

District Wide Parents' Council (DWPC) October 2007 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Madeline Hoetger at 9:35.

Old Business –

Everyone took a quick minute to introduce themselves.

No old business was brought up. A motion to accept the minutes with a clarification to the minutes involving a concern that came up last month with Miller was made and approved. The change is below.

Minutes read as:

Lisa Klotz from Miller brought up some changes that are occurring at Miller, dances are now being held after school at 3:15 instead of night. One concern here is that students involved in sports or after school events won't be able to participate. The eighth grade sleepover was cancelled. The Gettysburg trip has been cancelled. Lisa was informed that district policy has not been put into effect to change these events so these issues need to be brought up with the principal at Miller.

Minutes were changed to:

Lisa Klotz from Miller asked if the changes in school dance time from night to after school, the cancellation of the 8th grade sleepover, and the Gettysburg trip were a result of a district-wide safety concern. She has not had a chance to speak to Mrs. Crown-Marchionnes concerning this yet, but parents were wondering. Mr. Gretzinger said that these decisions were not made at the district level.

No Treasurer's report was given this month.

Speaker – Joe Scesney – NY DOT - Joe is in charge of bus safety and bus inspections and will address this area. Joe gave us a brief rundown on his background. He informed us of how the SED (State Education Department) and DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) work together on the maintenance of buses. A manual is available for viewing on the web it is called "School Bus Safety Is...One Bus Stop At A Time" – website is <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/schoolbus/SBDI/pdf/SBSIOBSAAT2007.pdf> . At the website you can find the manual along with a table of contents.

The DOT is in charge of all of the school buses in NY state. All buses are inspected every 6 months. The inspection results are placed in a computer bank that is kept up to date and reviewed all of the time. If a continuous problem arises the offending bus company will be fined. Any report that the DOT has written up can be obtained on the web the site is www.nysdot.org or just Google search NYSDOT it's the first one. The state of NY is one of the top states in regards to the amount of inspections that take place with the buses. In NY 6 inspections are done by the company and 2 by the DOT.

PTSI - Pupil Transportation Safety Instructor is located in Syracuse it is in charge of putting together the training that the bus safety instructors go through. It is one of the best facilities in the country.

Some facts regarding the state - 50,000 bus drivers in the state.

New York is one of the only states that has an intense safety inspection of the buses –

The bus drivers go through an annual physical.

10% of the total school buses in the nation are in NY– 30% increase over the past couple of years.

Special needs students that are in need of services not available in a students' home district has now made it necessary to get vehicles other than buses. Several start up companies have been started for transporting students to areas outside of their home school district. Now SUV's and even cars are used.

2 hundred million dollars in NY state is spent on fuel.

An in-depth discussion took place on the buses and how the state is working on finding alternative methods for use in the bus. The bus drivers have to take a two hour driver refresher courses this year in Ulster County. This year they asked the drivers for areas that they felt they needed training in. This years' topic was "The pre-trip inspection and accident awareness". The bus drivers were asked three questions – most dangerous conditions on bus routes, top safety concerns on your bus, pet peeve's as a driver or monitor. The results from the questionnaire were taken up with the bus drivers.

Seat belts are in the buses most have had them since the late 1980's. Forward and rear hits are the most common hits. Some research has shown that the lap belt can cause injury to the students' that is why controversy has arisen for student's not using belts. It is not up to the driver to have the children use the belts. They are now designing three point seat belts and some of the buses are starting to have them. A lot of the new backup lights and beepers

are on all buses in NY. Charters – if you are going to do a charter go through your district transportation providers. They have found that some charters that are being used in some districts are not safe and approved. If anyone needs to find one you can contact Judy Falcone - Head of Transportation. She has a list of the approved charter companies in our area.

Judy shared a few facts about the bus routes here in Kingston, we have 275 routes - 10,000 miles daily - 53 schools – all transportation here in the district is done by buses. Joe took several questions and comments from the reps.

Rountable/Building Concerns –

Questionnaire – We went over the questionnaire that the reps were asked to complete. The results of the questionnaire are below. In depth discussion took place Maureen Bower would like us to email her with any alternative birthday celebration ideas that you might have or that you have seen used. Some ideas that came up a goodie bag is made of nonfood items or healthy foods that are given to the birthday child. Another idea was that the birthday person is dressed up special for the day by a teacher. Principal gives a card to the birthday person or another idea was a special gift is given by the principal.

Questionnaire results –

Does your school have a chorus?

Anna Devine – yes	Chamber – yes	Crosby – yes	Edson – yes
Graves – yes	Meagher – yes	Myer – yes	GW – yes
GW – yes	Kennedy –	Zena – yes	

What grades participate? In all of the schools but Crosby grades 4–5 at Crosby grades 3–5 participate. At Graves all of the students take part in chorus.

When do they meet? Before School – 3 After school – 2 Not sure – 3

1 – they met in AM close to the event 1 – during the school day

Do you do anything for Halloween?

No longer do anything – 4	No parade this year – up to teacher – 1
Fall themed party – 2	Halloween Parade or Party – 2 After school pumpkin fest – 1

What is it called?? Harvest Party, Halloween Parade, Fall Fest???

Halloween Parade – 1	Party up to the teacher – 1
No longer any official activities – 4	Not sure of title – 1 Fall Themed Party (nothing Halloween) 2

Some schools have a costume parade for grades K–2 do you? No – 6 Yes – 2 but only K–1 or K–2

Does your fifth grade have an end of the year swimming party??

Yes – 5, No – 2, 1 school is working out something this year, Not sure – 1

(Note: We also had a list of areas that the reps would like to see addressed this year. The Chairs are going to work on getting speakers in to address those issues.)

Caroline Ramalay – **GW** – first PTO meeting went well – they had a successful barbeque - they provided childcare for the parents for back to school night and they had a great turn out – they are meeting to design t-shirts for the school

Cyndi Light – **Crosby** – first PTO meeting went well they had an ice cream social and the back to school night

Cathy Murphy – **Chambers** – first PTO meeting – Yankee candle -spirit day for Halloween – Back to School went well – they are making packages for the troops – they do a lot of spirit things with the children –

Lu Mabey – **Graves** – first fall fundraiser took place – they now have the Graves Greening Group – they are doing composting and no waste lunchboxes - they have adopted a school in Guatemala and are working on a fundraiser to raise money for the school they have adopted. They will be having a book fair and an assembly Puppet People on Oct 29 if any schools would like to see the assembly contact Lu for times

Jolyn Safron – **Edson** – Sally Foster fundraisers are going out this week – they had the Brooks Barbeque, and are selling Entertainment Books

Lisa Klotz – **Miller** – PTA is getting a lot of members they've had good turn out – still questioning the day dances

the Craft Fair will be Oct 20-21

Kristen Casciaro – **Meagher** – They are having their Book Fair at night – first fundraiser went well – Kkids which is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club is a group of students that work on a variety of things at school one being a garden – on Oct 26 they will be having their yearly spaghetti dinner –
Madeline Hoetger – **Sophie Finn** - yet to have PTO meeting two people have resigned they are working out a lot of issues – Back to school night went okay
Pam Tack – **High School** – Back to School night – it depended on the classes as to the turnout, some classes were high others not – PTSA is disbanding this year due to a lack of interest – Band is going to a competition on Sat.
Debbie Ferraro – **Myer** – Sally Foster fundraiser – once again they are having the Clothing drive – clothing, toys, linens, and shoes - items need to be in a plastic bag **the drive is Nov 6** along with a bake sale – it's at the Hurley Town Hall – Brooks Barbeque will be on Nov. 7 – Make a Difference Project Oct 21 Book fair is this month
Renee Bonjolo – **Zena** – new PTA they are very active they are doing an Avon, Family Magazine and Yankee Candle fundraiser – they also let all of the parents know how much money they need per student and let them make a choice of selling or just giving money as a donation
Maryellen Whittington Couse – **Anna Devine** – PTA is going well Back to School night they are trying something new this year at recess time during rainy days they are trying movies – they've had some problems but are working them out
Camille Farley-Vining and Cheryl Oliver – **Bailey** – a uniformed school resource officer is at the school each week – the PTO just found a president and they are having their first meeting on Oct. 9. **The Bailey Plaza is taking place on Nov 3.**

James Shaunnessy – Board of Education Member - wanted to point out that an article appearing in the paper this morning regarding the Montessori school that has been developed had some incorrect information. The pilot program will be for ages 3-5 at a school yet undecided. It will progress through the elementary years as the children progress. It is a long range program that is still in the formative stages.

Speakers - Errin Parese, Director of Prevention in grade K-12 programs and Gary Tomczyk Jr. coordinator of technology and Internet Safety came in. They are interested in meeting with the parents of the district to discuss the wide variety of problems currently out there on the internet. They deal with cyber bullying, issues with www.myspace.com and general internet safety. They are trained in the ISafe and IParent safety - they did a presentation at the middle schools last year and they tell the parents how the computer predators get to the kids. Today, cyber bullying is a big topic that needs to be addressed – the goal of the speakers is to get to all of the PTO/PTA's. The district computer system itself has been running very well and they have not had any problems. Both Errin and Gary answered several questions and different “cyber” areas were discussed. Currently, the program is targeted to parents – if you would like to have Errin or Gary come to your schools contact Errin or Gary eparese@kingstoncityschools.org or gtomczykjr@kingstoncityschools.org. The programs will be geared to your group and will only take ½ hour with time after for a question and answer session.

Sandy Miller – Assistant Superintendent of Special Education – Sandy passed out a Special Ed in NY State – handbook for children's age 3-21. The handbook is available for any parent entering the school whose child is going to be evaluated. Sandy took several questions from the group and talked a bit about her part in the cyber safety program.

Maureen Bower – School Board Rep – Maureen passed out her packet and we briefly went over the info – healthy fundraising, alternatives to food as reward, Kingston High Administrative team report, 5year programs as part of a high school reform, **Seussical** the musical will be taking place October 12-21 at SUNY Ulster's Quimby Theatre several of our students are in the production.

Cyndi Light made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 and it was seconded by Pam Tack.
Our next meeting will be on November 1st.

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