

ROE PTO BOARD MEETING

Minutes for October 13, 2010

Meeting was brought to order at 6:04

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| 1. Frances Moore-Jones | 14. Debra Kenna |
| 2. Dianas Cimino | 15. Shenequa Animashaun |
| 3. Holly Shilstone | 16. Ann Tanabe |
| 4. Charla Carroll | 17. Natalie Cordova |
| 5. Sandra Ahlhorn | 18. Phyllis Epps |
| 6. Liz Palmer | 19. Wendy Sides |
| 7. Ann Guerra | 20. Stephanie Moll |
| 8. Terri Gerber | 21. Tina Salem |
| 9. Robert Woelfel | 22. Maria Onofrow |
| 10. Tammy Yum | 23. Paul Heyburn |
| 11. Meredith Maierson | 24. David Rose |
| 12. Janann Pittman | 25. Lesli Gisi |
| 13. Michele Dahlquist | 26. Susan Shenker |

Frances welcomed everyone and the meeting was brought to order.

TOPIC: Secretary's Report

SPONSOR: Charla Carroll

- The minutes from the September Board Meeting were presented and requested to be approved. Janann motioned, Holly Shilstone seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

TOPIC: President's Report

Sponsor: Frances Moore-Jones

- Frances introduced our Parent Visionaries, Phyllis Epps and Vernon Pontes, who could not be here tonight.

Phyllis Epps gave a report on the activities.

- There is a primary audit being done on magnet schools. Magnet Schools of America is conducting an audit of the magnet system in HISD. Superintendent Grier is familiar with their work from other cities. The timeline of the audit is very condensed. The Parent Visionary Group (PVG) wanted to make parents and other stakeholders aware so they can make their feelings known. Trustees meet all this week and parent speakers have time to speak.
- Magnet Schools of America has views with regard to Gifted and Talented programs. They tend to take a view that a magnet subject should permeate the whole school.
- Q: Are they visiting schools?
- A: Yes every magnet school will be visited by MGA

- Q: Should we write letters to make our feelings known?
- Phyllis: Trustees are meeting with groups all this week.
- Ms. Shenker: There are 2 audits ongoing: a Gifted and Talented audit and the Schools of America Audit. We are presenting that we have the best way to teach to gifted and talented as well as others who attend.
- Phyllis suggested that those who would like to make their feelings known do so with visits, emails and letters to their trustees, administrators and principals.

- Q: When they say they'll centralize and take away options, could that happen?
- Principal Shenker said that no decisions about the magnet program will be made exclusively as a result of this audit. The magnet review is going quickly but nothing will happen without approval from the Board of Education.

New Fourth Grade Rep

- Frances announced that current Fourth-Grade Rep Lee Riley moved to London, so Anadeli Bencomo has been nominated as a new 4th grade representative. Sandra Ahlhorn motioned that we vote Anadeli Bencomo in as 4th Grade Representative. Janann seconded. Motion carried.

- **Frances Moore-Jones talked about some new focuses for the year.**

1. **BIG IDEAS.** Last year the PTO started a “Big Ideas” group and one of those big ideas was the potential addition of a middle school to ROE. That is the main focus of this committee. According to a Houston Chronicle article, some other area schools are also looking into it for example Poe Elementary and West U. The committee will collaborate with other schools where it makes sense. The committee consists of Cassandra McZeal, Lynn Marsh, Vanessa Gilmore, Susan Shenker, Frances Moore-Jones and Holly Shilstone.

2. **BUILDING COMMUNITY.** A second focus will be strengthening the ROE community. This will happen through:

- a. Volunteerism
- b. Events beyond fundraising -- movie night, parent workshops, growing a garden, ...

C. Communicate – electronically and on paper in a meaningful way

3. **DEVELOPMENT.** The last is the push for development of relationships with parents, businesses and foundations to make ROE as strong as it can be. The Development committee will talk about the purpose and objectives of this committee later in the program.

TOPIC: Internal School Relations

SPONSOR: Meredith Maierson

- First off, we are no longer asking for reallocation of the budget as was listed on the agenda.
- My job is morphing to include things like Bullying Prevention, Community Building, Carpooling and all these things are interrelated.
- We have funds to pay for Movie Night! And events such as this will be part of Internal School Relations' budget.
- Susan Shenker: the parent response to Movie Night was great. It was so relaxing – really wonderful Meredith.
- Meredith: everything is on track for next week's workshop and I'm just trying to prepare snacks for the attendees.

TOPIC: Smart Board Demo

SPONSORS: Susan Shenker and Lesli Gisi

- The school bought Smart Boards for 4th and 5th grades and teachers are incorporating them into the curriculum.
- Lesli Gisi says there is so much flexibility with these boards, upload things, write on them, use the tool bars and putting things together quickly in front of the class.
- They have built in shape recognition, math and other tool bars. There's a page recording feature. With the basic program that we use the kids can create and solve their own problems.
- From a teachers perspective building lessons can be time-consuming, but it comes with a database of lessons that are already created: The Smart Exchange. Third through 5th have it and grades 1 and 2 have a bid out and will have it this year.
- Training involves two, 3-hour sessions that come with the package and they have become so popular that the District has started in house training.
- Team leaders have been identified as Elizabeth Eastman and David Vialard and we try to keep them accessible.
- It also works with Elmos. There are so many ways to incorporate technology into teaching. Every child gets a chance to be hands-on. Training had smart pads that could be used remotely in the classroom by the teacher. Right now you can use the laptops.
- Since it is web-based it has auto updates and lots of tools and programs the teachers can incorporate into their curriculum.
- Q: Ann Guerra asked if anyone is working on getting stools?
- Q: Liz Palmer: Can you think of what kind of stools you want? Susan Shenker agreed to let us know.

TOPIC: Principal's report

SPONSOR: Susan Shenker

- We are using an instructional program called the Independent Investigation Method that starts with the entire class participating with the goal of individual research. The students pull sources together, record facts, arrange it in a meaningful way and develop it into larger concepts toward creation of their "product".

- The PTO paid for this training.
- I saw it in action recently with 5th graders. They used this method to make a product but the catch was they had only 1 hour in which to do it.
- Some kids acted out skits, some developed power point presentations. It was very exciting knowing that this process can be applied ANYwhere.
- A number of schools have asked about it: TH Rogers, Harvard, Twain. Now the district is putting on a Train the Trainer class.

Technology Segment

- We have a goal to have smart boards in grades 1 and 2. For Kinder we are exploring alternatives that require less dexterity and are considering “Smart Tables”.
- There is a PTO-funded I-Touch Cart that has been ordered for all classes.
- An attendance award from the district came with the prize of a 30–laptop cart, which has been ordered.
- A mobile Skype video conferencing station has been ordered through a parent donation through the PTO. This may allow connection to IB schools worldwide!
- 4 I-pads came through a parent donation!

Differentiation Training funded by the PTO last year is being implemented.

- ‘Guided Reading’ is our differentiation reading program
- ‘Words their way’ is the spelling program.
- Math differentiation is an area for opportunity for ROE.
- Most classes are growing and thriving. This approach allows kids to think about their own learning.
- Pre assessment is the heart of differentiation. It helps teachers place the kids. For example, with ‘Words their Way’ sorts are done in classroom to help kids see the patterns. With this system no one is ever “done”. If you are out of words for your grade level, then you start to study Latin based words.
- Math is the biggest growth area for ROE. We are looking at ways to stretch kids who are ready for it.
- Most classrooms are growing and thriving with differentiation.
- Q: Are we stretching teachers too far?
- Susan Shenker: There is some stress on our teachers but I think it’s a healthy amount. Teachers deserve to grow. You can’t create a system for the lowest common denominator. Katie Morgan, Michele Dahlquist and Becca Pfeiffer are our “Teacher” support. We have an incredible team and I know that this is the right way to grow.



TOPIC: Options for the Spanish Curriculum

SPONSOR: Ms. Shenker

- Sra. Vazquez will attend a professional development conference with funding from the PTO. As an IB school, a second language should be a priority and students need to practice at home. We put together a proposal using web-based Rosetta Stone and we would have a ‘Spanish lab’.

Initial startup would be \$47,150 the first year. Annual costs after that would be around \$11,000. Frances and Ms. Shenker discussed having the school pay for the annual license of \$11K and the PTO pays for laptop cart, headphones, and mouses. This option is low risk, because the laptop cart and headphones could be used for another program later, if we move away from Rosetta Stone or if another pressing need arises that requires technology.

- Ms. Shenker: Most ancillary classes are about exploration. The reality is, kids who pick up a second language use it more than once a week. Frances mentioned kids must use a language daily to learn it which is why a web-based program is such an asset to ROE children.
- Discussion came up about what other schools are doing and that ROE needs a comprehensive package.
- What about our Spanish teacher? Ms. Vasquez supports this idea. Susan Shenker will research information regarding what other schools are using and with a recommendation as to the purchasing of this system. PTO will not move forward buying anything until we hear from her on this issue.

Science

- The science lab is below district standards. The large multipurpose room is perfect for our new science lab, so RAISE THE PADDLE!!

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TOPIC: Development Committee

Sponsor: Stephanie Moll

- Our purpose is to unite and decentralize our fundraising efforts rather than a bunch of small events. We are currently looking for
 - Community sponsors
 - Corporate matching
 - Foundation funds
 - Parent participation at any level
 - Grandparents
 - Some companies give paid volunteer hours
 - In-kind donations
 - Alumni program
- **Grand total to date from this committee to ROE stands at \$66,945!**
- Emily Madison and the committee are hoping to raise \$15k from Fall Frenzy Underwriters
- We have 3 new parents adding to our efforts. We are currently building our prospects list. We welcome others helping on the Development Committee, as the new year will bring a new push for sponsors, as business and foundation budgets generally renew at the beginning of each calendar year.

TOPIC: Fun Run

SPONSOR: Natalie Cordova

- This event raised close to \$3500. It was a good event and with continued development it can be even more of a profit center with great benefits for the sponsors.

TOPIC: Specialists Report

SPONSORS: Janann Pittman, David Rose

- As was mentioned before, Raise the Paddle funds raised at the Fall Frenzy auction will go to the Science Room. David Rose will assess the needs of the room and Janann Pittman, an architect and PTO's Specialist Rep, is working with him closely to produce the final product.
- David says the Science lab is woefully inadequate.
- The things in a science lab that are important are creative discovery space, access to materials, having space to work, a place to take abstract concepts
- Of course, tables, storage, gathering space for teacher demonstrations, sinks, computer workstations.
- Our lab is restricted by the room. We think the multi-purpose room can be used as our lab with a few modifications.
- So with the Raise the Paddle dollars we start with the sinks, counters, teachers area, demo area, Smart Board and remaining funds will buy supplies, if possible.
- All this has to be done within the scope of our needs; teaching to kinder students one class and 5th graders the next, looking at the standards for Texas and HISD requirements. The ability to have multiple demo areas set up at the same time is important. Some issues with the multipurpose room are water and firewalls.
- We also want enough space so that teachers can go into the Science Lab with their classrooms to do a brief lesson, especially during Mr. Rainn's "off" times.
- Q: Liz Palmer: do you have any numbers?
- Janann: we're working on it. There are some complications with the water and drainage. For Raise the Paddle the reality is about 30K. We can use that for Phase I and perhaps other future money for Phase II. Frances added, we are looking for a corporate matching fund via the Development Committee and will continue to seek sponsors for the Science Lab after the Fall Frenzy event.

Sandra Ahlhorn motioned to close the meeting

Holly Shilstone seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned @ 8:06.