

JAMES W. ALEXANDER PTA, INC.  
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING  
September 11, 2007

**CALL TO ORDER:**

President Betsy Reetz called the meeting to order at 7:11pm and led the flag salute. Betsy welcomed everyone to the meeting. Betsy welcomed our teacher representatives: Miss Glonek, Mrs. Zelins, Mrs. Braender, and any visitors that were with us.

**ESTABLISHING QUORUM:** (Executive Committee)

Excused from tonight's meeting and those present; see attached list.

**OFFICER'S REPORTS:**

**Secretary's Report:** Deb Conti noted that there were no changes to the June 5, 2007 meeting minutes, which had been e-mailed to the Executive Board in mid August by Bev Braddock. The minutes were acknowledged and approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Tori McMahon reported from the Statement of Accounts for June 6, 2007 through September 11, 2007, a beginning balance of \$13,255.45, receipts of \$16.87, disbursements of \$6,357.62 and an ending balance of \$6,914.70. The report was filed for audit. (See copy of attached report.)

**Correspondence:** Tammy Rodriguez read thank you notes from the kindergarten, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers for the yummy welcome back breakfast held at Mastoris'. Also, a thank you to the Devine family for the notepads. Thank you notes were also received from Christopher and Claudia DeSantis for the Alexander Alumni Scholarships and Julianne Norton for the Lorraine D'Zurilla Memorial Scholarship Award.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Arts in Education** – Rachel Sorrento and Bev Braddock are co-chairing the PTA Arts in Education Committee this year. Bev Braddock reported in past years the committee's only project has been the Reflections contest. This year the committee plans to participate in the "Start the Arts" program, which is a National PTA week long event to celebrate, embrace and advocate for the arts and is being held Oct 8-12. She reported that the committee has been brainstorming ideas for the program. The program goals are to inform the school community about the benefits of arts education, get the students excited about the arts and kick off the Reflections program. Bev reported that the committee would like to try to do one thing each day without interrupting the school day, and she presented several of the ideas under consideration. The committee will coordinate with the art and music teachers for ideas and assistance, however they will also need volunteers to help with the mural creation and the art show. Bev indicated that she had discussed having a Reflections entry as a class assignment with Mrs. Stevenson, as in past years this has greatly increased our student participation numbers. Mrs. Stevenson has indicated that she will speak with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade level teachers about this.

**Communications-** Sue Bishop reported that the Alexander handbook should be distributed on Friday. There were changes made at the last minute because of the new school schedule, which is why it did not get to the printer in time. She thanked Julie McGuinnes for lending her time and talent to this Spartan publication again this year. She reported that the committee will also be providing parents with three more informative newsletters (Dec., Feb., May.) this school year and thanked all who had already sent their articles for the Sept. newsletter. Sue reported that this year each newsletter will include the past general PTA meeting minutes. Marianne Joralemon asked whether it would be possible to have a blurb included in each newsletter about the no cost fundraisers and Julie responded that she thought that would be easy to add.

Jodi questioned whether it was possible to electronically submit flyers for HGTV and Sue responded that as of now it was not. It is still necessary to give Sue a hard copy and she will forward it to Mike at Steinert. She informed the members present that high school students are responsible for putting the information on HGTV.

**Hospitality-** Sue Fox reported for this committee and began by welcoming new members Lisa Goodarz, Michelle Lescynski, Geri Grant, Jennifer Haley, Cathy Stout and Wendy Queval to the committee. She circulated a sign up sheet for volunteers from the PTA executive board to provide a baked good item for Back to School Night and reminded everyone that those who sign up are asked to have the baked goods dropped off in the school kitchen after 3:30pm, but before 6:15pm, sent in disposable container or plate and marked clearly for the PTA. Sue reported that the committee recently submitted letters to both Shop-Rite stores nearest the school requesting donations for the School Fair and is waiting for a reply.

**Membership, Volunteer Recruitment, and Kindergarten Registration-** Jamie Rosica reported for Membership and Kindergarten Registration. The theme for this year is Treasure your child...join the Alexander PTA. She reported that the bulletin board is finished and asked everyone to take a moment to check it out. Jamie said that they have gotten many compliments from the staff and thanked to Audrey, Deb, Ellen, Kalyn, and Kelly for all the work they put in. So far the membership drive is going well and as of Monday afternoon there were 240 members. Mrs. Nami's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class is two away from 100%, followed by Mrs. Coyne's with four, Mrs. Burden with five and Mrs. Zelins with five.

Jamie reported that pennants and pencils will be distributed to the kindergarten class by the end of next week. Attached will be a welcome Class of 2013 letter from the PTA. Jamie stated that she will need to order more pencils for next year and questioned whether she had to use the original company, a discussion followed and it was agreed she should just find the cheapest place when reordering. Jamie reported that there is no information on Kindergarten Registration available yet.

Audrey Maruca reported for Volunteer Recruitment and stated that she has had a tremendous response for the Three for Me drive. She has asked that committee chairs please use the list as needed. Audrey stated that she would like to see it utilized instead of always relying on the executive committee for baked items. There will probably not be enough time to use them for Back to School night but it will be in place shortly thereafter. There were many people who

checked off to bake. Marianne questioned whether many had checked off school fair and Audrey replied that a few had done so. Marianne will be sure to contact them.

**Summer Reading-** Kim Flood reported the deadline for submission for the PTA Summer Reading packet is Wednesday, Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>, although we typically accept them through the end of the week. The papers will be posted on the bulletin board for Back to School Night. The Summer Reading Ice Cream Sundae party is scheduled for Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup>. The children will be divided into two groups. The first group will come in at 2:00 and the second group will come in at 2:30. Kim indicated that several volunteers were needed to assist with the party and circulated a sign up sheet for anyone wishing to help. Jodi questioned whether there was anyone donating the ice-cream and Kim replied that there was not. Kathy Register volunteered to contact Pauly's to see if he would donate the ice cream. Kim also reported that the children will receive an Applebee's certificate and Book Fair coupon as a reward.

**Educational Programs-** Rachel Sorrento reported that the following programs had been set up for this school year: "Bully-Proof Your School – The Magic of Character in October; "Animals of Egypt" in November; a program on the science behind the weather in December; a math related program in January; "The Okra Dance Trio" in February and a free program in April from the Peppermint Puppeteers about the importance of energy conservation and other tips about how to help our environment. There may be an addition program of the K-9 unit but that date is as yet unconfirmed and possibly a free program on smoking which may fall under the Health and Safety Committee. Rachel requested for teacher/parent feedback as these are all new programs. Rachel questioned whether parents are permitted to attend any programs and Mrs. Stevenson replied that that was not possible due to space constraints; however Rachel is welcome to attend the programs in order to gather feedback.

**Family Activities-** Cindy Mimmo reported there will be a fundraiser at A & M Market, Sept. 29 and 30. The flyer will be going home on or about Sept 17 and the committee will be promoting the fundraiser in the September newsletter. Cindy indicated that it is the same concept as the Mother's Day/Spring Flower Sale, that is by using a Bob Bucks coupon A & M Market will donate 25% of the total merchandise purchase back to the school.

**School Fair -** Cindy also reported on the School Fair which will be held October 20<sup>th</sup> from 10am- 2pm. Pauly's will be bringing fall flavored ice cream, Dave Barlow will be the DJ and Dana the ice cream lady will be there with goodies different from Pauly. The committee is still trying to confirm the hayride and a jumpy thing. Marianne reported that the slides at Septemberfest would give us a discount and Cindy indicated that she will follow up. A&M will be providing pumpkins at a minimal cost. Jamie and Tori will be planning a cake walk. Cindy Devine added that she will be contacting the Township police department and Knapps bike shop for possible representation at the fair as the Health and Safety Committee is interested in having an information booth on safety.

Cindy announced that the Holiday Extravaganza will be held December 7, 2007. Debbie Hamm questioned whether there would be vendors this year. A suggestion was made to possibly move Santa to the stage to make room for the vendors. Cindy Devine offered to work out the logistics.

**Fundraising-** Marianne Joralemon reported that the Fall Fundraising packets were sent home with the students yesterday with a due date of September 28<sup>th</sup>. We are selling the usual wrapping paper, candy, and household items. Pick up will be November 13<sup>th</sup>. The Budget and Finance Committee will be running the pick up station, but announced that any additional volunteers will be welcome. She reported that will not be selling perishable items this year so the pick up station should be much easier. The PTA receives 40-50% of sales. Marianne also announced that if nothing was found in the brochures that was of interest to you, a donation to our PTA in lieu of participation was always welcome.

Marianne announced that September 26<sup>th</sup> is a Friendly's Fundraising night and relayed, for the benefit of new members present, that our PTA will receive 10% of all sales, including take-out sales, that occur between 5 pm and 9 pm on September 26<sup>th</sup>.

She again stated that the School Fair is scheduled for Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup> and encouraged board members to volunteer to help with this major event and fundraiser. A flyer will be going home in the very near future seeking school fair volunteers. She reminded members present that if we do not get enough volunteers we can't have the fair and we do not want this to happen. Marianne reported that there will be an offer made to pre-buy tickets for the fair and that 5 boxtops could be submitted for one free ticket.

Marianne reported that we will continue to run the no-cost fundraisers such as the Box Tops, Marrazzo Receipts and Campbell's Program. She reviewed the specifics of each no-cost fundraiser. This information has been sent home and will also be printed in the September newsletter. She also outlined several other fundraisers planned for the coming year, including; the School Book Fair in October, the A&M Fundraiser the first weekend in October, a Fezziwig's Fundraiser on October 16 from 5pm-9pm; a Barnes and Noble Fundraising Day on Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, a Poinsettia Sale in December, Family Bingo Night which is tentatively scheduled for the First Friday night in February, hopefully our super 50/50 again this year, new fundraisers such as Original Art Works and Book fundraisers as well as car washes, walk-a-thons and various other events.

She reported that the sale of school spirit items will occur throughout the school year, a Mother's Day Flower Sale at A&M is being planned and that it is hoped that Alexander PTA can sell 50/50 tickets again at a Trenton Thunder Game as it was very profitable for us. She also announced that the prize from last year has not yet been claimed. The winner has one year from the day of the drawing to claim the prize and if they do not come forward our school will receive a \$513 check from Trenton Thunder. Marianne also announced that Melissa Giori had arranged for a discount card to be made available for purchase to use at area merchants, Cindy Devine will be organizing a Read a Thon through Osbourne books that will coincide with the Six Flags reading offer in February. Karin Casole described a fundraiser in which children's original artwork becomes magnets, mouse pads etc. There is a large catalog of products from which to choose from. This will probably take place in the spring.

Marianne announced that over the summer she won a Health and Safety magazine from Campbell's which will be distributed to families at Back to School Night free of charge. She questioned whether the list of fundraisers could be put in the newsletter so that they would not have to be read at the general membership meeting and it was agreed that this was a good idea.

**Fifth Grade Activities-** Jodi Morgan reported that committee members met over the summer with past fifth grade committee to get ideas. They will be having a car wash on October 13 at Patterson Chevrolet from 10am-2pm. Cindy Mimmo stated that they will be pre-selling tickets for \$5 in hopes of having an idea as to how many people may show up. Jodi also stated that there will be a meeting September 19<sup>th</sup> in the school library at 7 pm for all 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents to form necessary committees.

**Room Representatives-**Sue Bishop reported the room representative committee had met several times before the start of this school year in order to discuss some new procedures. There have been several new forms generated and a new format for the procedures involved in this committee. Parents chosen to serve as room representative will be notified soon after the September 12<sup>th</sup> deadline. A mandatory meeting for those room parents will be held on Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup> in the library.

Deb Conti asked if any one present had any questions or concerns. She stated she is trying to alleviate discussions and complaints once the decisions are made. There were no questions. She proceeded to inform everyone that the room rep. is not permitted to give out the class list of phone numbers or addresses to anyone. She told parents to request this information from the teacher. Sue and Deb also thanked Linda and Felicia for their help with getting this going. A discussion about alternates followed and it was decided by Mrs. Stevenson, Betsy, Sue and Deb to eliminate this part of room rep.

**Library-** Melanie Gaston reported that the library volunteer flyer will be distributed on Weds, Sept 12<sup>th</sup>, a brief orientation for new volunteers will be held on Fri, Sept 28<sup>th</sup> at 9am in the Library and library circulation will begin on Wednesday, Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Celebration Book Sale will take place on Back to School night.

**Founders Day-** Jodi Morgan reported there would be a meeting the end of October to begin the planning for February. For the benefit of the new members present, she announced that Founders Day is the PTA's birthday celebration. There are four people on the committee which should make planning easier. Since there are fewer honorees than last year, this year's event should be more manageable. Next year is the really big one, as this PTA will be celebrating its 45<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Health and Safety-** Julie McGuinness reported that the committee has arranged for a local bike shop set up a table at the School Fair to give out safety information, provide helmet fittings and/or bike/skateboard tune-up advice. They could sell helmets and other safety items as well. They are planning to offer one or two healthy snacks for sale at the School Fair e.g., yogurt with sprinkles in little cups or some type of fruit/cheese and crackers. The committee will also be putting a healthy, short recipe in the PTA newsletter. Julie indicated that the committee is also discussing the possibility of a Family Fitness Night or holding a healthy recipe contest with prizes.

**Grandparent's Day-** Audrey Maruca reported that for this event students can invite up to two special people to spend a few hours with them at school and in their classroom. This will take place sometime in the spring and the committee will meet around March to begin planning.

**Special Treats-** Melissa Giori reported that since we are no longer permitted to serve lunch, Special Treats Days will provide the children with a treat instead. The committee would like to send home one flyer requesting participation for the entire school year, which they felt should simplify the process for parents as well as the Special Treats Committee. Melissa announced the following Special Treats: on Friday 10/26 soft pretzels and water; on Friday 2/29 fruit, muffins and a juice drink; and Friday 6/6 Flying Saucers with sugar free ice pops as an alternative if the flyer saucers are not permitted due to the new nutritional policies.

**Teacher Appreciation-**Felicia Huth thanked the Devine family for the welcome back notepads they provided for the teachers. She indicated that the committee had many things in the works for the teachers but since there were teachers present no details would be provided.

**Recognitions-**There was no one present to report for this committee. Betsy announced for the benefits of new members present that this committee recognizes the many school staff members other than teachers.

**Special Education-**Kathy Register reported that as of yet PAC has not set any meetings.

**Scholastic Book Fair-** Deb Conti reported that the book fair will be held the week of conferences. There are two new members Cindy Devine and Kelly Sterns. There will be a meeting September 12 to get the ball rolling. Deb told everyone to look for flyers in the near future.

**Website-**Bev Braddock reported the new Alexander PTA website was developed over the summer. It can be found by going to [www.hamiltonpta.com](http://www.hamiltonpta.com) and clicking on Alexander in the school list. This site is the landing page for all of the PTAs in the township, so links to both Reynolds and Steinert can be found there as well. She reported that we now have the ability to upload documents, so the committee will be posting flyers and forms. She requested that all committee chairs email her a copy of flyers and any information that they would like included on the site. Betsy indicated that she was sending all approved flyers to April Sette on a monthly basis for use in the Historical Yearbook and was willing to send them to Bev as well. It was agreed that this process would be followed first and evaluated to see how it was working

Bev reported that the new website was publicized with a flyer in the Back to School folder. The committee will be ordering refrigerator magnets that include the website and all school contact information in the near future, as this was agreed upon at the budget meeting held over the summer and funds had been allocated in the budget for this purpose. The estimated cost for 500 is \$75. Debbie Hamm questioned whether the PTA website was the same as the school's and Bev replied that the school has its own website.

**Historical Yearbook -**Debbie Hamm reported for the historical yearbook. She requested pictures of the teacher's breakfast for inclusion in this year's book if anyone had them, however Mrs. Stevenson indicate that no one took pictures of this event. The yearbook was submitted at

the end of June to meet the July deadline for judging. The book looked fabulous and there is a brag book that will be brought to the next meeting so people can see how wonderful the book came out. Thanks to Ellen, Kathy, April and Debbie for all the hard work. The committee met in August to come up with ideas for this year's book. Debbie requested the submission to the committee of all flyers and pictures so that they may be part of the new book. The committee is anxiously waiting to hear if the yearbook won first place in the county competition.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Standing Rules:** –Betsy announced that this issue will be tabled until next meeting.

**Life Member Nominating Committee** – Betsy reported development of criteria for this award remains pending, discussion tabled until next meeting.

**Retirement Gifts**-Betsy reported that it was brought to our attention by a board member that we had inadvertently neglected to purchase parting gifts for two teachers who had retired at the end of the 2005-2006 school year. The gift committee reported at our May meeting that they had allocated the funds necessary to correct this oversight. As no requests for reimbursement have yet been submitted for the purchase of said gifts, it would appear that this has not yet been addressed. Tammy Rodriguez has volunteered to take care of this oversight.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Executive Board Meeting Time** –Betsy reported that in accordance with Article III Section 3 of our bylaws “Regular meetings of the executive board shall be held monthly during the school year, the time to be fixed by the board at its first meeting of the year.” Jamie Rosica proposed a motion for the meeting time to be set at 7 pm, which was seconded by Debbie Hamm and passed by unanimous vote.

**Audit Committee**-Marianne Joralemon reported the audit committee met over the summer and everything was in order.

**Proposed Budget**- The budget meeting was held on July 31. Copies of the proposed budget were made available to all members present. There were no questions from the executive board regarding the budget. The budget will be presented for adoption at our general PTA meeting on September 25.

## **PRESIDENTS REPORT:**

**PTA Mailbox** – Betsy requested that all committee chairs check the PTA mailbox located near the sign in sheets as it contained mail for every committee, including information received from National PTA regarding contracts. She also requested for any new members who did not get a copy of the article “Why We Do It” to let her know and she would get a copy to them.

**Board Folders** – Betsy announced that the board folders include a list outlining everything that should be in them. She requested that all members take the time to review folder contents and make sure that their folder had everything on that list. She announced that since our current bylaws expire on September 13 and the new ones had not yet been returned with NJPTA approval, copies of the current bylaws were provided to new members only. Betsy reported that copies of the new bylaws will be distributed at the first board after they have been received.

**Name Tags** – Betsy requested that members not take their name tags home. They should be left in the shoe box located on the librarian's desk. She would like to have them available at all executive board meetings so our new board members can get to know us and we can recognize them and at general meetings so that you are easily identifiable as an executive board member.

**Fall County Council Dinner-** Betsy reported that the dinner scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup>. and there is a sign up sheet circulating for those wishing to attend. The deadline for reservations is October 1.

**NJPTA Awards Criteria** – Betsy announced that Alexander PTA will once again be represented at the awards dinner at NJPTA convention and thanked Diane Kern for taking the time to submit the application. This year, we are being awarded the Arts in Education Award, which is particularly exciting given National PTA's focus on Arts Education with their new program "Start the Arts".

**HTPTA Committee** – Betsy reported that she attended the first HTPTA committee meeting last night and announced for the benefit of new members that all PTA Presidents in the Hamilton School District meet quarterly with the Superintendent of Schools and the President of the School Board. She relayed that the focus of last night's meeting was the referendum on which we will be asked to vote on December 11<sup>th</sup> regarding the school facilities plan. She also announced that the committee will be sponsoring a Parent Education Night on October 17<sup>th</sup> at Crockett.

**Walk for Breast Cancer** – Betsy reported that a flyer was left in the PTA mailbox regarding Mrs. Burden's participation in the 60 mile three day walk for Breast Cancer in October. On Saturday, September 6 at McQuinn's Place on Brunswick Pike her team, Team Pinkalicious will be holding a fundraiser with their husbands' band as the cover band.

## **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:**

Mrs. Stevenson thanked everyone for coming and for providing such a wonderful delicious breakfast at Mastoris. She announced changes to the school schedule. Students may arrive no earlier than 8:45am and 9:00 is arrival time. The late bell will ring at 9:05. There is also a new lunch schedule. The children have twenty minutes for lunch and twenty minutes for recess. The teachers must include 10 minutes additional physical education time in their lesson plans. A discussion followed concerning the amount of time given for lunch to the younger grades. Mrs. Stevenson assured parents that the children will be given extra time to eat their lunch.



Mrs. Stevenson expressed the need for district wide improvement of test scores. This is one of the reasons block scheduling has been put into place. The children are adjusting to the new schedule and they are taking it slow so that the teachers and students are comfortable with the changes. These changes are necessary to meet the No Child Left Behind requirements.

Mrs. Stevenson announced that there is also a new math program at Alexander. It has been introduced to grades K-3. Mrs. Stevenson encouraged parents to attend the parent workshops to learn about this new program. It was chosen because of its ability to help children improve their critical thinking skills and it correlates more closely to the NJ ASK test. Rachel Sorrento questioned the need for the program at Alexander, since low math test scores at the school are not a problem. Mrs. Stevenson said that the four schools in which the program was piloted improved their scores and that is the goal with this new program.

Mrs. Stevenson addressed nutritional concerns within the school. There will be a cut down on sweets in the school. Teachers will no longer be offering candy, sweets etc as rewards. It is OK to have one sweet on a special occasion (birthday, holidays) otherwise sweets are not permitted. The students are no longer permitted to pass out birthday treats around the school. Birthday treats can be distributed only be in their classroom. Jodi Morgan asked about the 5th grade Kiss A Gram, a discussion followed and it was decided to address the issue at a later date. Cindy Devine also wanted to make sure everyone was aware that this was a nutritional concern and had nothing to do with the children who have peanut allergies.

Mrs. Stevenson thanked everyone for the PTA's efforts and relayed how much she appreciates how hard we all work. She reported that this was her best opening week here at Alexander and she feels the children are happy and both the teachers and children are adjusting to the changes nicely. She indicated that she is available to discuss any concerns or questions and that she has an open door policy.

A brief discussion about the referendum followed.

#### **GOOD OF THE ORDER OR ANOUNCEMENTS:**

**PTA Recognition Certificates** – Betsy announced that the awarding of PTA recognition certificates will begin again next month. She requested that board members Email her nominations for recognition and the reason for nomination. Kelly Sterns was presented with a certificate from our last meeting in June.

**Adjournment** – There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35.

Debra Conti  
**Recording Secretary**