

**Meriwether Lewis Elementary School**  
**PTO Meeting**  
**July 14, 2011**

*Meeting held at the home of Skye O'Donnell*

In Attendance: Mary Chinn, Jennie Commins, Val Newcomb, Skye O'Donnell, Susan Park, Debbie Parmelee, Nancy Paulson, Brandi Piccirilli, Mistei Roebuck, Sue Ann Sarpy, Clark Smith, Jerilyn Teahan, James Younger

**I. President's Report**

A. Appointment of Directors

The Board voted to approve the following directorships: Communications - Jerilyn Teahan, School Staff Support - Sue Anne Sharpy, Community Events – Mistei Roebuck.

B. Vote on Revised Bylaws

The proposed revision to the bylaws were formally approved by Board member's signatures.

C. Discussion of PTO Board Goals and Objectives

An initial discussion of goals for the 2011-2012 year was begun. O'Donnell reminded Board members that the actual objectives for the PTO are outlined in the Bylaws. These objectives are:

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To promote quality education of children within the school and community.
2. To increase communication, understanding and cooperation among students, teachers, parents, administrators and the School Board.
3. To represent the interests of the neighborhoods of the Meriwether Lewis School district to school administrators, the School Board, the Board of Supervisors and the community at large.
4. To enhance the academic program and physical surrounding through fundraising and volunteer efforts.
5. To seek for our students the highest possible standard of education by assisting the Principal and staff to obtain adequate financial and administrative support.
6. To promote vested leadership and accountability in the school community by creating multiple leadership opportunities for members to share in achieving the goals of the PTO.

**GOALS**

Board members discussed their interest in a number of goals. These included 1.) better communications of PTO decision and programs to the MLS community, 2.) using Meriwether Matters to poll parent opinions/preferences on programs, issues, and goals for MLS, 3.) creating a standard form and process for teacher and administrator funding requests, and 4.) creating a capital campaign for replacing the gym floor. (There was also a humorous discussion as to the history of the removal of the "Explorer" as Meriwether's mascot and whether it should be a goal to bring by the "Explorer." Debbie Parmelee volunteered to find out the history of why the "Explorer" was replaced by the "Blue Bird.")

There was lengthy discussion concerning two of the proposed goals: the engagement of parents in PTO meetings and activities and the gym floor replacement. Concerning parental involvement in PTO meetings, member debated the merits of separating the PTO meeting from the fall Open House and the spring Choir Concert. Additionally, members talked about whether providing childcare, movies, or snacks for children of parents who attend PTO meetings would increase attendance. There was a recommendation for sharing the agenda and upcoming topics with the

general MLS community well in advance of the meeting and providing email addresses/phone numbers of Board members for parents to call concerning upcoming agenda/discussion items. Finally, it was recommended that the MLS community be better informed that every PTO meeting is open to the community and that, in a similar fashion to the School Board meetings, there will be a time allotted for "open/general comment" from parents at each meeting. Concerning the gym floor replacement, Clark Smith reported on his recent meeting with Bill Shifflett who oversees ACPS Building Maintenance. Clark reported that Meriwether's gym floor replacement has been moved to the year 2014-15 budget. The funding of the replacement has been moved multiple times, so there is little guarantee that it will remain in that spot. However, Clark also noted that the School Board was to discuss at their 7/14/11 meeting if Meriwether would be expanded. If the expansion was approved, the gym floor would be contained in that remodeling in 2012/2013. But, even if approved for this expansion, the funding would not be guaranteed until it was approved within the fiscal year it was to occur. With this uncertainty, Board many Board members expressed an interest in beginning a special capital campaign to fund the replacement of the gym floor. The estimated cost of replacing the floor was cited by Clark (per his meeting with Shifflett) as between \$40,000 and \$60,000.

The Board will further discuss these suggestions and prioritize goals at the next meeting.

D. Discussion of Board Policy/Procedures on Funding Requests

James Younger explained to new Board members the history of how funding requests from teachers had been processed. In years past, most funding requests were submitted at the conclusion of the school year and funded under the category "end-year gift to MLS." However, this process left little opportunity for the Board members to review and discuss the expenditures. Therefore, there has been an effort to improve the process by having 1.) a standardized funding request form and 2.) a stream-lined process of review utilizing the PTO Teacher's Representative and the Principals as initial first point of submission. Board members agreed that the Principals and Board's Teacher Representative should, in general, review and approve faculty funding requests prior to submitting them for Board for approval. These funding request forms should be submitted by the Teacher's Representative and/or Principals to the one of the Board Presidents at least one week prior to a regularly scheduled PTO meeting. The Board President will then scan and email the requests with the meeting agenda and previous meeting minutes to all Board members for review prior to the meeting. Realistically, since the Board does not know until later in the year the extent of funds available, large funding requests will likely still be funded later in the fiscal year. However, funding requests can still be made and approved throughout the year. Brandi Piccirilli volunteered to bring a copy of a request form to the Board's next meeting for approval.

James also highlighted that MLS PTO annually gives each teacher (including the specialists) a budget of \$400 annually to use at their discretion for classroom expenses or educational enrichment (a new teacher receives \$450 and a current teacher moved into a new position received \$425). To his knowledge, this is the highest level of funding provided by any other ACPS PTO to individual teachers annually.

E. Nominations for and Discussion of Remaining Appointments for Committee Chairs

The position of Fundraising Director remains open. Val Newcomb nominated Michael McKee and Susan Ketron for this position. Nancy Paulson agreed to work with Val on the recruitment of the Ketron-McKees to this position.

F. 2011-2012 PTO Calendar of Events

Board members reviewed the draft calendar provided by Skye O'Donnell. Corrections were noted. The Applebee's Pancake Breakfast date will be added at a later date since the company does not

schedule the 2012 dates until early in December (Skye O'Donnell will be contacting Applebee's on behalf of the PTO). Additionally, it was decided that MLS PTO meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of each month during the school calendar. Finally, a deadline of July 22 was selected as the last day to make additions/changes to the calendar. As of July 22, the calendar will be set for publication on the website, in parent handouts, and in the MLS directory.

## **II. Vice President's Report**

### **A. Fall Fun Fair Update**

Susan Park reported that the date of October 21 has been set and that the theme will be "Fall" (apples, pumpkins, leaves, fall colors, hay, etc.) As a reminder, this year the Fun Fair is moving from the spring semester to the fall – combining the successful programs of the Fall Festival with the Fun Fair. The events will be scheduled as primarily indoor activities with the potential of placing some of the activities outside if weather permits. Board members recommended having "Freaky Friday Fun Fair" shirts again this year. Board members also liked the idea of having a "chili cookoff."

## **III. Principal's Report**

### **A. SOL test results**

Brandi Piccirilli reported that SOL results had already been mailed to parents. Although scores will not be reported formally by the ACPS until later, Brandi noted that MLS had performed very well in all area.

### **B.**

## **IV. Treasurer's Report**

### **A. Budget Updates**

James Younger reported that the June Treasurer's report had been emailed to all PTO Board members. He noted that Rick Emery would be forwarding last year's budget to all the committee directors and committee chairs. From the feedback of these directors/chairs, Rick would be creating the 2011-2012 budget. This is the budget that will be presented at the Open House on September 13.

## **IV. Enrichment Zone Coordinator's Report**

### **A. Pricing Structure Change**

James Younger reported that parents will no longer receive a "multi-session" or "siblings" discount. However, the 4-week and 5-week classes would be priced differently, reflecting the number of classes actually taught during the session. The afterschool program discount will still apply.

### **B. Fall Program Updates**

The request for fall programs has already been emailed to teachers. There will likely be a change in the language programs for the fall. The Chinese instructor has moved and the French instructor may also be unavailable. James is in contact with the "Speak Language Center" about potential instructors for the language offerings. There will be one 4-week session and one 5-week session in both the fall and spring semesters.

### **C. Salary for MLS Teacher EZ Instructors**

The current salary for MLS teacher who teach a EZ class is \$60.00 per hour = \$90.00 per class. Salaries for outside specialists are negotiated by the EZ Coordinator.