

Carderock Springs Elementary School General PTA Meeting—October 7, 2008

Principal's Comments

Mrs. MacLaughlin alerted parents that MCPS has issued new benchmarks for student success culminating in students achieving a SAT score of 1650 or higher. Three of these new benchmarks pertain to elementary school-age students—meeting reading benchmarks in Grades K-2; Reading on grade level by grade 3; and advanced math in grade 5. Mrs. MacLaughlin clarified CSES' position to continue to offer opportunities for acceleration in math and reading but not force students beyond what they are ready for. Staff will help students develop skills at their own rates, she said. The new benchmarks are not tied to school funding, she said.

Treasurer's Report

The CSES budget was presented and approved by the membership. The balance as of 10/7/08 is \$27,843.23 (but will nearly double soon, based on the impending receipt of over \$27,500 in income - a recoupment of costs plus 5% profit - from the Giant Gift Card fundraiser this month).

Income from one of our historically most profitable fundraisers—Sally Foster gift wrap—is down by \$1750 compared to last year-- to \$5750. However, Giant card revenue is estimated at \$6,000, up about \$1900 compared to last year. Directory advertising also is up nearly \$2300 (compared to last year) to \$8500.

A slight change was made to a line item in the budget to make it more explicit. The Principal's Discretionary Fund has been renamed Principal's Education Fund to more adequately reflect how the money will be used. In addition, the PTA has added a Principal's Scholarship Fund with \$200 at Mrs. MacLaughlin's request, to help students participate in fieldtrips and classroom activities whose families may not be able to afford the additional costs.

The PTA's plan to make a \$6500 donation to the CSES Foundation for the Weatherbug station in the new building 2 years hence prompted a lively discussion highlighting concerns about the use of PTA funds to directly benefit students right now. In the interest of time, a motion was offered and approved to have a separate and fuller conversation about donations to the Foundation at a later date. With the exception of the Foundation donation, the budget for school year 2008 - '09 was overwhelmingly approved.

Finally, a motion to add a Treasurer's Assistant Position to the PTA executive board was made and approved. Lynn deBettencourt, who served as Treasurer in 2007-2008, will stay on the board as assistant to current Treasurer Cyndi Debisschop.

Radnor Transition

Enrollment in after-school activities has declined this year, causing some programs to be cancelled or moved off site. The lack of participation may be a casualty of our move to

Radnor and its distance from the Carderock area. Parents also expressed a desire for new and different activities. Also, no parent has volunteered to serve as After-School Activities chair. The PTA is still searching for someone to take over this committee, and hopes to offer some programs in the spring.

Transportation issues continue to be a frustration for parents with students returning home very late from school in the afternoon, overcrowded buses and last-minute changes. Parent Lisa Bronfman volunteered to coordinate the handling of transportation-related complaints for Mrs. MacLaughlin, who will then send them on as a complete package to Liz Embry at MCPS. If parents have continuing concerns regarding the bus schedule, they are encouraged to send emails to Lisa Bronfman at Lisa_Hab@Yahoo.com.

Additional Business

Parent volunteers are needed for Bingo night, scheduled for Tuesday, 11/11/08-- which is a half-day for students due to parent/teacher conferences. Interested volunteers should contact Lauren Gross at laurenginmd@aol.com. Mrs. MacLaughlin has promised that night will be a no-homework night for students.

Girls on the Run, a popular after school activity for girls in grades 3-5, needs more coaches for the future. Coaches must be trained in the program. Contact Deb Lang at debolang@yahoo.com or Clayton VerPlanck at Mary_C_VerPlanck@mcpsmd.org for more information.

The Giving Tree has been revived at CSES this year. The Giving Tree is an anonymous way to donate needed items for the school. Participants pick leaves off the tree marked with specific items and bring the items and the leaves back to the CSES office.

Respectfully submitted,
Joni Lucas-Shapiro
Recording secretary