

**Falmouth Middle School PTO Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 16, 2010**  
**Falmouth MS Library**

**In Attendance:** Sue Palfrey, Danielle Tracy, Wendy Morrissette, Betsy Perron, Amy Kuhn, Terri St. Angelo, Barb Skop, Sharon Leskanic, Analise Larsen, Beth Franklin, Rick Hogan, Liz Hutcheon, Pat Wright, Dawn Girsch, Amanda Hensen, and Steve Dunwood.

**Welcome, Introduction and Call to Order** (Terri St. Angelo, President)

- Terri called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.
- Today's meeting is going to provide information on where the middle school is at regarding the needs of the school, how the community can be involved and support our school. We have 2 members of the School Board here to review provide an update.
- Everyone introduced themselves.
- Thank you to everyone for the Teachers' appreciation. Tanya Preston did a great job.
- Reviewed agenda.
- Please consider joining the board. Terri reviewed the positions of the PTO Board. Nominations will be collected over the next few weeks.
- Reviewed the upcoming events and dates to remember.
  - March 17 – All Schools Band concert
  - March 18 – Annual Kindness Garden Bake Sale Fundraiser
  - March 19 – MS Dance
  - March 25-27 – FMS Musical
  - April 1 – Talent Show
  - April 6 – School Spirit Day and Basketball Game
  - April 6 – 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents information night at the HS
  - April 9 – Diversity Day
- Sue & Rick will provide information on where the MS is today.

**Treasurer's Report** (Liz Hutcheon)

- Liz reviewed the budget.
- The magazine drive is not quite there yet, but we are still receiving checks monthly.
- We are staying on budget.
- We may not be able to give out spring grants at the original targeted amount of \$3,000, but we may be able to do something.

**Diversity Day** (Pat Wright, Guidance Counselor)

- On Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, the MS will be celebrating 'Appreciating Diversity Day'. The Civil Rights Teams from both FMS and Falmouth High School, along with our S.O.S. Team and Student Council are joining forces to organize this special day. Our goal is to encourage awareness and celebrate the many types of diversity within our community and our world. Each grade level will have

different speakers and classroom activities; some of those scheduled include: The Cromwell Disability Center; Raza Jalali (USM Multicultural Student Affairs); Brandon Baldwin (from the Civil Rights Team division of the Attorney General's Office); the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine; and 'The Color of Community': ELL students from SMCC who will speak about their former countries and their immigration experiences. We are still looking for parent or community volunteers who would like to help with this day, either in presenting something that fits with our diversity theme or just to help with the organizational details. This is an exciting opportunity to recognize and honor those things that make us unique and "diverse" as well as learn about other cultures.

If you have any ideas, or would like to volunteer please contact the Student Services Office and ask for Pat Wright or Dawn Girsch (781-9886) or e-mail Pat Wright at [pwright@fps.k12.me.us](mailto:pwright@fps.k12.me.us)

### **Principal's Update (Sue Palfrey)**

Status of teachers/administrators in tough times.

- We have a pretty vibrant community.
- A few things we are working on: collaborative groups, constant communication with tough topics as to School climate – addressing issues proactively. They put together a survey monkey to poll the staff at a recent meeting and broke into small groups for discussion of the results from the survey. The theme of the survey was respect -- student to student, self- respect in and out of class, and the staff. Being on time – respect, self advocacy; big picture.

New School Topics

- Exciting and productive talks in regards to switching to a 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> school; the brainstorming at the MS is very forward thinking
- They will form 2 committees – a transition committee with staff only this spring and then by the fall, add some parents on the committee; the 2<sup>nd</sup> committee will be a transition monitoring team – they will monitor what's worrying people, concerns, etc. Then they will report back which will help with transparency.
- The Transition team will do readings from the book, Managing Transitions by William Bridges and be provided an "executive summary". The book depicts that a successful organizational change takes place when employees have a clear purpose, a plan for, and a part to play in their changing surroundings.
- Their next staff meeting will focus on what we like about ourselves. She is anticipating a positive meeting. They will celebrate what's working.

Budget Topics

- They are looking at class size.
- Being a Writer Program for the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade – the MS received a FEF grant that will allow for the program to be adopted from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
- They are committed to staying with teams (crews) in the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- As far as major cuts in the MS - one has already happened with the reduction in secretarial assistance. They have gone from 3 to 2 assistance. Parents can help out by calling or e-mailing when their child(ren) are sick (instead of the secretaries having to follow-up) and; by helping your child(ren) to remember all their "stuff" needed for school. The more we can reduce forgotten "stuff", the less it disrupts the office.
- There is one anticipated retirement for 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade in world language that will happen mid-year. The teachers will teach both Spanish & French.

- Service learning – practice and reflect. We are getting better at what we do.
- A half time music teacher has been discussed at the board meetings. Hopefully for this year we are managing to keep both teachers.
- Supplies were cut back – more in the way of textbooks. This was volunteered by the teachers.
- 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grader use a lot of on-line information in the classroom. Textbooks would supplement that information.
- Additional budget status – all information is on-line under the School Board tab and then under “workshop” tab.

#### PTO role in the MS environment

- Communication
- The financial support is very much appreciated
- Support of the administration – teachers’ luncheon, hiring for administration, etc.
- Betsy Perron has done a great job with organizing volunteers, event organization, etc.

Parents are a vital part of our community. We have a wonderful support of parents who volunteer in many different ways.

#### **Assistant Principal’s Update** (Rick Hogan)

- In continuing with respect, Rick is working with a group of staff on how to come up with common language with regard to the students. They would have 4 consistent questions: i.e., what are you doing, who is it affecting, how is it affecting them and what are they (students) going to do now? This would be an immediate on the spot reflection. They are not sure how to best get it out. Some thoughts have been to have posters in the rooms or business cards.
- John Carter has been working with Eight Keys to Success to be the best student--how do you get a common vocabulary out in the school. One example would be teaching students to speak with good purpose.
- Eventually, they would like to present this to the entire staff (from administrators to bus drivers, to lunch room staff, etc.)

#### **School Board Update** (Analise Larsen & Beth Franklin)

- Textbook are a line item in the budget. They are on top of it. It was discussed at their workshop and it is a concern of the Board. They are working on a textbook replacement schedule.
- As Sue mentioned, you can view the budget online; the goal was to maintain our high-quality programs. As the budget stands now, 0% impact for a tax increase. We can thank the teachers and administrators for this because they have taken the hit. The teachers are always concerned about what’s going to work for kids learning and for the kids in general.
- Opportunity for All – attend the Town/School Board joint meeting on Wednesday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:00. This is an opportunity for the community to provide any additional input.
- There will be a follow up Council meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>.
- There are 2 open seats on the School Board. They really encourage anyone to participate. The end result is very rewarding.

## **Community Facilities Planning Project** (Analise Larsen)

- Once the new elementary school is complete, the old Lunt & Plummer-Motz buildings will revert back to the town.
- They looked at all the data from the library & town hall which need renovation, expansion and/or relocation.
- They are encouraging the public to provide additional input at the 2<sup>nd</sup> public forum on April 5, 2010 at 7:00 pm in the Plummer-Motz gym
- An information brochure was passed out.
- If you are not able to make the meeting, an online survey will be available with only about 20 questions.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Barb Skop, Recording Secretary