

District Wide Parents' Council (DWPC) MARCH 2008 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Pam Tack at 9:39.

Old Business – Secretary's report – one change was noted the date due for the packets for folks running for the school board positions are due on April 30th not the 29th as noted in the Feb. minutes. A motion to accept as corrected was made by Maryellen Whittington-Couse and seconded by Jolyn Safron. Minutes were accepted unanimously.

Treasurers' report – Caroline Ramaley was unable to attend today's meeting but has sent the treasurers' report. The balance last month was \$248.38 and the current balance is \$268.38. The only outstanding dues at this time are Kennedy Elementary and Miller Middle School.

Update on the Meet the Candidate's night which will be taking place on May 13th at Miller Middle School was given. The League of Women Voters will be moderating the meeting. Cheryl is working with Camille Ellsworth (District Clerk) at getting the packets together for the candidates. One question came up regarding the flyers going out to the schools. Cheryl will be checking with Camille to see if the district will be getting out the flyers. (NOTE: I did speak to Camille and she will take care of getting the flyers out to the schools.) According to a recent article in the **Kingston Times** at this time Maureen Bowers, Ian Horowitz, Rev. Coston, Jeremy Blaber and Robert DiBella are planning on running for the three available positions.

DWPC Officer Positions open for the 2008-2009 school year - we need co-chairs and a secretary. It was requested that the co-chairs and the secretary discuss what their jobs entail so that the reps know exactly what the positions entail and take the info back to the schools. Pam Tack and Madeline Hoetger discussed how they set up the meetings month to month depending on what the reps would like discussed. Some meetings need a speaker scheduled others do not. The co-chairs usually take turns contacting the speakers. All info is then given to the secretary who sets up the agenda for the month. Depending on the events occurring within the district you may need to meet with the Superintendent a few times during the year. The secretary's job entails recording the minutes and getting them out to the reps and the district contact person so they can be posted on the website. The agenda is sent out first to the co-chairs and if no changes are needed they are sent to the reps. If any reps have a topic or concern that they'd like presented that get that info to the secretary to get on the agenda. It is a big help if the secretary has access to a computer preferably a laptop you can do the notes right at the meeting. I usually wait a couple of days edit them and try to get them out over the weekend. Once you have set up the mailing distribution list everything goes right out to everyone.

Once again the topic of the future direction of the DWPC meetings came up. At the last meeting it was felt that the new officers would make the decision with the reps as to what direction they'd like to take. However, at this time some in-depth discussion took place regarding this issue and some concerns regarding the district and how to handle various concerns that are coming up was discussed. The issue also came up regarding the need for setting up a Parent Advocacy program. This is a topic that Maureen Bowers and Madeline Hoetger have been interested in doing and they are going to pursue this for the future.

We also brought up "Bringing Unity to our Community". Again, the event will be presented by the YWCA in collaboration with the school district. "Bringing Unity to our Community" will again take place at Miller Middle School on Saturday, April 26. Any school interested in having a booth can contact Nadine Ferraro with any questions; she can be reached at 338-6844 (X 102) or at Nadineywcapa@livitybiz.rr.com. Flyers were available for anyone who was not on Nadine's list.

Administrative – Sandy Miller – Assistant Superintendent of Special Education – Sandy Miller wanted to share a new grant that the district received. The grant is a three year program along with a series of parent workshops which will be offered in April at Ulster BOCES in Port Ewen. The workshops are dealing with transition planning services and parent information. The workshop topics are as follows: Tuesday, April 8 - Introduction to the World of Adult Services, Tuesday, April 15 – Employment/Post Secondary Supports and Tuesday, April 29 – SSI and other benefits, Residential options, and Guardianship and special needs trusts. The

workshops are free and are open to any parent. They run from 6:30 – 8:30. If anyone is interested in attending call Virginia Carrig at BOCES at 331-5050 X2220 to register.

A few issues came up regarding the Building Leadership Teams at the schools. Some concerns came up regarding how the parent reps are chosen. The parent reps are supposed to be chosen by the PTO/PTA. In-depth discussion took place involving this area. Maureen Bowers asked Lisa Klotz if she was attending a PTA conference/meeting this weekend. Lisa will be attending and she will be getting some detailed information regarding this area and she will be reporting back to us.

Diana Kuster brought up the topic of a questionnaire that went out to the Title I schools. The info from the questionnaire will be used to help with the TOPS (Teachers, Organizations, and Parents for Students) Grant. The TOPS grant are grants that are available to assist with after school programs and parent training sessions. Paula Childs is working on getting the grants. Eligible schools are Chambers, GW, Kennedy, Sophie Finn and Miller.

Discussion came up regarding bringing back the DWPC sponsored Roundtable. At the Roundtable each school is requested to send folks who can share and take back to their schools information. In past years, board members and committee heads have attended. Madeline Hoetger has offered to host the Roundtable at Sophie Finn. We are looking at Tuesday, April 22, from 7:00 – 9:00 for this years' Roundtable. A lot of discussion took place as to how this year's event should run. After much debate it was decided that three topics will be covered they are - Fundraisers, BLT (Building Leadership Team), and Assemblies. Everyone should get your Board members to attend and any head of the listed committees. Any parent that is interested in attending is welcome to come but it would be great if the schools could send members working with the areas. Madeline will email the flyer to the reps so they can get the info to the schools.

Board of Education Report - Maureen Bowers presented her packet. The packet included info regarding the budget vote, a message from NYSSBA message to the legislature, the new calendar was adopted, Master plan facilities committee report, and articles on the Montessori Program - A Second Language in the Classroom, Are We Missing the Boat?, and Evaluating Montessori. Maureen also shared that at the meeting last night the board agreed that the district will begin teaching language in the elementary schools. The program will begin in kindergarten and students will be exposed to both French and Spanish. The district is also fading out German, this years seventh grade will be the last grade that will be continuing it through high school. Language will be introduced formally in sixth grade rather than in seventh grade. The district also decided to hire a grant writer.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Madeline Hoetger at 11:45 seconded by Maryellen Whittington-Couse.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 3, 2008.

Minutes submitted by Cheryl Oliver. Minutes are not official until approved at the next meeting.

NOTE: We have run into a few conflicts for the April 22 date for the Roundtable we are now checking to see if Mon. April 21st would work.