

11/18/11 PTO Meeting

## Principal's Report:

Dr. Celeste Harris

Dr Harris commented about the paper shortage for teachers to make copies. Some teachers do not make copies because of the use of internet. For example if teacher A uses the internet and doesn't need the estimated amount then those will go to teacher B. Dr. Harris also commented that the budget is necessary to make sure we are where we need to be by the end of the year, and telling teachers to watch their limit. We won't run out of copies, we will just cut back somewhere else. For example out of town professional development is off the table now. It costs the district \$35 per day to pay a teacher for food and travel expenses as well as cost needing subs in the classroom while the teacher is out.

\*Reading Center Update:

Money from the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary donations "Bouquet for Books" is being used to purchase books for the program. Currently working on a 3 fold brochure to explain what the program is about.

Looking at schedule for 2012 already for numbers of 5<sup>th</sup> graders coming in, we will lose more staff if the 6<sup>th</sup> grade count isn't the same as the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Schools are fighting for kids to attend their schools. 12 tours have been completed and 4 of the 12 will be attending Portage North Middle the upcoming school year. Parents are being very clear what they want for their children.

Conferences feedback from parents went well!! What PTO did for the meals has left the teachers in AWE! BIG THANK YOU from the teachers. Somehow the teachers want to return the favor and they were told PTO did it because we truly appreciate them.

Staff meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays just ask if we want to attend.

\*Canine Units that test for illegal items on school property will be here next week.

## Vice Principal's report:

Mr. Medd commented on the following:

\*Traffic flow in the parking lot:

Currently people don't follow flow of traffic when dropping off students. The problem occurred when the second drive into the North Middle School parking lot was blocked off. The High School flow of traffic is much better now however it didn't benefit North Middle. In the past Mr. Medd commented that there were people directing traffic and on occasion he and Mr. Moiles would make their presence known hoping parents would "get a clue" to follow the flow of traffic. A possible solution is signs for designated "flow and Go" or Stopping lane. Approximately 4 permanent signs will be needed to designate what each lane is to do.

Other ideas:

- 1) It will cost a large amount of money to use cement curbs. Landscape timbers are ideal. The cost is \$180 for 60 timbers but will have to be replaced when they break down. There would be no cost for labor because we could get the custodians to help put them out. Currently working on a proposal to present to the PTO once all possible ideas have been exhausted.
- 2) Comments from parents about how to handle traffic were to get volunteer parents to assist until this gets under control. Contact the principals at Angling Road and Haverhill on how they handled the safety issue. Comments included how fast both schools were able to get this under control. There was no cost to the school, the district paid for it.

Mr. Medd will check with the district to see if they will pay for signs/painted lanes that will improve traffic flow for safety.

\*New grading software: BUGS NOT WORKED OUT YET

Received email from Pinnacle, the grading software company, about reports from the grading program and they have not figured this out yet. Seems as if we are the first ones to even use this program that was sold to us. In the end it will be beneficial, just getting it set up right now is a process. Please spread the word they are doing everything they can to help us and please be patient.

\*Guest Speaker:

Judy Beam speaking about PEF: Portage Education Fund

The PEF was established in 1990, is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit that has awarded more than \$390,000 in support of students, staff and district initiatives throughout Portage Schools. The PEF has assisted hundreds of students and faculty with grants to cover a variety of costs not typically covered by district or individual school budgets. The PEF is made up of representatives from each school, members of the community and local business leaders.

Portage Public Schools has to cut millions of dollars from its budget. While PPS has made every effort to prevent cuts, the district cannot continue to provide an outstanding education without financial support. Our schools are no longer receiving sufficient support from Lansing.

By law monies raised from a bond initiative cannot be used for classroom activities or teacher salaries. The bond was earmarked for new schools, renovations and improved technology. Bond monies cannot be used to pay operational expenses.

Who should contribute: Portage Public Schools' parents and alumni, local homeowners, and area businesses all share an essential role in the success of our public school system.

How will funds be allocated: In the spring, the district will identify needs and share them with the PEF: Now Steering Committee, which is made up of school and community volunteers. They will then formulate a proposal on how the donations should be allocated. The Steering Committee will then present its proposal to the PEF Board for a final vote. In the final step, the Portage Public Schools Board of Education votes to accept the donation.

How much should I contribute: We are requesting \$30 a month, which is the equivalent of approximately a \$1 a day – that's less than the average coffee or soda. We hope every family and area business will contribute to the extent that they can. Visit [www.portageeducationfoundation.org](http://www.portageeducationfoundation.org) for more details.

Ways to give:

An Endowed fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, your gift goes farther when you take advantage of the Michigan Community Foundation Tax Credit. Visit [www.kalfound.org](http://www.kalfound.org) for more details. Donations need to be turned in by the end of the year (2011). Or donation forms are available or give on line at [www.portageeducationfoundation.org](http://www.portageeducationfoundation.org)

**This information is not all publicized please spread the word!**

**This program is being cut Dec 31, 2011**

\*Husky Den: Joel VanWinkle and Heidi Traver

Boo's: 360 sold at .50 each. \$40 each for the lollie pops. Thinking about doing this again with Candy Canes for the Holidays. We could use help during lunches handing these out. Week before school gets out, we will make an announcement that the students can purchase these. They will be passed out Friday the last day of School.

Order forms are out for spirit wear for the holidays!! Sleep wear available.

\$22 orders need to be in by Tues Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>.

\*Penny Wars: Donna Dillon

Janet Ingersoll speaking on behalf of Donna: 6<sup>th</sup> grade is in the lead -619 points, 8<sup>th</sup> grade 2<sup>nd</sup> place -1235 points and 7<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> -2466 points. Total collected so far is \$178.53.

From Library fines 6<sup>th</sup> grade has \$15.11, 7<sup>th</sup> grade has \$26.75 and 8<sup>th</sup> grade has \$15.50 with a total of \$56.36.

\*Teacher Appreciation: Jodi VanderWelle

The meals provided for teacher conferences were a Success and ran smoothly. No money needed from PTO Donations to provide for this. Cash and food donations from Parents came through. Teachers extremely appreciated the meals and drinks so much that they wanted to return the favor.

Directory: Renee Smith commented that due to computer glitch nothing can be done at this point

\*Mini Grants: Shelbi Cummings

Ms. Howrigan,

It is the pleasure of the PNMS PTO to approve your request of \$100.00 for the purchase of incentive items to be used in the Huskie Help program. The PTO is eager to support teacher efforts which are foundational to "Failure is NOT an option."

Mrs. Toth,

It is the pleasure of the PTO to extend approval for your mini-grant request of \$100.00 for the purchase of items used to incite students in the areas of respect, responsibility and relationship in your 7th and 8th grade ELA classes. The PTO is eager to support teacher efforts such as this at PNMS.

Mrs. Dalecki,

**Ms. Kalecki,**

The PTO executive board is pleased to approve your request for funding in the amount of \$25.95 for the purchase of posters and bookmarks to be used in your 6th grade ELA and 8th grade science classes. The PTO is eager to support your efforts related to the Portage North Middle School initiative of student growth in the areas of reading and writing.

\* Barnes and Noble event: Janet Ingersoll

2<sup>nd</sup> annual PTO fundraiser is on Friday December 2<sup>nd</sup> 6-9pm. Tickets were handed out during conferences with the donation code printed on them. Mr. Bartz and Mr. Jordan are on board with helping encourage kids to perform at the event. Mr. Swanson is undecided at this time to perform like he did last year.

\*Academic Awards at lunch: Tuesday November 22<sup>nd</sup>

82% performed a 3. (B grade) Or higher

Currently looking at the kids who didn't qualify, how could we reward them if they can show improvement. It's important that no one gets left out.

Joell VanWinkle commented that if those kids get the same award or if there will be a different type of reward, trying to not devalue the student constantly striving for that A.

Shelbi Cummings commented that we are trying to encourage all kids and letting them know up front what is expected without creating more problems.

\*Comments from attending Parents:

Anne Marie commented for in the future we could raise money at conferences with a food/drink table for parents that come from work

A comment made by an attending parent that Mr. Jordan and music parents want to send 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to Cedar Point: band, choir possible orchestra. The kids may have a chance to perform at the park as well.

Jodi VanderWeele heard that Kalamazoo County may be offering School of Choice County wide.

Jason Koscinski asking about locks being broke into and switched around has anything been reported from other kids?

Mr. Medd commented that he wasn't aware of this happening. Most of the time kids give their combination to friends. Stephanie Taylor commented that there is a You Tube video on how to break into locks.