while the test is being administered. Because the test is being given on block days (Wednesdays and Thursdays) during the class time for the particular test, this means withdrawing the student for a portion of a day. Therefore, due to a variety of factors, this year it will be more difficult for students not to take the test. Parents have a right to take their children out of school a certain number of days per year, and after that number of days have passed, they need to present documentation explaining the absence. If students have not been absent for other reasons, missing the PARCC tests will probably not cause them to go over this threshold.

## **V. Teachers' Report: Libby Black, Stephanie Spencer and Meghan McCracken**

There was some discussion of using Magic Phoenix money for stand-up desks, because they help some students concentrate. Ms. Spencer said that her students are very happy with the books that the Magic Phoenix funded for her room. The boys are especially happy with the books about football.

## **VI. Treasurer's Report: Erica Johnson**

Erica was not present. Michele distributed Erica's report. Those expenses in lighter print are future expenses. The handout with the heading "MMS PTO Treasurers Report" should say "Monthly Report February 2, 2015," not "Monthly Report January 12, 2015" in the second line just under the heading.

## **VII. Field Trip Update: Michele Marshall**

Michele said that we have designated about \$3,000 from the Magic Phoenix receipts for field trips. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade is going on a ski trip on March 30<sup>th</sup>, which is the first day after spring break. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade is going on a trip to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science on February 9<sup>th</sup>. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade may take a trip on March 30<sup>th</sup> to the Fiske Planetarium and somewhere else. For the remaining time, the students may be taken on a tour of the University of Colorado campus. Later in the day on March 30<sup>th</sup>, the Boulder Film Festival may be showing a movie at Manhattan. It is called Far From Home, and it is about skateboarding in Uganda.

## **VIII. Committee Reports**

### **A. Trip Tracker - Trina Faatz**

Trina said that Trip Tracker money will be distributed on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Next year, some schools will be eliminated from this program, because the sponsor lost funding. Manhattan is one of the schools with the largest participation.

### **B. Parent Engagement Network (PEN) - Trina**

We have another PEN presentation this school year at Manhattan. It will be about body image. The earlier one was about natural highs (without drugs). The body image presentation will be on Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. The speaker will be a former middle school teacher named Brooke Lindquist, who now has a private practice treating body image problems and eating disorders.

Today the 8<sup>th</sup> graders saw a play called Voices Out of Silence, as part of the suicide prevention portion of their health class curriculum. PEN has done presentations on this subject, as well. There are some pretty alarming statistics. For instance, 13% of BVSD students have attempted suicide. We need to look at feelings of depression and hopelessness as treatable and make sure kids feeling depressed do not feel isolated.

## **IX. Other Comments or Questions –open time for anyone**

### **A. Garden**

Jennifer suggested revamping the garden near the tennis courts. It would cost less than \$100 per bed to install 4 feet-by-8-feet raised beds made of cedar. There is already some irrigation that another parent put in. Some other Manhattan parents are landscapers. The District may have money for school gardens. We may look into asking parents to sign up for time periods over the summer to harvest and/or maintain the garden. This has happened in the past, but not over the last two years. Barb Hoyt, our former treasurer, has worked on the garden in the past.

### **B. Community Volunteering**

Jamie said that he had talked to Open Space and Mountain Parks about the possibility of students volunteering. Most of their volunteers are adults. Libby will ask the 8<sup>th</sup> grade team if people would be interested in volunteering for OSMP and/or a project such as “adopting” a creek segment.

## **X. Upcoming Events**

February ? Community Dinner @ ? for Art Field Trip to New York  
February 9<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> grade field trip to Denver Museum of Nature and Science  
February 10<sup>th</sup> – Parent/Teacher Conferences – PTO sponsored dinner  
February 13<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> – No School  
February 19<sup>th</sup> – Parent/Teacher Conferences – PTO coordinates the meal  
February 24<sup>th</sup> – Parent/Teacher Conferences – PTO coordinates the meal  
March 5<sup>th</sup> Community Dinner at California Pizza Kitchen for Manhattan’s Newest Club  
West African Drumming and Dance  
March 10<sup>th</sup> – Orchestra & Choir Concert  
March 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> – School Musical  
March 30<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Trip to Eldora  
March 30<sup>th</sup> – Proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Trip

Next scheduled PTO meeting: Monday, March 2nd, 6:30-8 pm in MMS library