

**PARENT TEACHER STUDENT ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 1565
Nome AK 99762**

Minutes of November 8, 2006 Meeting

President Barb Nickels called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m., in the Nome Elementary School library. The following individuals were in attendance:

Todd Hindman, Member
Lori Head, Treasurer
Gina Appolloni, Member
Kim Erickson, Member
Barb Nickels, President

Jon Berkeley, Member
Julie Kelso, Vice-President
Sylvia Matson, Member
Margaret Thomas, Member
Lisa Wehde, Member

President's Report

Barb stated that she wanted to rearrange the agenda by delivering her President's report before elections were held for new officers. There was no opposition to her request. She reviewed her report, which is attached to these minutes. There was some discussion regarding means of ensuring that new parents learn about the Imagination Library book distribution program. Sylvia Matson suggested that brochures be included in the welcome baskets furnished by the Methodist Church to parents. Another idea was having them distributed by staff at the Public Health department when babies were brought in for routine immunizations. Barb concluded her report by resigning from her position as President.

Elections

Barb nominated Julie Kelso for President. Sylvia seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

Barb nominated Margaret Thomas for Vice-President. Julie seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

Barb nominated Lori Head for Treasurer. Sylvia seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

At 6:15 p.m., Julie Kelso assumed the role of President and conducted the remainder of the meeting. She thanked Barb for all the contributions she had made as President during the three years she had served. Julie noted that Barb's efforts on behalf of the PTSA had contributed significantly to improvements at the Nome

Elementary School (NES), including smaller class sizes in early primary grades and the new reading and math instructional materials adopted for K-6 in 2006.

Treasurer's Report

Lori Head reported that the balance in the PTSA account was \$8,235.94. The PTSA will be paying for the winner of the local Bee and a chaperone to travel to Anchorage to compete in the State Bee. This expense usually runs about \$2,000.

Julie reported that the PTSA sold 506 Community Birthday Calendars this year, three more than last year. For the first time, the PTSA offered businesses the option of having color in their ads. The printing and mailing costs increased slightly, so the net profit from the calendars will be \$30 less than last year, for a total of \$4,920.

Spelling Bee

Barb asked for volunteers for setting up and cleaning up after the December 6, 2006, local Spelling Bee. Margaret volunteered to help set up at 4:30, and Julie offered to help clean up. Todd indicated that the younger participants in particular were having more difficulty than usual with the word list. The format has changed this year, and words are not sorted into categories by level of difficulty. Todd plans to supplement the official list with easier words from past lists in order to give younger participants a more rewarding experience.

Santa Shop

The Santa Shop is scheduled to take place from December 11 until December 15. Class and volunteer sign-up lists were made available. Lisa Wehde asked for permission to speak regarding the Santa Shop activity. She stated that she had polled 21 teachers regarding the Santa Shop. Of these, ten were opposed to having it continue, two were in favor of it, six had mixed feelings, and the remainder abstained. An extensive discussion ensued. In opposition to the event, Lisa stated that she felt that it was disruptive to academic work and that it was very hard on children who did not have money to spend on merchandise. Jon Berkeley stated that he had mixed feelings about it, but that given the strong emphasis being placed on academics this year, he felt that it ran contrary to the "singular purpose" guiding NES this year. In response to the criticism that items are over-priced, Julie and Barb pointed out that the PTSA makes very little profit from the activity, and that it is primarily operated as a community service to help students with very little money purchase gifts for friends and family members. Sylvia Matson stated that she felt that the activity yielded the most educational value the year that her son visited twice—once to make a "wish list" that he reviewed with his parents as he compared it with his budget, then to make purchases.

Julie reported that the merchandise has been ordered for this years' event. However, the PTSA will work with teachers in an effort to minimize the disruption and difficulties posed for children without spending money. Julie suggested that the PTSA could take all its projected profit and use it to issue "Santa Bucks" that teachers could distribute to students in whatever way the teachers felt appropriate. Shoppers could participate during recess rather than class time. Store hours could be set to begin relatively late in the school day and to continue after school. Jon Berkeley and Kim Erikson suggested that the letter sent home to parents before the activity begins include a detailed explanation of how it works (including the price range of items), why it is conducted, and how the profits (if any) are spent.

Security at NES

Jon Berkeley reported that parents would be receiving a letter at their Parent-Teacher conferences explaining the new security measures that will be undertaken at NES. All doors except the front door will be locked during school hours (the playground door will be unlocked during recess times). Visitors to the building will be required to sign in and wear a badge identifying themselves as visitors. Special badges may be issued to regular visitors, such as parent volunteers. Margaret asked that a procedure be developed for insuring that the front door of the building remains unlocked during school office hours or, if the door is locked, that a mechanism be installed to allow visitors to communicate with staff in the building who can open the door during those hours.

Hearing and Vision Screenings

Dave Keller, the Special Education Director at Nome Public Schools, has announced that hearing and vision screening of NES students will take place on November 20-22, 2006. A sign-up sheet for volunteers to help at the screening was distributed.

Gravel on Playground

Lisa Wehde stated that as a parent and teacher, she was concerned about the fact that the gravel on the playground is not distributed as well as it could be from a safety standpoint. She asked whether the PTSA would organize a volunteer day to redistribute the gravel. It was suggested that she contact the Maintenance department to find out whether enough gravel remains on the playground for redistribution. Boy Scout or Girl Scout troops might also be interested in participating in this activity as a community service project.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Julie indicated that she found the suggestions for questions to be posed at Parent-Teacher conferences to be very helpful. The questions are located on the reverse side of the paper notifying parents of conference times.

PTSA Goals for 2005-2006

There was an open discussion regarding PTSA goals for the coming year. Jon suggested that the PTSA might be able to assist the school with community outreach, particularly in contacting parents who otherwise are not actively involved with the school. Acknowledging that she did not know whether her idea would be workable given confidentiality requirements, Sylvia wondered whether PTSA members could help contact parents who did not make it to fall parent-teacher conferences, facilitating their participation in the ones held in the spring (calling to remind them or offering rides, for example). Todd stressed the importance of communication in increasing parental involvement—"you need communication to get commitment." He noted that a few years ago NES had a person on staff whose job it was to contact the parents of children who were chronically absent or tardy. ACSA uses email to keep lines of communication open between the school and parents.

Science Standards

Todd reminded the PTSA that Science Standards have been adopted and will be implemented during the next few years. The Science Standards Based Assessment will be field-tested in April 2007. It will first be administered officially in April 2008. Grades 4, 8 and 10 will take the test. The Nome Elementary School should begin planning for the acquisition of pertinent instructional materials, such as lab kits. Formal textbooks may not be necessary.

Adjournment

Julie conducted the drawing for the door prize, a \$50.00 gift certificate to Airport Pizza. Gina Appolloni won the certificate.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.