

**MADISON MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**PTA Meeting Minutes (not yet approved)**  
**Nov. 8, 2006**

**In attendance:** Valerie Forshaw, Peter Sullivan, Kate Donahue, Cindy Katske, Regina Dougherty, Theresa Bulan, Susan Gilson, Judie Galaty, Naila Haroon, Lori Hayes-O'Brien, Linda Bartolucci, Jill Ellen, Diane Pikikero, Rachelle Rousso, Monica Welch, Michelle Keckler, Lynn Cammarota.

**Meeting Called to Order** at 7:38 pm.

**Secretary's Report:** Motion made by Lynn Cammarota to dispense with reading of minutes, seconded by Diane Pikikero, unanimously accepted. No changes or omissions. Sept. Minutes were approved unanimously. Minutes are available on Madison Middle School website. Thank you email was read from Tracey Marble, winner of iPod.

**Principal's Report:** Mrs. Forshaw

- **Health Nights** – very well organized. Children were well informed. Thanks to Bob Schmidt for the internet safety portion of the program which was given to the parents while the children were free to ask questions of the doctor.
- **Career Night** – more than 30 presenters – **ALL 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS WHO ATTENDED SCHOOL THAT DAY ATTENDED CAREER NIGHT!!! INCREDIBLE!!** If anyone knows a pilot for next year, let us know
- **Halloween Dances** – need to address emotional and social parts of children's lives. > 30 teachers participated & about 500 students. Says a lot about a school when kids want to be here at after school events.
- **Conferences** - next week & Parent Visitation Day. Judie Galaty said we still need volunteers to work the sign-in desk. Class lists will be given to those monitoring the door to ensure adults are coming to visit a bona fide student. Another email will be sent out for volunteers.
- **Vets Day** - full assemblies planned –West Point graduate and helicopter pilot, Bob Kokorda , who served in Haiti, Bosnia and Serbia will speak at all the assemblies.
- **MIX IT UP DAY – Nov 21** lunch time kids sit with other kids they don't know by grade level. Initiative begun by students, presented by the students to the principal and student council via a video which was shown tonight. Plan has 6 steps: Survey; Newsletter; Publicize; Set Up; Lunches with color coded stickers; Evaluation with another survey to see how it was experienced by the kids and whether or not it was of value. Will be used to asses whether or not to do again next year. Students Riana Odin, Ariana Speridakos and Grace Donahue are to be congratulated on such a well planned initiative!
- **Pig Race – Nov 22** 11:15 to Noon
- **Parent Pick Up Parking** – Still dangerous. Today raining and students running. Someone is going to get hurt. Parents need to park in spaces and not idle their cars in middle of lots waiting for their children. Several ideas were tossed around:

1. putting up “horses”,
  2. making a “Right of Way” walkway for the children to use;
  3. having children wait until buses leave to cross to the parking areas;
  4. Having parents park and come up to school to get their child.
- Nothing final was decided.

**Assistant Principal’s Report:** Peter Sullivan

Working on Budget Requests and Needs which fall into following categories:

- **Staffing Needs:** Support; Speech & Language clinician; School Psychologist especially since next years projection of special education needs is increasing. Last year cuts were made in staff in these areas. Our school psychologist has largest case load in the district. Also have need for Intervention Counselor to address any students not identified with needs so they don’t fall through the cracks. We need to be proactive. Also need staff to address school’s commitment to goal of having every 6<sup>th</sup> grader involved in at least one after school activity/club. Valerie Forshaw emphasized that the social and emotional needs of the students are just as important as academics in producing a well rounded individual. Children need to develop interpersonal decision making skills to avoid risk-taking behaviors at this age and in HS. Kids are most vulnerable in Middle School.
- **Facilities:** Bleachers – money was allocated but work not done yet; Sewing Room in dire need of revamping. Roof leaks over Media Center; windows old, drafty, no caulking or insulation. Electricity is at its max. Can’t add more load which means can’t complete or add more white boards or any other technology for that matter. Band Risers in bad shape. Electro-magnetic doors dangerous – kids pushing on them in wrong directions. Mrs. Forshaw pointed out the “As New Renovations” taking place at the HS which was built in 1972 which were a dire necessity. However, the Middle Schools need to be addressed also since they were built in the 1960s. A question came up as to whether or not we need to have separate bonding for the electricity issue.
- **Textbooks:** Science curriculum rewritten over summer. Need to be aligned with CMT and new curriculum at the High School. Teachers have been copying chapters from the books for the students. World Language Spanish and Algebra programs also reworked and need to phase in new text books. Language Arts books are very expensive. Robbie Weiner has identified set of books which are excellent but prohibitively expensive.

Cindy Katske reported that she spoke to Bob Schmidt who can no longer keep his commitment to be a rep at PTA meetings. He has other commitments on Wednesdays and regrets that he can no longer continue in this capacity. He asked Cindy to express his gratitude to the PTA for their help with Career Night.

The PTA wants to extend their **HEARTFELT THANKS** to Mr. Schmidt for his **many years of tireless devotion and attendance at PTA meetings.** We completely understand being pulled in different directions; we appreciate all that he has done for the PTA and we wish him well in all his future endeavors. Best Wishes and Many Thanks Mr. Schmidt!!!

**Treasurer's Report:** Theresa Bulan reported that as of 10/31/2006:

Checking Account:	\$54,146.45
Dedicated Savings:	\$5,928.78
Reserve Savings:	<u>\$2,580.56</u>
Total Accounts:	\$62,655.79

Linda Bartolucci moved to transfer \$250 from School Agendas to Gifts to School to be used for Stickers for Mix It Up day, seconded by Jill Ellen, unanimously approved.

**Committee Reports:**

**Membership:** Currently 281 Members. Cindy Katske reminded all committee chairs, members that they should sign up for membership if they haven't already done so.

**Magazine Drive:** Lynn Cammarota reported that we received \$50,571 with a couple of bounced checks. Money from books not in yet; Internet sales should be higher than last year. Cost of prizes is about \$500 less than last year.

**School Apparel:** Virginia Green not here. Parents are asking when the orders will be delivered. This info will be obtained and sent out through the email network.

**Giveback Program:** Theresa Bulan reported that we received a check for \$157.25 for the cell phones and ink cartridges.

**Publicity:** Awesome, large photo in Neighbor to Neighbor section of CT Post. Bulletin boards continue to fascinate kids who continuously pause and peruse the ever changing coverage of school events. Judie Galaty reported that newspapers require JPEG files or prints on Glossy Photo Paper.

**School Beautification:** Kathy Pekera not present but reported by Kate Donahue that Kathy is working with dad Tim Coughlin, a landscape engineer, who is working on a plan and will be contacting the Father's Club for possible help and the PTA for funds. We will look into policy about posting a sign with landscaper/business name if they donate their services/products to the school. Don't think this is allowed but will double check.

**TPSLD:** Mrs. Forshaw reported that Dr. Angelo Vespe, Director of Pupil Services & Special Ed Services, visited Madison to talk and see what needs are. She said she was very impressed as this had never been done before.

Monica Welch reported that two workshops have already been held:

Oct 12 Promoting Self-Advocacy and

Oct 26 "It's So Hard to Be Your Friend" – Social & Emotional Needs of Children

Oct. 12 a former Trumbull TPSLD HS Graduate now in college read a poem he wrote about his experiences which was extremely moving especially to the children who attended the workshop.

Many future meetings are planned and details will be distributed through the email network closer to each workshop. However, you can mark your calendars now for:

- Thursday, November 9: "Path to Diagnosis & Eligibility for Services"
- Thursday, December 7: (snow date: December 14) "Understanding Testing"
- Thursday, January 4: (snow date: January 11) "Differentiation and Inclusion"
- Thursday, January 18: (snow date: January 25) "Related Services and Accommodations"
- Thursday, February 8: (snow date: February 15) "Transitions: Elementary / Middle / High School / Post High School"(Four Workshops)
- Thursday, March 8: "IEP & PPT Planning"
- Thursday, April 26: "Summer Options for Children with Special Needs"

All are welcome to attend. Meetings will be held in the **Administration Building on Main Street or at Frenchtown at 7 p.m.** Please be aware that the committee will try to use a building that is already open so as to avoid having to pay maintenance staff OT to stay and lock up another building.

**Also being initiated: Coffee and Chat November 15, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.**

Come to this first, informal meeting hosted by TPSLD at **Long Hill Administration Building, Assembly Room** for parents of a child (children) with special needs to meet other parents/guardians who are facing the same challenges. The purpose of this informal group is to meet to discuss the unique challenges and triumphs of parenting a child with different learning needs as well as to share knowledge and resources and thereby create a network of support for ourselves and our children. To find out more about the group, please contact: Liz Selinger: [lizselinger@charter.net](mailto:lizselinger@charter.net) or Jennifer Brennan: [jib14@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jib14@sbcglobal.net).

Also in the works are plans to initiate a TPSLD "Above & Beyond" award for the individual who does the most to promote the work of this committee.

**Red Ribbon Week:** Val and Peter reported that the children wore red the first day of that week; crazy sock day on Friday was also very popular and there was a box in the cafeteria during lunches with alternatives to drugs.

**New Business:**

**Cultural Celebration Committee:** Naila Haroon is chairing this committee and looking for help and ideas. This is a town-wide initiative to help overcome boundaries through education. A flyer will be at the doors on Nov. 15 Parent Visitation Day asking for help. Naila has some ideas about featuring a "Country of the Month" and putting together a display case with clothing, money, artifacts, flags, etc. from the featured country. Susan Gilson said this was attempted at Middlebrook but that doing this once a month was too intense. The children didn't have enough time to absorb the information and the committee was overworked trying to organize so many countries. She suggested doing one country per quarter. She also reported that common words or phrases from that country such as "Good Morning, Hello, How Are You", etc. were included in the daily announcements. Linda Bartolucci suggested we bring the

information down to the kids level by perhaps including what a middle school child's day is like in that country (in some countries, the kids go home for a nap). She thought things like this would capture the children's interest and motivate them to learn more. Naila is open to any and all ideas and suggestions.

**UNDERAGE DRINKING for 9<sup>th</sup> Graders** – Presentation tomorrow night, Nov. 9 7:30 p.m. at the High School Gym & Auditorium. 350 freshmen signed up so far, which is not even half the enrollment. Speakers will rotate to both rooms. Panel of speakers includes: Lawyer; Police Chief; MADD rep; Dad who lost child to drugs/alcohol related death; Chris Brown the school psychologist; medical personnel working at St. Vincent's trauma. **ALL ARE WELCOME** regardless of whether or not you have a ninth grader at the HS. Unfortunately, studies have shown that Trumbull parents are not as vigilant in monitoring their children's activities. Some parents allow kids to drink in their house as long as they aren't driving. It has also been found that kids are being dropped off at Crown Theaters and not going to the movies and/or drinking inside the movie theater! New law effective Oct. 1 whereby parents can be arrested for their child's underage drinking. Presenters will offer strategies for parents and kids to avoid the pitfalls of this problem and situations that may occur. This will be covered and aired by Channel 17.

**Workshops being offered at Fairfield University:** Cindy Katske reminded us of "Parent of Adolescent Information Night" on Nov. 15 from 7-9 p.m. at Fairfield University in Fairfield CT. Choose from 1 of 3 topics: **What is my Teenager Doing on the Computer?**, **Navigating the Maze of College Financing**, **School-Based Accommodations for Adolescents with ADHD**. Parents will be asked to participate in research by completing brief, confidential questionnaires. To register for the **free workshops** contact: Dr. Christine Siegel, Assistant Professor of School Psychology, 203-254-4000 x 3125, [csiegel@mail.fairfield.edu](mailto:csiegel@mail.fairfield.edu). If you cannot attend either of these information nights but would still like to participate in the research by filling out the questionnaires, please contact Dr. Siegel as well.

**Meeting Adjourned at 9:05 PM NEXT MEETING In January 10, 2007 7:30 p.m.**

**Future PTA Meetings: March 14, 2007 and May 9, 2007**

**Important Upcoming Dates:**

- **Nov 14 Afternoon Parent Teacher Conferences**
- **Nov. 15 School Visitation Day**
- **Nov 16 Evening Parent Teacher Conferences**
- **Nov 21 Mix It Up Day**
- **Nov. 22 Pig Race**
- **Nov 28 Afternoon Parent Teacher Conferences**
- **Nov 30 Evening Parent Teacher Conferences**
- **Dec 5 Seventh & Eighth Grades Chorus Concert**
- **Dec 7 Strings Concert**
- **Dec 12 Band Concert**