



PTO Meeting Minutes September 18, 2008

1. The meeting was called to order called to order at 6:32 pm
2. **Introductions.** The Executive Board introduced themselves as well as Jennifer Weese and Sara Harp, Principal and Assistant Principal. The following staff was also present: Joanna Schott-5th, Linda Dowd-Literacy Coordinator, Linda Eastering-P.E., Shelly DeRock-3rd and Kristin Raney-1st.
3. **PTO Board Work Plan** - Kris Rimbos:
 - Thank you all for coming. We are going to try to stay on time to respect your time.
 - The Board met over the summer to create a Work Plan for the PTO. During this meeting, we went through a structured process where we talked about what went well and what didn't go well last year and then we set goals.
 - Kris reviewed the PTO goals contained in the Work Plan brochure. One of the goals is clear and concise communications with families. Jennifer Bragg is our webmaster and does an awesome job. She used the website to send out reminders for this meeting tonight. We're going to try to use email as well as to provide updates on what we're doing, what kind of money we've earned, etc.
 - If you would like to be on the website mailing list, go to the website and subscribe. The address is www.MeridianPTO.org.
 - We are doing some family focused events this year and we are looking at different ways we can bring families in to begin participating to support our school.
4. **Treasurer's Report** - Toni Masters:
 - Through last year's fundraisers, we earned \$7,120. We had \$2,000 at the end of year reserved to purchase indoor and outdoor playground equipment from the spring Check Writing Campaign. We had the kids vote on what they wanted and then met with Ms. Easterling and got feedback from the paras who supervise kids during recess. We ordered everything this week and expect it to arrive in two weeks. We're going to be able to buy 2-4 of everything we're purchasing so there will be plenty to go around. Then we'll label it and it will stay in the flex areas. Once we have the equipment purchased, we will communicate it everyone.
 - We cannot buy hoola-hoops or jump ropes because the kids don't play nicely with them, so we substituted them with some other things.
 - In the next few weeks, the kids should be coming home saying they got to play with some new equipment.
 - Last year, we carried over \$3,540. So far we've spent 23.78 on the BooHooYahoo, and \$246.85 for Staff Appreciation. Our Crossing Guard committee donated the meal for the back-to-school luncheon. .
 - We earned 150.40 from the Coldstone and just got a check for \$35 from Skate City.
 - The Directory has been a great success. So far, we have 211 orders and 21 businesses have chosen to advertise. The Board will purchase some extra Directories for families who didn't who didn't get their orders in on time. Total profit will be about \$1,277 and that's only the money that we've collected and we do have some money that is owed. It was not our intention, but so many businesses want full and half page ads. Thanks to everyone who purchased ads. Your support is much appreciated.
5. **Crossing Guard Program** – Angela Elliott (Crossing Guard Committee Chair):
 - Angela is the chair of this committee. They have been very busy gathering a lot of information and working with the school and the Police Department. They still need volunteers. We don't have enough people to get something started.
 - We do have some steps we can take even though we don't have crossing guards. We are going to be putting cones at the intersections to raise awareness of the need to drive safely

and are working with our current volunteers to do that. We will be posting all the training information on our website. We are doing a cross walk assessment. We'll be counting kids, parent and cars so we can put a priority on how we're going to staff our 3 current crosswalks. The District has also provided a yield sign. The problem is that our streets are very narrow and we can't put the sign in the middle of the street. Because they only have 5 crossing guard volunteers, all efforts have to be preventative in nature. Angela was hoping to get more volunteers after Back to School Night. She has contacted Triple A volunteers, but we need people to volunteer. You get a cool orange vest.

- We are also looking into providing daycare, but the BASE program is separate from Meridian so we can't really do that, but if a parent would volunteer to watch the kids of the crossing guards, that would also be a need.
- Contact Angela for more information.

6. **Bond/Mill Levy Effort** – Emily Hendrix (Meridian Parent Campaign Liaison):

- You have all noticed that our class sizes are getting bigger and the number of classes is rising and this fall, on the ballot there are going to be Initiatives 3A and 3B. We have a history of great education, especially here at Meridian. A lot of you choose to move here because of the education here. We've seen larger class sizes and added mobiles. The District has had to cut \$16M over the last 3 years. It hasn't been that obvious that that amount of money has been cut. But if the Initiatives do not pass, we will feel it. 165 employees will be affected, so it's not going to be solely support staff. We are getting to the crunch. We also have Anthem, which needs a school and doesn't have one yet. 3B would fund physical facilities; 3a would provide funds for staff.
- She is asking that all of you get registered to vote and when you get your ballot, that you find 3A and 3B and vote "Yes"
- There are several volunteer activities coming up. There is a walk on Oct 11th on neighborhoods that are close on the vote to pass out flyers. If you are interested in helping, please sign-up and then I will contact you.

7. **Cookie Dough Fundraiser** – Kris Rimbo:

- It seems to be going wonderfully. Many neighborhoods were teeming with little sellers. I couldn't even sell a box in my own neighborhood. The kids seem really excited about the limo rides and prizes. Based on the level of sales, we anticipate receiving \$6 per box.
- Limo rides: They will come to the school, pick the kids up and take them to McDonalds for lunch. Some of the administrative staff and parent volunteers will chaperone the rides.
- Someone asked whether we could have started earlier to beat some of the other schools, but Kris indicated that this was the earliest the school could support the assemblies required to kick off the effort.
- The sales window is through September 24th and the pick-up of the dough is October 22nd. It will be set up in the gym, but people will have to make arrangements to come that day to pick up their dough. Ann Ryan, our Volunteer Coordinator, is collecting names of people to help with the pickup.
- The cookie dough will be safe until 6:00 pm without refrigeration.
- A comment was raised about allowing children to opt out of food-related or fundraising assemblies for next year as some kids are feeling pressured. Kris indicated that we would talk about that with Jenn Weese for next year, if in fact the PTO votes to do another fundraiser of this kind.
- Another idea was suggested that for people participating in the check-writing campaign instead of the cookie dough fundraiser, that they have the ability to earn prizes as well either through sending letters out or by how much they raise. Heather Armon can provide further info.
- Cathy Painter indicated that we didn't have a huge number of people attending meetings last year, so if you want your voice to be heard regarding fundraising efforts, please come to the last few meetings of the year to ensure you have an opportunity to vote. We also were faced with very limited volunteers so we had to recommend something that required few volunteers.

This year has been a different story, but last year when the voting happened on fundraising and events, we did not have enough volunteers to do a big fundraising effort. This is our first year of doing this type of fundraiser and some people love it and others hate it, but either way, this is a valuable learning experience for us and we really appreciate the comments.

8. **Meridian Student Directory Project** – Leslie Maegley:

- The project is coming along well, although it has been challenging to get responses from everyone.
- We are sending the teachers their pages so they can tell us who is missing and we will try to get forms from them. The school is not able to provide us with a list of students, so we have to go only on the forms submitted.
- We hope to have them out soon, but are waiting on information about which students are moving to the new 2nd grade teacher's classroom so we can update our information.

9. **SCRIP Funding Request** – Allyson Duchak (SCRIP Coordinator):

- The SCRIP program is a gift card program where Meridian purchases gift card from United SCRIP at a discount of 2 to 18% and the purchaser buys them at face value. Meridian keeps the difference.
- We have been flooding everybody with emails and paper because we want to get the word out. You can buy gift cards for things you purchase everyday such as groceries, Shutterfly for your pictures, Starbucks, etc. If you can do just a bit of pre-planning, this program is for you.
- Orders are submitted either via the paper form or via the Scripzone website (the preferred method). You can enter them any day of the week but must send in your check Tuesday morning. Delivery happens that same week on Friday.
- We would like to request \$25 a month to reward the classroom with the most SCRIP sales. A motion was made and passed unanimously

RESOLVED, the Meridian SCRIP program may award a \$25 gift card to the teacher of the top selling classroom per month.

10. **BoxTops** – Pat Hagara (Passives Coordinator):

- We've already collected over \$500 worth this year. Pat requests that when you cut them out, please trim them and bundle in counts of 50, if you have that many. Pat and her family have decided to donate all the shipping costs to meridian.
- Pat is also requesting that the Kindergarten classes be allocated \$60 per classroom, which is 4 classrooms) to print their pictures for their memory books using a Shutterfly gift card (through SCRIP). We have a volunteer who will show the teachers how to upload and order their prints, but we need your approval to spend the \$240 out of the Passives money. A motion was made and passed unanimously.

RESOLVED, \$60 per Kindergarten classroom for a total of \$240 is approved to be spent on Shutterfly gift cards for printing memory book pictures.

11. **Family Costume Festival** - Cathy Painter:

- We have the Halloween family dance coming up on Thursday, October 30th at 6:30 pm. The teachers were very pleased to have this alternative to taking half their day and parents having to get off on Halloween to come to school. Since we don't have school on the 31st, this will be a nice celebration.
- Lisa Wagner has volunteered to be the event Chair (THANK YOU LISA!!) and we have 10 people who have volunteered to help. If you can add your name to the list, please get in touch with Ann Ryan (email on our website). The committee is beginning to meet on what will actually happen at the event. We will have a DJ, light snacks, a costume contest, etc. All are welcome to join in the planning.
- This will be offered as a free family event. We have a high budget estimate of \$1,100 and would like your approval to spend up to that amount to put on this event. A motion was

made, duly seconded and passed unanimously to approve an expenditure of up to \$1,100 for this event.

RESOLVED, the Family Costume Festival committee may spend up to \$1,100 to fund this event.

12. **Calendar Review** – Amy Helmick:
 - We have posted a calendar on our website (www.MeridianPTO.org) thanks to Jen Bragg.
 - We published an initial calendar at Back to School night, but the most current info will be on the website as the calendar isn't set in stone.
 - If you need an item to be added, have noticed any changes or have upcoming event committee meetings that you would like to be posted, please contact Amy Helmick.
13. **Teacher Appreciation Update** – Rachael Rome.
 - We will be celebrating teacher appreciation week one time this year in May (vs. differentiating between the classified and non-classified weeks like last year). Big thanks go to Kelly Fukanaga who has volunteered to lead the meals the PTO provides during parent/teacher conferences. The first ones are scheduled for October 9th. If you are interested in helping, email Ann Ryan. Volunteer Coordinator for the PTO.
 - In addition to the week in May, we're assigning a coordinator to each grade level and a group of volunteer will give our teachers surprising, little darling, yippy, skippy little things. We asked each teacher to complete a form about the things they like to provide us with an arsenal of information.
14. **“HOW GREEN IS YOUR BAG?” Sales Fundraiser** – Rachael Rome:
 - We also have one other fundraising effort we'd like to undertake and that is selling the bags you see up here. See the flyer handed out for complete info.
 - The company sells bags you can use instead of plastic bags and they are made out of jute. We can offer them at less than what the company offers them and make a profit for the PTO and potentially other efforts, such as Destination Imagination. More info on this effort coming at the October meeting. We're thinking of them as great Christmas gifts.
15. **Gifted & Talented & High Achieving Effort** -- Diane Sandstrum:
 - Diane wanted to announce that through the efforts of a small group of interested parents, we were able to hire a person to manage our Gifted/Talented & Differentiation program. We hired our former teacher, Estee Baldwin, part time to lead this effort. This was all done through parent support. We raised over \$12,000 over the summer and submitted several grant requests. Kristen Kelly and Susan Faltinson were also instrumental in this effort and we are very excited and proud that we were able to get this accomplished.
15. **Adjourn**