

**Olney Elementary School**  
**PTA Business Meeting**  
October 6, 2009

Introduction of 2009-2010 Executive Committee

**Guest Speaker:** Mary Ellen Bombara, OES School Counselor

Valuable tips for preparing for and getting the most out of Parent-Teacher Conferences

Schedule the conference at a time that works for you and is not rushed.

Make time to talk with your child before the conference to gain their important perspective. Ask them how they are doing in school.

Begin the conference with a positive comment; remember the parent and teacher are on the same team.

Avoid lengthy discussions not related to the purpose of the conference.

Listen with an open ear to what your child's teacher has to say.

Come to the conference with a list of specific items that you want to know. Make note of your questions/thoughts and prioritize them. Time is limited in the conference – make the most of it.

Keep your emotions under control. Focus on sticking to the facts and stay in problem-solving mode. Focus on your child, not your feelings.

Take notes about what has been discussed so you can review notes with your child. Be sure to begin the conversation with your child by sharing all the positive comments you heard. Find the right time to discuss the areas that need work.

Watch the clock and stick to the scheduled time. Express appreciation for your teacher's time and decide next steps as needed.

Be proactive. Ask for suggestions and contribute purposeful information to the conversation. Try not to make excuses and take responsibility for how you can be supportive to your child's needs.

Language development: What should my elementary school child be able to do conversationally?

Age Communication Skills

Age 3: Knows 300-500 words; understands most of what you say; uses 3-5 word sentences; curious – asks "why?" and learns through play (side by side) and lots of verbal talk

Age 4: Knows 1,500 words; uses complex sentences to describe what they saw or did; still difficult to distinguish time; preoccupied with fantasy; learns through cooperation activities

Age 5: Uses 600-1600 words; loves knock-knock jokes; more complicated speech patterns; follows 2-3 step directions; learning to name feelings; can talk more readily about experiences in richer detail; learning to read (figurative meanings still hard); and still loves fantasy (superheroes) but more logical base on observations

Ages 6 – 9: vocabulary doubles between ages 6-8; role playing is a great tool; loves picture books and stories; team/group activities engage dialogue; uses/reads body language (research indicates that 90% of what we communicate is through body language not our words)

BASICS:

We are the role models

We have to check ourselves

Words can shut down a dialogue ("always" and "never")

Body language sends clues

Not all kids are comfortable talking face to face (see tips below for how to overcome this)

Boys like (need) to be busy when talking

Listen for what is NOT said

Learn to reflect the feelings

Set patterns in the family routine for communication

Strategies for engaging conversation with elementary school-age children: Getting beyond answers like "Nothing" or "Fine"

Model healthy communication  
Avoid "always" and "never"  
Don't dismiss the feeling  
Learn to name and claim the feelings  
Draw – side by side  
Plan "date time" (one-on-one time, 5-10 minutes/week that's for the child, not a chore/task)  
Dads too! Ensure one-on-one time is spent with Dad.  
Use puppets / toys to role play  
Use trade books to help deal with changes/challenges in a child's life  
Time out the movie/show to ask questions about what might happen next  
Catch and talk  
Cube Roll – a cube with a question on each side that the child or adult answers  
Play High/Low – examples of a high and a low in the day  
Hold family meetings  
Playdates are important!

- Recommended Reading:
  - How To Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish
  - How to Talk to Your Kids About Really Important Things: Specific Questions and Answers and Useful Things to Say by Charles E. Schaefer and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo
  - Siblings Without Rivalry: How To Help Your Children Live Together So You Can Live Too by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

### **President's Report**

- Membership was a focus in September. We also worked on creating the Student Directory and it should be delivered to students on Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Monthly cluster meeting: OES is represented at a monthly cluster meeting with all the other schools are doing.
  - Discussed the potential increase in Montgomery County PTA dues for next year.
  - Reviewed school procedures in the event that there's a H1NI pandemic. Starting to monitor absences for flu symptoms.
  - Identified a potential PTA meeting speaker on the subject of ADHD: Jodi Miller, NIMD
  - Gathered information on how we might revise the OES website.
- MCCPTA News:
  - MCCPTA is putting together a work group on mathematics.
  - MCPS, MC Police and MC Government have formed a Cyber safety committee.
- Listserv and Dragon Tales: make sure you're on the distribution list to receive valuable information

**Treasurer's Report** – see attached document outlining the expenses and income for OES PTA

**Principal's Report** – nothing at this time; available any time for questions

### **MCCPTA Report and Voting**

1. Restroom Renovation Project: voting whether the County handles maintenance of school restrooms as needed or on a cyclical basis according to renovation plans. Vote = support the maintenance of school restrooms as needed.
2. FY 2011 Operating Budget Priorities: priorities are approved; however, the vote is to amend the language pertaining to the priority "Minimum possible class sizes"

3. Proposed By-Law Changes: primarily clarifications of definitions (e.g., quorum). All approved.
4. Capital Improvement Project Budget for FY 2011: All approved.

### **Committee Reports**

- Yard Sale: scheduled for 10/10/09. Have sold 27 spots to families who plan to participate in the yard sale. Rain date is 10/17/09.
- Sally Foster Fundraiser: biggest fundraiser of the year for OES; all orders due 10/9/2009. Increased activity on internet sales.
- Membership: as of 10/6/09 – membership includes 219 households, 33 staff members; an increase of more than 60% over last year. This represents 51% of the OES households. Second graders have the most children represented in the PTA with 60 children, and they will enjoy an ice cream party for the achievement!
- Family Night: OES PTA will provide a Golden Ticket to the family who sells the most Sally Foster products. This is a free ticket to all Family Nights for the academic year.
  - Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>: first Family Night is Harvest Dance. We will have a DJ, activities, prizes, pizza/drinks, popcorn, cookies. \$3 per child (ages 2 and under are free).
  - Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>: Bingo Night. Pizza/drinks/treats will be for sale.
  - Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>: Drop & Shop – pay a small fee for babysitting (2 - 5PM)
- Scholastic Book Fair: is October 26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>
- Cultural Arts: committee conducted a survey of teachers to collect ideas and interests, and they're also attending the Cultural Art showcases to learn more about the various performers. Preparing recommendations for Cultural Arts events to be held at OES this academic year. Dates for these events will be provided at the next PTA meeting. Each of the Cultural Arts programs is paid for by the PTA.
- Spirit Clothing: scheduled for February 2010.
- NAACP: MCPS meeting is November 19<sup>th</sup>; Health fair 10/24 at 10 AM – 3 PM, Tacoma Park's Montgomery College campus
- Yearbook: reviewing the possibility of getting the 5<sup>th</sup> grader pictures taken sooner in the year

### **Miscellaneous Business:**

- Chess Club: will be charging a nominal fee to participants (voted on and agreed to at a PTA meeting in the previous school year; re-confirmed in this meeting). The Club begins in December and a flier will be distributed the first week of November
- FLES program: unsure whether the program will continue this year due to low level of interest among students. Please consider enrolling your child(ren) in this valuable program!

### **New Business: OES PTA Website**

- Other schools in the Sherwood cluster have a specific website for the school PTA. The sites are designed similarly in format. We are proposing that the OES PTA consider investing in a site. The initial set-up cost is \$500; annual costs \$360. Will discuss further and vote at the November PTA meeting.

### **DATES TO REMEMBER:**

- ~~Yard Sale—October 10<sup>th</sup>, 8 AM—1 PM (rain date is October 17<sup>th</sup>)~~
- ~~Scholastic Book Fair—set up is October 23<sup>rd</sup>; Book Fair is October 26<sup>th</sup>—30<sup>th</sup>; Family Night is October 27<sup>th</sup>~~
- ~~Family Night—Fall Dance, October 24<sup>th</sup>~~
- ~~PTA Meeting—November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7:30 PM~~

**OLNEY ELEMENTARY PTA< o:p>  
MONTHLY TREASURER'S REPORT  
JULY 1, 2009 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2009**

**Income:**

Membership	2,540.00
Donations	136.50
Miscellaneous	56.45
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Total	2,732.95

**Expenses:**

School/Room rentals	2,097.53
Staff Reimbursements	900.00
Staff Appreciation Brunch	424.91
Patrol Ponchos	358.20
MCCPTA Dues	331.00
Miscellaneous (checks, blue paper)	311.10
Postage - Summer Dragon Tales	305.00
<sup>=2</sup> 0 Insurance	179.00
Fax line	87.44
Dragon Tales, Jr.	21.18
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Total	5,015.36
<sup>=2</sup> 0 Net Income/(Loss)	(2,282.41)
Cash, July 1, 2009	<hr/> 11,625.29
Cash, September 30, 2009	<hr/> <hr/> 9,342.88