

## CHANGO ELEMENTARY PTA MEETING

**Location: Chango Cafe**

**Date: September 20, 2010**

**First meeting of the school year 2010-2011 commenced at 7:05 p.m.**

**ATTENDEES:** Six Board members were present; Karen Calhoun, Noel Day, Suezen Brown, Danielle Canterbury, Maureen Flaherty, Krista Ferguson. Also in attendance: A. McCarty, K. Skarka, C. Cook, T. Harris, M. Lucey, I. Sepulveda, G. Litvaitis, T.Dinst., D. McNulty, S. Roy, L. Hodge, K. Strother, K. Levy, D. Montague, D. Rigney, A. DeMarco, C. Shorkey, J. Galpin, S. Pennock, J. Wade, R. Casale, P. Thompson, M. Vlachich, T. Rivera, L. Meehan, V. Boomhower, J. VanPelt, A. Amino, S. Lamar, A. Quattrocchi, N. Kinkead, S. Jadhan

PTA President, Karen Calhoun, introduced herself and then the Board introduced themselves. Everyone who attended the meeting also introduced themselves, followed by a fun, icebreaker game.

**Principal's Report (Karin Skarka):** Mrs. Skarka welcomed all the new and returning parents and reported a great start to the new school year. School fire drills are being conducted and practiced. The last drill will include the Round Lake Fire Department where they conduct a test to see how well the school is prepared. Mrs. Skarka also recommended that parents practicing fire drills at home.

We have 500 children enrolled in Chango. We are the smallest Shenendehowa school currently, however, with all the new construction and development in our area, that will likely change in the future.

Regarding NYS testing, the Social Studies exam will no longer be conducted in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In the spring, language arts and math testing for NYS will be conducted. Students previously scoring at a Level 3 were not translating into passing Regents for the SAT to prepare for college, therefore, scores were rescaled. Our students in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> did very well on the NYS testing this past year. Special education students did not score very well. Any special education child or child who didn't score a 3 is being monitored and will be getting help with academic advisors and Mrs. Skarka to bring all students to a Level 3. All schools are now being held to a higher benchmark.

Open houses are being conducted next week.

Field trip committees are being defined and refined. Three field trips per grade level will be the maximum. There is a cap on costs for field trips. PTA field trips may be affected this year as well. It was announced that if any parent has an idea for a field trip to send a note in to teachers. There will be no field trip repeats.

There is a school partnership team meeting this Friday, September 24th. They will be assessing data from the NYS testing on how we can help our students perform better and maintain the level to which they are performing.

It was requested that if there are questions regarding a child's schedule to contact their teachers. The school nurse should be contacted regarding medical information/questions. Transportation should be contacted regarding bus schedules and/or changes. It was announced that Chango does not switch buses for transportation. The Transportation Department and Mrs. Callahan should be contacted regarding bus incidents and/or changes. School bus drivers do review bus rules and give bus referrals which are emailed to our school so that the information is received ASAP.

**District Board Liaison (Andrew McCarty) :** District goals are listed on the main webpage. If anyone has a question for Mr. McCarty during the school year, he can be reached via email from the main district webpage. Mr. McCarty was able to tour our district's schools and meet the principals and teachers.

Virtual field trips for classrooms are being explored.

The district did not have as much construction this year as in years past, but there were many camp and enrichment activities for our students.

Mr. McCarty stated NYS math scores were up for Grades 4 and 5. With NYS ELA testing, 4<sup>th</sup> graders were up on scores. Mr. McCarty stated our testing standards need to be raised to meet international levels. Race for the top grant money will offset the budget over the next 2 years. AIS will receive money for special education students who scored low on NYS testing.

There will be reorganization on the district's administrative side this year; condensed on the board side. Year end financials were approved. A budget meeting is being held next week regarding next year. Teacher contracts renegotiations are up.

We won a grant for solar panel installation at HSE. Mr. McCarty encouraged staff and parents write to obtain local grants for our classrooms and schools.

A question was posed regarding if full day kindergarten will ever come to fruition. Mr. McCarty stated that there is not enough room at schools to accommodate full day kindergarten at this time.

**PTA Membership (Gigi Litvaitis):** We have 137 members, 15 staff members at this time. Everyone was encouraged to come to meetings and help get more people to sign up as members. If 100% participation goal is reached by staff members or by an individual classroom, a prize will be awarded to that group from the PTA.

**Treasurer's Report (Suezen Brown):** There is \$8,700 in the PTA budget to start the new year. Everyone was encouraged to suggest ideas on how to help spend the money for our students. Questions regarding the budget were addressed, after which the budget was approved. The budget is available for anyone to review, if they so wish.

**Fundraising (Danielle Canterbury and Maureen Flaherty):** Four fundraisers will be conducted this fall. September 27<sup>th</sup>, the Joe Corbi books will come home with the students (cookie/pizza options, etc.), and orders can also be placed online, snack sacks from Snacktaxi.com will go home with kids, all to be returned on Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy the City coupon books will be available to purchase at the Back to School

BBQ and open houses. Tickets for the gift baskets will begin at the Back to School BBQ and end with drawings to be held at the Harvest Fest on Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>. Ticket prices for the baskets are \$2/ea., 3 for \$5 and 8 for \$10.

**Arts & Education (Nancy Kinkead):** A meeting was held with teachers from Grades 2, 3, 4, 5. Kindergarteners do not go on field trips. Grade 1 does not attend many field trips, though some programs are brought in for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade students. Scotia Glenville programs were booked. A proposed budget will be approved soon. There will be character education for the entire school, the character counts program in which Mrs. Barbagelata is in charge. Trips to Proctors are being reviewed with a possible school trip to see The Lion King. 4H will be coming to our school with presentations. Ideas from the group were encouraged. It was stated that combination trips with another school(s) lessens our costs. It was encouraged that if anyone in attendance was interested, grants may be written.

**Events (Krista Ferguson):** Health screenings for kindergarteners are coming up on Sept. 29th/30th, and three volunteers were needed for a two-hour commitment, either 9:30-11:30 and 1-3.

The date of the Harvest Fest is Oct 23rd, and volunteers are needed for one-hour shifts and food donations. A call for help will be coming out soon via the Chango Yahoo Group.

Krista requested volunteer sheets be filled out and turned in ASAP. She also reminded parents that a volunteer application needed to be completed and approved by the school before volunteering for any event at Chango.

Tamora Dinoto spoke briefly regarding school photos. Picture day is Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>. Parents can choose from thumbnails sent home or go online to choose photos. The photo retake day is Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>. Packets will be coming home soon after board approval.

Idalia Sepulveda and Sharyn Roy spoke regarding the Back to School BBQ/softball game. All food orders have been placed. There are 55 families signed up. Parents were given one last day to place food orders. Volunteers were needed from one-hour shifts up to three hours for this event. There will be a staff vs. parents softball game being held during the BBQ. Two parents' games will commence, followed by a championship game with the winning parents' team against the staff.

At the end of the meeting, the raffle winner's names were drawn. The winners were: Danielle Rigney and Savita Jadhav.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

**The next PTA meeting will commence on October 25<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 in the Chango Library.**