



PTO Meeting Minutes September 20, 2007

1. **Call to Order** – Jenn Weese & Sarah Bender

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 pm by Sarah Bender and Jenn Weese. Jenn apologized that the meeting started late because the SIT meeting ran late, and welcomed everyone to our very first PTO meeting.

Sarah also welcomed everyone to the first Meridian PTO meeting and made the following comments: Anyone with issues or concerns is asked put those comments into the PTO Suggestion Box for review and response. The Suggestion Box is in the school lobby sitting area. The PTO can't set or change PTO or District policy, but there are certain things that the PTO can address. If something submitted is not a PTO issue, we'll get it to the right person. Sarah said that several activities that have been done in the past will be placed under the PTO umbrella and things will be more cohesive and flow into the years to come. By having all organized parent-participating activities as part of the PTO, hopefully there will be an open and comfortable environment for everyone to feel like they can get involved. We hope that all interested parents and family members can find a place to volunteer. Lots of people have been working hard over the summer in planning activities and in trying to get a foundation established. Sarah is excited to have everyone here who hasn't volunteered before. Not everything is going to go smoothly in the first year, but it's critical for parents, teachers and staff to get involved to help establish programs. There will be a lot of new things to consider and we plan to bring those items to a vote as often as possible. We're hoping to set a really good groundwork and have a good start for future years. Everyone's input is welcome.

Jenn shared that the school knows that it is a transitional year. We really are working together. Some of the money that the passive fundraisers have raised has been used for the "Principal Pizza with the Kids" program or other staff appreciation activities in the past.

Future agendas will provide opportunities to discuss how we want to allocate funds.

2. **Introductions** – Staff and PTO Officers

The following staff members were introduced: Jenn Weese-Principal, Laura Grapner, speech language, Sherry Case-4th, Linda Dowd-1st/Literacy Coordinator, Patty Toomey-student achievement and K-2 interventions for reading, and Sara Harp-Assistant Principal.

The following PTO Officers were introduced: Sarah Bender-President, Ann Ryan-Vice President, Leslie Maegley-Secretary, and Toni Masters-Treasurer.

3. **Treasurer's Report** – Toni Masters

Toni provided a Treasurer's report and shared that we do have some money, thanks to some important efforts over the summer and early this school year. One of the first small fundraisers (cowbells & hats) sold \$955, but we will have some expenses coming in, so the net is not known at this time. Regarding the Fall Festival, we have exceeded our sponsorship estimates at \$1,500 and we have received over \$3,000 in ticket sales. The office was gracious enough to loan us \$3,000 to help us with expenses so we could get started but Toni stated that she does not want to carry that debt for long and plans to reimburse the office as soon as possible. She is hoping each event will have a budget in the future and is working on a master budget. Regarding how we will spend the money raised, we will be giving the money to your children's classrooms, to specials, etc. The number one goal of fundraising is to give back to the school. We also want to host free events for students and parents. Our goal is to have excess funds that we would carry over year after year. That money might fund a special field trip or replace a computer. The plan is to propose it and then everyone would vote on it at a meeting. Until the budget is set up, we ask that if you're on a committee and you have any out of pocket spending you're planning on, that you give us a few weeks advance notice, so we can make sure we have enough money to cover it.

4. **Financial Procedures** – Toni Masters

There is a reimbursement and check request form in the PTO box in the teacher workroom. Any expenditures that are planned must be approved in advance before any money is spent – even your own money. The form is also used to request reimbursement when you have a pre-approved expenditure. Original receipts are required. Let Toni know if you have any questions in completing the form.

5. **Operating Procedures** – Sarah Bender

Sarah was a PTO president at a different school which has been helpful in establishing some baseline procedures. A lot of things have been going on over the summer and a lot of communication by email. Now that we're having regular meetings, most of the business will take place at the meeting. The meeting is the primary place where we can have discussion. As a parent of this school you and all the teachers and staff are automatically a member of the PTO. Every member has a right to vote on what we do and how we spend our money. Regarding voting, to vote you need to be here as we will not be doing proxy voting at this time. In the future, we will get the Agenda out sooner and we'll try to keep our meetings to one hour on the 3rd Thursday of the month. The only known exception is December's PTO meeting which will be the 2nd Thursday of the month due to the choir concert. There was a suggestion made that the Agenda contain a "vote icon" or check mark next to any item on the Agenda that will be voted on, so people will know what is up for vote.

Regarding communication, the staff has asked the Officers to be the primary point of contact with the Staff. This is not because the officers want to be in charge, but the staff doesn't want to be overburdened with lots of questions. Jenn recognized that because the PTO is a new endeavor and everyone is excited, there is a lot going on. Also, if you want to have any meeting or use any school space, you must complete the purple space request form. Many rooms and space have already been reserved and allocated to community groups, so it is imperative that you pre-request any space needed. Meridian is the second highest community use building in the District.

A question was asked about the structure of the Committees. Sarah explained that after initially setting up committees based on function, it seemed that some committees would be better as event-focused committees. This will allow volunteers to work on an event they're interested in instead of feeling like you have to work on a committee for an entire year. The Teacher & Staff Appreciation Committee will be the exception, but volunteers are welcome for specific events as well as on the committee. Contact is Dani Thiret, Chair. Involvement on committees is completely open to anyone who wants to get involved.

A question asked how people know how and where to help with the Father/Daughter Dance or other planned events. Information on upcoming events and contacts will be in a future PTO newsletter – probably every other month or as needed. In the future, we want to have a PTO website. We did get approval to have a bulletin board in the front, so we'll be putting things on it in the future. A suggestion was made that teachers could put a little note in their newsletters, although there was some discussion about not wanting to burden the teachers with doing PTO communication. Information was shared that if we can plan ahead with our communication, we can use the Adams 12 print-house for a lot less money than last minute copies cost. There was also discussion about emailing information vs. copying and using paper. That would be good if we had email addresses for everyone and if someone could manage the list. It was decided that we would put that on a future list of something to be discussed and scoped out.

6. **By-Law Update** – Leslie Maegley

We are working on a draft of our By-Laws and will be providing that to Jenn in October/November. Leslie stated that she has reviewed By-Laws from several other schools and has had some experience creating and updating By-Laws for other organizations. The By-Laws will be sent home in draft format and comments will be taken prior to a vote in January 2008.

7. **Committee Reports** –

- Fall Festival – Cheryl England for Suzette Fremling, Chair. Fall Festival is tomorrow. Volunteers are still needed to help run the booths. It's going to be really fun and it should be a blast for the kids. Heather Johnson talked about the various games and the prize structure. Rather than give out little trinkets, we'll be giving out redemption tickets and we'll have a general store, Chuck E Cheese-style where you can pick out a prize based on how many tickets you have. Three (3) pop-up canopies are still needed. There is a back-up plan if the weather forecast does not appear to be good.

- **Passive Fundraising** – Chanda Organ
Passive fundraisers are things that you're already doing that can benefit Meridian. Chanda took over Boxtops from Sara and also added Campbell's Soup labels and the Target red card/credit card program. The upcoming deadline for the first collection of Boxtops is October 1st. A reminder will be sent home and we ask that everyone takes some extra time to cut them because cutting them down to the proper size takes a lot of time. The Target card earned Fairview HS in Boulder \$17,000, Aspen Creek got \$9,000 and Meridian got \$300. There is obviously a lot of opportunity for us to promote people getting a Target visa and then designating Meridian as the school to get the % payback based on their purchases.
- **Scrip** – Pam Burgess
Pam spoke about the Scrip program. Jenn has given us approval for us to go forward with it. There are some trifold brochures that Pam passed out. Scrip is a term that means substitute money. It's an old term and basically what it is a gift certificate program. Participants purchase gift certificates at face value and the school purchases them at a discounted price determined by the merchant. Pam showed a sample order form, so it's not necessarily what is going to actually go out. United Scrip has a website with a complete list with all their merchants. You will be able to order online or through an order form. Orders are received on Mondays, and then processed and then several volunteers are needed weekly to fulfill the orders. Gift cards are sent home in laminated, Velcro envelopes. Pam handled a Scrip program at a previous school for 6 years. Cards are the same ones as you would get if you purchased them in the store and expiration dates are the same. Cards cannot be re-loaded. Pam's research says that elementary schools earn an average of \$12,000-\$15,000. Profit is immediate. Checks need to be made out to Meridian Elementary. Pam will need to have volunteers help sort and fulfill orders. She suggests that two volunteers work in pairs so we can check each other's work. We double-check to make sure that we are accurate and then we will double-check everything again. You can buddy up with your friend and do it with your kitchen.

8. **Open Positions** – Sarah Bender

There are several open volunteer positions we have identified. Contact Sarah if you are interested:

- **Volunteer Coordinator** – This position will be in charge of coordinating volunteers, providing info to people wanting to know where they can plug in. It should be a fairly simple position where organizational skills are important.
- **Donations Coordinator** – This position will track the names of businesses from which we've requested donations or who have provided donations, so we don't ask the same people over and over again. Cheryl England put together a spreadsheet to get the person started.

9. **Crossing Guards** – Jenn Weese

Jenn explained why there is a need for crossing guards this year. By contract, Jenn cannot require teachers to perform that duty. Jenn would like to avoid having to pay teachers to do that duty because it is cost prohibitive. Buster agreed to receive training and will be starting to try to man the north crosswalk. Jenn's goal is to reliably handling the other crosswalk by the Kindergarten playground. Volunteers must attend 1 ½ hours of training with, to fill out a volunteer form, and submit to a background check. Ann Ryan is heading up this effort, so if you are willing to help out, either as a crossing guard or as a person to watch the children of someone who can be a crossing guard, please put your name down.

10. **Red Ribbon Week** – Ann Ryan

We are sponsoring our first event with the not yet elected student council during the Anti-drug education week of Oct 23-31. We're planning to have poster contests and each kid will get a red ribbon around the theme to wear all week. At the end of the week, they'll get some kind of prize.

11. **October Happenings** – Leslie Maegley

Box Tops – October 1st is first submittal date
Red Ribbon Week – info above
Parent/Teacher conference – staff luncheon – October 11th

12. **Meeting Adjourned** – Sarah Bender

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.