

SVSD PTSA Council Presidents' and Principals' Workshop
January 11, 2010
Middle School and High School Breakout Session

Attendees: Joel Aune, SVSD Superintendent, Randy Taylor, MSHS Principal, Beth Burrows and Liz Piekarczyk, MSHS PTSA Co-Presidents, Tom Athanases, Two Rivers HS Principal, Kirk Dunckel, CKMS Principal, Miranda Thorpe, CKMS PTSA Co-President, Sarah Burns, SMS PTSA President, Ruth Moen, Principal, TFMS, Carol Masters, TFMS PTSA President, Lara Currie, SVSF Vice-President.

CKMS: Kirk Dunckel said that the PTSA Teacher Mini-Grants are a good example of collaboration between the school and PTSA that has worked very well. The teachers can apply for a mini-grant of any amount, as long as it is curriculum-related and benefits as many students as possible. Teachers can apply for first or second trimester mini-grants. Also, this year the PTSA provided a Recession-Buster Grant of \$100 to all teachers. Miranda Thorpe noted that the PTSA had been able to purchase hardbound textbooks to replace paperback versions as an example of one mini-grant. The PTSA also has hosted a BBQ the past two years on Fee Payment Day, which has been a great way to get the students and parents involved socially at the school. This year the BBQ covered all grades and the teachers cooked. The PTSA had its membership sign-up on that day also and had a successful "pass the hat" fundraiser at the BBQ that raised \$2,500.00

SMS: Sarah Burns said the PTSA has collaborated with the school by providing volunteers to staff the lunchroom and library at lunchtime. The PTSA coordinates a group of volunteers who come into the school and supervise lunch and an open gym. Volunteers have signed up to staff these positions through the end of the school year. Sarah said that she envisions launching an all-day "Watch Dog" program like Issaquah schools have, which provides for volunteer presence on campus every school day. The volunteers for Issaquah's program are provided through the district's Voices and VISTAS programs. The SMS PTSA also sponsors a once a month "Learn a Latte" meeting, at which Mr. Newell talks about what is going on and coming up at the school. These sessions are held on Friday morning and about 8-10 parents attend the sessions. The PTSA then tries to have its general meeting right after the Learn a Latte session. The PTSA provides coffee and snacks.

The SMS PTSA sponsored a pledge drive this year in which all families were asked to donate \$25, with an overall goal of raising \$8,000. Everyone who donated got a ticket to a dance at the school. Sarah said this fundraiser was very successful and raised a lot of funds with very little overhead.

MSHS: MSHS' PTSA is in its second year. The PTSA has put a lot of its energy into cleaning up the entryway into the school, weeding, painting, repairing and just generally sprucing up the school. Beth Burrows said that Beth Castle and Randy Taylor have been very supportive of the PTSA. The PTSA stays more in the background at MSHS, taking care of details. PTSA members handed out grade reports on conference days and handed

out schedules on Wildcat Day before school started. Randy Taylor praised the PTSA's box of tissue campaign, which asked all parents coming to conferences to bring in a box of tissues and a bottle of hand sanitizer. The PTSA also sponsors the Parent Visitation Day, at which parents can follow their student in the morning, afternoon, or the entire day. Up to 100 parents can participate in this event, which usually has 30-40 participants. This year's Visitation Day is set for February 25, 2010.

The PTSA also sponsors a teacher wish list, which is just getting started. The teachers can list tasks they would like parents to assist with and the PTSA will get the word out to the volunteers. The PTSA sponsors some mini-grants and cooperates with the ASB and DECA on projects. Joel Aune noted that the PTSA also helps with informational sessions, such as AP/Running Start Information Night.

The PTSA serves dinner at its General Meetings and takes suggestions on topics to cover at the meetings through surveys and word of mouth. The PTSA was complimented on the way that it had all meeting dates and topics scheduled at the beginning of the year so parents could plan accordingly. It was noted also that Randy Taylor attends every PTSA General Meeting and is available to answer questions on any topic at the meetings.

Two Rivers High School: Tom Athanases said that there is no PTSA at TRHS. He thinks it would be a good thing for a parent or two from the school to attend MSHS PTSA meetings or serve on the board of the PTSA. MSHS PTSA has talked with Mr. Athanases about working together and all agree that it would be beneficial for both schools in the future.

Twin Falls MS: The TFMS PTSA is in its second year and Carol Masters said that so far all fundraising has been done without selling anything, which the parent base likes. The PTSA collaborates its fundraisers with the ASB and Music Boosters Club. The three groups wrote contracts and set up ground rules for all school dances, which are held monthly. All money goes through the PTSA and is divided equally between the three groups. This year, the groups sponsored a Comedy Show, which was very successful and will be offered again next year. The PTSA also sponsors a golf tournament fundraiser with NBE.

Ruth Moen noted that it is challenging to come up with fundraisers that work without having the students sell things and thought that this issue could be discussed at the council level.

VISTAS Program: Lara Currie discussed the VISTAS (Volunteers In Schools To Achieve Success) program, which is currently in its pilot stage at TFMS and OES. It is hoped that this program will go district-wide over the next couple of years to act as a clearinghouse for all volunteers in the district, through background checks, scheduling of volunteer opportunities, and email reminders of volunteer dates. Lara noted that approximately \$10,000.00 is needed to get the full computer program online for the VISTAS program for the district. It is hoped that the program and its funding would be a partnership of the PTSA's, SVSF, and the SVSD. The program would coordinate and

manage volunteers throughout the district. The VISTAS program will broaden the volunteer net beyond the parents in the district to retired professionals and the like.

Closing Thoughts: It was discussed that it is often difficult to get busy parents to show up to the PTSA meetings. MSHS PTSA is conducting a survey on the best time for meetings. It was mentioned that a combination of day and evening meetings allows working parents to participate. Joel Aune said that in his experience mid-day or lunchtime meeting seem to work very well. It was also suggested that the PTSAs could combine their meetings with other meetings and limit the time for each subject on the meeting agenda to streamline the meetings.