

Carderock Springs Elementary School General PTA Meeting – November 3, 2009

The minutes of the October 6, 2009 meeting were approved.

Principal's Report

Mr. Palmisano shared the news that for the 2010-2011 school year, in our new building, a special education program will become part of the Carderock learning community. The proposed changes for Carderock include three autism classes, pending enrollment. Because this is a new autism program, it is unclear at this point whether we will have one, two, or three classes. Typically, each class is made up of no more than six students and is assigned a teacher and two special education paraeducators. Mr. Palmisano is working with Jim Tokar, Facilities Designer from MCPS, to plan for the location of the classroom(s) in our new school and to discuss any modifications that may need to be made. As the Principal receives more information, he will pass it along to the parent community.

Mr. Palmisano thanked the PTA for the extra funds we were able to provide to the teachers, which has made up for some of the budget cuts we are experiencing this year.

The Principal announced the upcoming Read-a-thon at CSES which will take place on Wednesday, November 11th, at which a well-known author and song-writer, Barry Louis Polisar, will be performing for all the students and autographing his books and CDs.

President's Report

Financial Update - Sara Bhatia reported that the PTA is doing well financially, with membership numbers very high (82%) and Sally Foster fundraising numbers up from last year. This financial boost enabled the PTA to add a new line item providing school supplies for the classrooms.

Events - Movie Night was not well attended. Next year, it may be combined with the Back-to-School picnic evening. Family Fun Night is scheduled for Friday night, December 8th from 6:30pm to 8:30pm, in the All Purpose Room, concurrent with the Book Fair. There will be a D.J. dance party for the kids while the parents can shop at the Book Fair.

International Night – The PTA is exploring different ways to run this event this year. One idea is having a week-long event (versus one night) with small performances daily, international games on the playground, and the like. Other ideas were suggested. In order to continue to have this event, we need to arrange a committee to start exploring ideas, and we need an event chairperson(s).

Community Service – This year the committee has made Martha's Table a weekly project at CSES, versus a one-time effort. Every Thursday, children can bring in sandwiches to put in the donation box in the entryway when they arrive at school. Week two saw 150 sandwiches donated!! Two Veteran's Day projects are taking place. First, "Give to the World" collects children's coats and stuffed animals to the troops in Afghanistan, to be given to local children. And secondly, a letter writing program allowing the kids to write letters and draw pictures to send to injured soldiers recuperating at Walter Reed Medical Center.

Cultural Programs – As the Principal mentioned, author Barry Louis Polisar is coming to visit CSES on November 11th to teach the children about the writing process for both books and music. Many additional cultural arts assemblies are being planned for the school year, including a planetarium show on Tuesday, November 17th and an a cappella singing group on Thursday, December 17th.

Task Forces – Mr. Palmisano spoke about the Transition Task Force which is being created to ensure a smooth transition to the new CSES building for the 2010-2011 school year. A Before/After Care Program Task Force has been created to evaluate the feasibility of having on-site “before and after” school childcare for CSES students once in the new building. A survey will be sent to parents regarding both task forces, to see what the consensus is for school start time next year, and to see how parent’s childcare needs can be best met.

Weather Bug Station – Last month, the PTA voted to approve a \$7500 gift to the Educational Foundation for the purchase of a scientific educational software program called Weather Bug. This system had been researched and approved by the County several years ago. A meeting is being set up between the PTA, the Principal, and science teachers at Carderock, to discuss the system, its requirements and a plan for moving forward.

Miscellaneous – The CSES PTA Directory is printed and is currently being delivered to all PTA members.

Parent Education Presentation

Social workers Allison Sibley and Kate Kelley presented on the topic of “Self-Confidence & Social Competence Within Children’s Friendships: A Developmental View”.