**Ilchester Elementary School PTA Board Meeting**

**March 18, 2014**

**Attendees:**

Maryann DellaRocco, Paul Norfolk, David Adelman, Glenna Deekle, Heather Tom, Beth Benoit, Samantha Marino, Debbie Feeley, Regina Brown, Momina Malik, Tonya Sigalas, Christine Case, Danielle Rao

**Meeting Summary**

President’s Report

* Coke rewards program switching to a cash system where they will send the PTA a check every 3 months instead of teachers picking from a cataloge. This switch will allow us to use the funds more creatively so keep sending in caps and/or entering codes online.
* Mrs. DiMartino would like to order materials for math enrichment totaling $407.70 but we budgeted $350. There was a motion to approve the increase and it unanimously passed.
* Teacher Appreciation week needs a lead. Wendy was the committee chair but she got a full time job and is; therefore, no longer available. Tonya had set a high bar with daily themes and games but the new lead has the flexibility to do whatever they want. Teacher Appreciation week is the first week of May, 4th-8th. If we don’t identify a lead in the next few weeks we will break it down and each take a day. There is a blue folder in the volunteer room in the big cabinet with detail on past years. A sample week is:
  + Monday breakfast - 6-8 casseroles donated (3 vegetarian) in cafeteria, kielbasa, fresh fruit, bagels, muffins, munchkins, coffee, juice
  + Tuesday appetizers- 12 apps served with approximately 36 pieces each- no plates, sample picks- set up table out by the mailboxes, replenish between lunches 11:15-1:45pm
  + Wednesday snack cart- incorporates theme- last year put treat in the mailboxes
  + Thursday lunch- salad bar theme is popular, bags of lettuce and toppings, pasta, tuna, egg salad, etc.
  + Friday dessert- chocolate fountain one year, have to ration and replenish
  + Sign-Up Genius for each separate day.
* Ilchester Road closure meeting scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on April 7 at Bonnie Branch. Crews will be doing water main work during the Spring and Summer.
* Election committee needs to be established per the bylaws. The members of the election committee will be Momina, Regina and Glenna. We need a President, Treasurer and 2 PTAC delegates for 2015-2017. The committee will put out the call for candidates, vet them and have a formal election. Election to take place at the Enrichment Fair- date TBD.

Fundraising Committee

* Members of the Fundraising Committee met to discuss moving to a direct donation fundraising approach as opposed to past years using a fundraiser strategy that asked students to sell from catalogs and online and the PTA received a portion of the funds. Danielle, Carver and Beth met and brainstormed how to roll out the direct donation program.
* The PTA will keep restaurant nights and hopes to increase the number and variety of restaurants. Suggested additions include Mission BBQ, Chipotle, Cheeburger Cheeburger and T-Bonz (pancake breakfast- they provide a cook and volunteer teachers could serve).
* The PTA will also keep Square 1 Art.
* We will be stopping Innisbrook, Pasta Sale and the Flower Sale.
* Maryann asked if we could do a Survey Monkey. We need to get a sense of what parents think about direct donations instead of getting a product with a portion of the proceeds going to the school.
* We will keep Giant, box tops, spirit wear, Coke rewards and Target.
* The main idea is a one-time donation per child. A paper letter and electronic communication about the new fundraising approach can be sent before the end of the school year. The letter will also be sent to incoming kindergarten parents.
* We discussed a suggested amount per child as well as a tier system (silver, gold, platinum) with car magnets denoting your level. No discussion of cost or producing these magnets was held.
* The communication piece will illustrate the impact of the dollars by spelling out how the PTA funds are used in the school to enhance instruction through materials, school assemblies and incentives.
* Rockburn has a bulletin board that shows everything the PTA pays for. It was suggested that we take a picture and copy it. We need to draft language for how we specify how the money is used. There is also the grade level enhancement which we also need to explain.
* A very direct and passionate presentation will be conducted at back to school night to our school community.
* The PTA will have members stationed at both of the doors to answer questions, distribute forms and collect donations.
* The PTA would like to have a presence at all the Ilchester events next school year. We would like to have a PTA board displaying what PTA has done. Parents will be able to make a donation and find out how to get involved.
* Heather wants to pitch Innisbrook but is open to a different vendor.
* There was a genuine concern expressed by Maryann about making the budget. She suggested we may want to table the proposed purchases like the mini iPads and buddy bench to keep a $20,000 cushion for next year. We can carry the money over and make a decision next year. Maryann wants to do a vote next month so we need to do the Survey Monkey poll ASAP.
* We discussed keeping the KidStuff coupon books and having a table with books for sale September & October only. Tonya proposed we have a table at open house and back to school night. Logistically it would be a lot easier. Back to school bingo can sell them as well.
* Clemens Crossing PTA does $5/child movie on half days. Clemens Crossing does direct donation only.
* It is difficult to compare ourselves to other schools because we have a $58,000 budget that is larger than most schools.
* It was suggested that we do a thermometer to show how close we are to our goal.

Principal’s Report

* Another portable classroom will be added at Ilchester. It must be 40 feet from the building according to code. It will be placed outside of the 5th grade. Mr. Adelman has not completed staffing and room assignments for next year. The school was built for 600 students and our population is 758.
* Kindergarten registration is going well. We have 60+ registered.
* April 27 will be the volunteer breakfast.
* For Back to School Night they have been comparing notes with other schools. It was suggested that parents are not interested in sitting in the gym for the principal’s presentation. They could make a video to play in the classrooms as an alternative. Middle and High School do it. The PTA meeting attendees did not agree on the use of a video. The majority felt, however that the face-to-face with the staff sets a tone and creates a sense of community.
* How do we handle new children to the school? They are assigned a buddy and they get to meet all the staff. There will also be 3 meetings with new families at 9:30am from September through Halloween.

Vice Principal’s Report

PARCC testing- A lot of prep but it is going smoothly. Every session there have been glitches but it has been pretty smooth. PARCC PBA almost done and EOY is coming up.

Teacher’s Report

* Reminder about Reading and Fitness night 3/25/15. The event times are divided by last name.

Treasurer’s Report

* As of 2/27/15 the checking balance was $28,828.75 and the savings balance was $1,174.94.
* Many teachers have not submitted their reimbursement forms. Last year the teachers got a note and a copy of the form in their mailbox. No grade has used their entire pod incentive money. For grade level enhancements the balances of unused funds are as follows: $147.83 in K, 1st grade $509.76, 2nd grade $199.33, 3rd $179.67, 4th $467.56, 5th $1,117.50. Please submit by the end of April.
* Mr. Adelman said that a parent should always let him know if they cannot afford a school trip or other fee associated with school activities. He has the ability to assist families. It is confidential and the teacher will not even know.

Committee Reports

* Junior Cheetah Day is April 21st. This is the day we invite incoming Kindergarten parents and students to the school. There is a session in the cafeteria with principal and vice principal, a tour and closing with children playing on the front playground. Each year there is an example that it is working. Last year Beth helped make it work. Heather needs volunteers to help with sign in and tour groups. The event will be added to newsletter. In addition, there will be a Kindergarten information night done by teachers on April 30th from 7-8pm. The same registration form will be used for both events.

PTAC

* PARCC testing was the focus of meeting. County staff members were at tables that you rotate to ask questions and collect information. County level staff know this test well. Sample questions were shared with attendees. The type of questions may not be familiar to adults. The original meeting was canceled due to inclement weather which was unfortunate due to the start of PARCC testing before the information meeting but it was still a good session.
* In follow-up to the conversation about the Wellness Policy school celebrations adjustment, it is not going anywhere. School system staff input will be sought before any discussion/decision is made.
* The superintendent proposed the budget and the Board of Education met in sessions to pass a budget that went to county council. The process continues into May. The budget is tight and could get tighter. Para-educators at Kindergarten level are currently staffed at 2.5 for Ilchester but it is proposed to be an estimated 1.5 for next year. No one would lose their jobs. They would be reallocated. This is a concern for the school. The budget is tight and the county executive asked for an even tighter budget than what was submitted. If parents want to reach out to the county council person or county council as a whole they should do so. 5/14 is a council meeting and 5/21 is adoption. A parent suggested that parents should advocate for this change not to be made by writing to support paraeducators. Parents should check the PTAC website. Councilman John Weinstein’s office is the place to contact. Middle and High school level are also in the budget to have no media assistants. It was raised that we need to be careful as a PTA given the political climate if we take a position against the proposed budget cuts.

Q&A

* Momina asked if we can have International Night back next year. Can we eliminate a cultural arts performance to allow for it during the school day? Probably difficult to accomplish but the PTA should explore options for an evening event.
* Christine asked if during Junior Cheetah Day contact information could be shared so that play dates could be arranged for kindergarten families. We could do it as an informal sign up with emails coordinated by a parent not affiliated with the PTA for insurance purposes. The sign up could read “Would you like to share your email and phone with other parents here today?” Mr. Adelman said he could photocopy the list and give it to the people on it only. They do not get the list if they don’t give their information.

Adjourn