

# MINUTES OF THE PFA MEETING

September 10, 2008

**Attendees:** Maria Kopf, Vicki Fraser, Ralph Wright, Jill Sandberg, Petra Boyle, Susan Broehm, Elaine Greene, Michele Ramia, Cheryl Brown, Anna DeAnda, Xianglei Chen, Stefanie Corrales, Monica Fitzgerald, Megan Trowbridge, Penny Christie, Barbara Pfaffenberger, Tess Taft, Misa Siemons Jenny Crosthwaite, Pam Lundgren, Gladys Moore

## May Minutes Approval:

Vicki Fraser called the February PFA meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Vicki welcomed everyone to the school year's first meeting and introduced the board members that were in attendance. She also asked that everyone go around the room and introduce themselves. A motion was made and seconded to approve the May minutes. The approval was unanimous.

## Principal's Report:

Mrs. Hutcherson updated the parents on the 2007-08 Review of Outcomes. This was an off-site staff development meeting that took place about 4 days prior to the start of the school year. Items discussed were areas of growth opportunities, goals for the 2008-09 school year, the seamless transition of the new principal, and fiscal support of the computer lab. Also discussed were the successful Career Day and Disaster Plan for Foothill. A goal for Foothill will be greater articulation with Northgate, and this has already started. Mrs. Hutcherson was part of the Northgate Principal Panel last year and helped interview candidates. Another success from last year was the implementation of the Strategic Plan Survey.

### 2007-08 API Results for Foothill:

#### English Proficiency:

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: 77% are proficient or better

7<sup>th</sup> Grade: 80% are proficient or better

8<sup>th</sup> Grade: 81% are proficient or better

#### Math:

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: 77% are proficient or better

7<sup>th</sup> Grade: 69% are proficient or better

8<sup>th</sup> Grade: 77% are proficient or better

Scores are fairly constant from previous years.

She also discussed the "New Foothill Attitude" – Being your very BEST and this will tie into last year's implementation of the BEST program. This year the focus will be on Character Development using BEST practices. The focus for September is Appreciating Diversity. Nurturing good behavior can earn students "BEST" coupons and students can win prizes. The Leadership group has really taken a lead in this, they put up all the decorations for marking September 11<sup>th</sup>, as well as created all of the posters welcoming the guest speaker for the school assembly. Michael Richard will be the guest speaker and he will be discussing "Anti-Bullying".

Mrs. Hutcherson stated that parents are Foothill's greatest partners. She thanked all of the volunteers who have helped since the Kick-Off. One of the focuses of Foothill will become a more parent friendly school. She is thinking of having A Second Cup of Coffee Chat with parents to be held every other month. This will be with small groups of parents. She is also thinking of having brown bag lunches – Lunch Box Chat. In March of 2009 there will be a multi-cultural celebration and the school will be working with parents. Stay tuned for more information!

Foothill has 1,104 students to-date: 371 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 351 7<sup>th</sup> graders, and 378 8<sup>th</sup> graders. She is still looking for to math teachers and has narrowed down the selection. Once the teachers are hired there will be a transition period with the substitute teachers. It is very challenging to hire math teachers in California and she is doing her best to find the right teachers. All students have a full schedule.

Jenny Crosthwaite asked Mrs. Hutcherson about the 8<sup>th</sup> grade science results for school testing and the response was that they did well.

Another question was asked if there was going to be a strengthening of the transition from middle school to high school for students with learning disabilities. Mrs. Hutcherson confirmed that there would be.

### **Faculty Report:**

Mrs. Green gave the Faculty Report. She thanked the PFA for the wonderful lunch provided before school started and thanked the parents for all of the support they receive. She also stated how well the teachers worked with the administrative staff. She thanked Patty Cochrane for all of the help she provides.

### **President's Report:**

Vicki Fraser requested that the PFA Board be voted in again due to a vacancy over the summer. Monica Fitzgerald made a motion and it was seconded by Mary Phalon. The vote passed unanimously.

Vicki thanked all of the PFA board members who worked hard over the summer to get ready for Kick-Off, Fall Social, and the Magazine Drive. The Welcome Back Breakfast was a tremendous success. Next year they are looking having people RSVP to better determine food and beverage needs. Back to School Night had a great turnout and thanked all of the teachers for their hard work.

The parking situation in front of Foothill continues to be a problem. There was a policeman parked near the school to observe parking infractions by parents. The officer was there and did not issue one citation. Monica Fitzgerald thanked Vicki for all of her efforts in trying to get parents to obey parking rules. A suggestion was made that maybe we could get parent volunteers to stand in the red zones and bar illegal parkers. The Campus Supervisors try to do this to no avail.

### **Treasurer Report:**

Vicki read the Treasure Report for Kathy who had a conflicting meeting and was unable to attend the PFA meeting. More money has come in for the Education Support Fund and the number on the balance sheet should be able to be brought down another \$4,000. We have \$38,000 guaranteed for the Magazine Drive and hopefully we will be able to make more than that in sales. We have \$64,370 available for Strategic Planning.

### **Committee Reports (Handout at the meeting – not all given verbally):**

#### **Education Support Fund:**

Mary Phalon provided an update on the Education Support Fund. To-date 401 families have participated which is about 36% of the population.

154 6<sup>th</sup> grade participation (8%) who donated \$180 or below  
130 7<sup>th</sup> grade participation (2%) who donated \$180 or below

117 8<sup>th</sup> grade participation (5%) who donated \$180 or below

For those contributions more than \$180 the breakdown is as follows:

6<sup>th</sup> grade 1%  
7<sup>th</sup> grade 2%  
8<sup>th</sup> grade 1%

Mary will continue to send out notifications via the eGazette. Jenny Crosthwaite asked if there was any information to compare this year's contributions to previous years. Mary did not have that information with her. Penny Christie asked if we could push a payment plan and if that would up participation. A payment plan is available to those who wish to participate. Mary will do another Education Support Fund push in February or March.

### **Foothill Library Volunteer Report**

The Foothill parents were pleased to meet our new librarian, Diana Conner. The year has started our smoothly. We have more than 45 volunteers signed up and all brunch and lunch spots are filled for Monday-Thursday. Thanks to some help from the Book Fair volunteers, we have almost caught up on processing the backlog of books so they can be put in circulation. (Processing involves covering and tagging the books before they are put on the shelves.) The library is currently closed on Fridays due to budget cuts. However, Janet Sheehy and I met with Linda Hutcherson to discuss finding a place for quiet study (only) for students during Friday lunch. Linda agreed there is a need for a place for students who want a quiet place to study and is looking at what is available. Once we finalize a place and establish the policies of how it will work, we will reach out for our more volunteers to supervise this area.

Mary Hain Rinehart, Foothill Library Volunteer Coordinator, [mhr10@pacbell.net](mailto:mhr10@pacbell.net)

### **Directory Report**

The Directory team received a lot of hand written forms since the 19th of August, mostly from the 6th grade class. As of September 5, 2008 the last of the directory pages were collected and entered. Tuesday, September 9th, the directory volunteers are meeting to get their proofreading assignments and will have their job done by the 14th. Layout will begin on the 15th and the directory is scheduled to be delivered to the district printer by the 19th of September. This will give the printer 2 weeks to print, bind and get the directories back to the team by the week of October 6th. Distribution of the directories is tentatively scheduled for Monday, October 13, 2008.

Misa Siemons

### **Magazine Drive**

#### **Important dates for the 2008 2009 Foothill Magazine Drive**

**Thursday September 18th** - Kickoff.....packets go home....we will deliver to classrooms the last hour of the day

**Wednesday October 1** - Packets are turned in before school starts and tallying begins

**Monday October 6** - Turn in orders to Dennis

**Friday October 10** - Prize Day starts at 1:30

**Friday October 17th** - Limo Lunch 11:00 - 1:00 (approximately)

**Wednesday October 22** - Money Scramble 10 - 1:30

Linda Graham

## **Fall Social Committee Report**

We have sold 63 tickets and 30 wine glasses as of 9/8/08. Deadline to purchase tickets is 9/19. A maximum of 200 tickets can be sold for the event. Tickets are \$25 per person, \$14 for staff and wine or beer glasses with 3 drink tickets are \$20.

We have some exciting auction items already including Wente Bros golf for 4, Boot camp for 2, tickets to St. Mary's sports, Gift certificate to Club Renaissance, possible buy-in party plus many other items in the works. If people have an item to donate to the auction, they should contact Gail Markham at 934-8328.

The band Stagefrite will play at the event. There are two dads with kids at Foothill in the band- Dave Rinard and Mark Shone.

We are looking for a few more volunteers to help at the event. If anyone wants to help out the night of the event they can contact Michele Ramia at 934-2287 or [ramia@astound.net](mailto:ramia@astound.net).

Michele Ramia  
Amy Frazer  
Gail Markham  
Fall Social Committee

## **PAC Report:**

1. There was an "around the room" where every school represented could speak to teacher/staff vacancies and status of textbooks and other district supplies. We were able to thank the facilities department for our beautiful new field!
2. The Pleasant Hill Education Council is hosting a candidate's forum at the Pleasant Hill Community Center 10/9 at 7:00pm for Board of Education candidates. We are all invited and welcome to attend.
3. The District is looking for parent input on a revised Homework Policy for the District. As was done in developing the new (June 2008) Board Policy requiring the return of all quizzes and tests to students so that they can be taken home (except semester finals), the District wants to involve parents, administrators and teachers in developing a revised District Homework Policy. If you would like to participate in this process, please contact me ([jd\\_sheehy@yahoo.com](mailto:jd_sheehy@yahoo.com)). Status on the new Quiz/Test Return policy will be given at the October meeting.
4. The district is getting serious about response time to parent phone calls, e-mails etc. The expectation is 24-48 hours response time. If that is not happening the next step is contacting the site Principal.
5. Regarding the impact of budget cuts and state budget issues: Due to budget cuts classes are being staffed at the maximum number of students allowable. Some school sites are seeing an increase in enrollment, as some students are returning to public school from private, again due to the economy. Fliers were distributed announcing the media event that we had last Friday.

If there are District issues or questions you have, please contact me. The monthly PAC meetings are wonderful forums where our concerns have a place to be heard.

Many thanks!

Janet Sheehy

## **MDUSD Leadership Conference (Notes provide by Ruth Carver)**

### **SUPERINTENDENT McHENRY'S SPEECH:**

This is from Superintendent McHenry's speech on Monday. He also gave a report on Tuesday which is too detailed for me to type up, but I'm happy to discuss with anyone.

Mr. McHenry was reminded recently of the "Seven conditions for success for a school system":

1. Good teachers, good curriculum, and staff development
2. Student support - academic, social & health
3. Parents and community involvement, and staff collaboration
  - Parents knows most about their children
  - The district must respect parents
4. Safe schools
5. Assessment system with good data
  - Who's getting into classes etc?
  - Teacher turnover
6. Efficient organization - Pay employees on time and correct amount
7. Leadership: "if the leader has no vision, then the people perish"

Mr. McHenry listed what he learned from last Spring's "Community Meetings":

1. His personal presence is important at school sites
2. Parent-friendly schools
  - Respond in a timely manner
  - More rigor
  - More AP classes
  - Treat with respect
  - Parents need to see the tests including quizzes
3. Students want:
  - More elective classes
  - More rigor
  - More career counseling
  - Teachers who care and support

Mr. McHenry's conclusion:

1. Treat parents as partners
2. Every student must be well-served
3. Up to 40% of some groups are failing 9th grade English and Math, and this must be addressed

### **FIVE WORKSHOPS:**

#### **1. Small Learning Communities at MDUSD High Schools:**

The principals of College Park and Clayton Valley had a 3-year federal grant to create small learning communities (grouping students for 2 or more classes so they can make friends and get to know teachers better), but the grant is over and they're unable to get a new one. The experiment was very successful for the students at those schools - it helps students stay connected and reduces the drop-out rate (also research shows less drugs/alcohol, better safety, better attitudes etc). The only real expense was to pay for a prep period for a "teacher leader", and otherwise it was a matter of organizing the school's master schedule. This year, CVHS has a "Service Academy" (grouping classes, teachers work together on projects, and "club" activity after school - there's a waiting list), CPHS has a "Career Academy", and MDHS has several academies. It works best if a school has a block schedule or modified block schedule.

## **2. Unlock the Mysteries of Algebra I**

The new Director of Curriculum for math (Sandy Brucketta) and many principals and teachers discussed strategies to prepare students for Algebra I. These include "Hands On Equations", "Visualized Math", MIND books such as "Algebra Readiness", "Math-letics" and "Board Math". Walnut Acres is starting a new computer, web-based program called "First In Math". The State has intervention programs - can use textbook money. Last year Riverview Middle School had every 8th grader take Algebra I, and it was successful because the same percentage of students received passing grades.

## **3. CalSTAT Leadership Sites - middle schools**

This was discussing collaboration between special ed and general ed teachers. The principals and administrators discussed different strategies (I asked Ms. Hutcherson later and she said these are already in place at Foothill). They also recommended placing special ed classrooms in the middle of the school so the students feel included.

The Riverview principal discussed discipline and recommended the "Support/Calls System", which sounds like it's used for all students. It's a holistic approach to behavior. A teacher calls an administrator's cell phone and the administrator will be at the classroom within 5-7 minutes, will speak to the student and then return the student to the classroom (or arrange counseling etc.). This sets the tone that academics is most important (instead of the student wasting time going to the office). The administrator also will call the parents so they'll know the history if their child is suspended later on. Another strategy is "Respect/Attention" - 8th graders write about respect during lunch - so no time out in the office and no sending them to another classroom.

## **4. Parent Engagement**

Ms. Hutcherson led this workshop and can recommend a book. The focus is making the school "family friendly". Also "listen first", and make interaction into a "teachable moment". Schools should become a "community center". Someone said the Adult Ed program will provide teachers for Family Math.

## **5. Positive and Equitable School Climate**

Children start school happy, and then what happens? Why is the drop-out rate high especially for certain racial groups? The consensus from the workshop was that parents believe the students would remain happy IF THE TEACHERS HIGH EXPECTATIONS - students including racial minorities will meet those expectations - it's a form of respect. Administrators recommended this should be part of staff development - "how to teach the unteachable child" - "inner city teaching" which is how to connect with the child - and perhaps teachers can learn "cultural learning styles" for children from different cultures. A teacher at Oak Grove Middle School volunteered to look into this.