

**Billerica Parent Advisory Council for Special Education**  
**Meeting Minutes for October 17, 2007**  
**7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

Present: PAC Officers: Priscilla Aufiero (Secretary), Joanne Barry (Vice-Chair), Michelle DeParasis (Treasurer), Donna Gadbois (Contact), Sue Hopkins (Chair), Gina Maniscalco (Public Relations), Dr. Steven German; Parents

Location: Billerica High School Lecture Hall

10 People in Attendance

Sue Hopkins, PAC Chair, introduced the Board Members and welcomed the attendees.

Grant Funds for the Parent Handbook

- Sue Hopkins reported that she spoke to Sara Mills, a past PAC member, with regard to the allocated Town grant funds for the Parent Handbook. It was determined that we will obtain a copy of Brookline's Public School PAC Parent Handbook (which was the original plan) and use their handbook as a template and modify where applicable. A motion was made for Sue to contact Brookline's PAC to be sure that they are still in favor of our original plan to use their parent handbook as a template. All in favor; none opposed.

Fundraising Ideas

- Diane Katz recommended an evening of gift giving as a fund raising source. Joanne Barry understood that this is a good idea but expressed her concern because the last time we did this type of fundraiser, we did not profit at all; probably because it is a common fundraiser among the Town organizations. This topic was tabled for further discussion.
- Dr. German suggested using Barnes and Nobles as a fundraising resource. Gina Maniscalco will contact Barnes and Nobles to see what they offer to charitable organizations.
- Another recommendation was a Penny Benefit; we could ask people to donate their pennies and have corporate sponsors match the donations.
- Donna Gadbois recommended holding a "Restaurant Night". This would involve less commitment from PAC members and we could do it as little or as often as we want. We could go Town-wide soliciting support.

- Michele DeParasis mentioned that Jordan's Furniture also does events similar to the above; she will contact them to get more information.
- Diane also suggested a Fundraising Calendar. We could solicit donations from vendors to raffle off each day/week.
- Donna also mentioned a "neighbor-to-neighbor" donation at Cricket's Flowers. Spend \$35 or more in this store and \$5 will be donated to the PAC. She suggested that we could put a link on our website to get the word out to people.
- Sue recommended forming a subcommittee to brainstorm fundraising ideas, resources and venues. Joanne, Michele and Diane volunteered to take on this role and report back to the PAC with their ideas.

#### Guest Speakers

- Dr. German reported that there is \$1,500 available in the budget for public service-types guest speakers. He recommended Steven Shore, an adult autistic speaker and Charlie Appelstein, an author, and a positive message type of person. Sue will meet with Dr. German and determine some dates for these speakers.
- Joanne suggested that we should consider a bigger venue, i.e. Town Hall or High School Auditorium. This would enable our audience to be able to find a central location with convenient parking. Gina Maniscalco will contact Town Hall regarding the procedure for reserving rooms.

#### Date Change for November

- Sue mentioned that the November PAC meeting will have to be change because it conflicts with the Elementary Schools' Parent-Teacher night.
- Dr. German suggested having the meeting after the November 8<sup>th</sup> presentation. All in favor. Sue will notify Carol Rose and ask her to post this change. Dr. German also reported that Tom Woodbury will be able to attend this presentation.

#### Mentoring Program

- Sue described the mentoring program that took place at the Tewksbury Public School (elementary level). She would like to implement a similar program in Town but is not sure of which School Principal would come on board with this new idea. Donna mentioned that this is something that should probably come from the School District and not the PAC. Joanne also recommended to check in with the schools first, to make sure there is no duplication of effort.

- Donna mentioned that some parents will go into classrooms (K and 1<sup>st</sup>) to explain their child's disability to the class. Maybe the PAC could facilitate something like this.
- Gina mentioned that we should find out from Dr. Serio if they know what programs are running at the schools. Sue will ask Dr. Serio to find out what the different schools are doing and to be certain that all children benefit from these programs. Establishing a partnership with regular education is very important.
- Sue will ask Dr Safier's secretary to send a mailing to schools and find out what programs are running at each school, i.e., peer mentoring, character education, etc. (including after school programs).

#### State House Visit

- Sue reported that she went to the State House yesterday to hear testimonies on the few special education acts reviewed. Joanne mentioned how important it is to contact your State Representative to let them hear your voice.

#### Treasurer's Report

- Michele DeParasis distributed the Treasurer's Report. 1) As of 9/30/07, the account balance is \$5,959.11. 2) The PAC received a favorable ruling for federal tax exempt status. 3) We will need to complete the process of registering with the State of Massachusetts as a tax-exempt organization. In order to do this the original articles of organization and current by-laws will have to be submitted along with a \$35 payment. 4) Our fiscal year needs to be determined. It was motioned that the PAC fiscal year begin on September 1<sup>st</sup> and end on August 30 (to coincide with the school year). All in favor. 5) A determination was made to distribute the Got Book checks to the schools PTO's after the 11/8 meeting. Gina will contact the Billerica Minuteman to be present for the presentation.

#### Other Business

- The Got Books bin at the Kennedy School needs to be moved to another area of the school property before the snow fall. Joanne suggested Sue check in with Mr. Antonelli before moving the bins. All lot of effort went into the planning and placement of the bins so the bins would stay and their designated location year round.
- Doreen Johansen distributed copies of a flyer from the Tewksbury PAC regarding their Family Day Event on October 27<sup>th</sup>. She also informed the

PAC that the Tewksbury PAC started a Dyslexia Support Group and their first meeting is scheduled for October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Meeting adjourned.