

**McLean High School PTSA
General Membership Meeting
March 10, 2008**

The March meeting of the McLean High School PTSA was called to order by Kathy Rugh, PTSA President.

Minutes: The minutes of the February 11, 2008 meeting were reviewed and approved. The minutes will be posted on the PTSA website.

Treasurer's Report: Rebecca Davis, Treasurer, presented the budget report covering the month ending February 29, 2008.

Principal and Staff Reports:

Tonight's Spotlight on Learning was the Science Department. Department Chair, Karen Molloy, is also the lead on the Grant Team which started the MHS Prep program last summer. Ms. Molloy thanked all the students, parents and teachers who came out last weekend to paint the science hallway. She also reported that the AP Biology students had a successful trip to the Florida Keys to study the eco systems in that area. The department is in full swing with registrations for next year. Oceanography will be added as a class offering next year. The Chemistry team is also looking in the possibility of pod-casting lectures, so students can listen to or review the lectures at home. This will open up more classroom time for other instruction or labs. Peg O'Hara is looking into the technology needed for this. The Summer Institute will take place again next summer; registration will begin after Spring Break. Dr. Jackson and Christie Taylor mentioned that McLean High School is looking for opportunities for community partnerships/grants to help fund some of these new initiatives, since the FCPS budget will be so tight next year.

Dr. Jackson reported that all is going well at McLean High School. The school did have a power outage in February, and the school also had a successful "lockdown" drill in accordance with the emergency plan. There have been some discussions in FCPS about having an open campus for lunch, but McLean High School said no to this. Attendance has generally been good, however, tardies are still an issue. Mini-conferences were canceled due to the weather, but Dr. Jackson encouraged all parents to contact teachers individually to discuss any issues. A Parent Coffee will be held on April 3 for parents of all grades. It has been a great winter for the sports programs as well as academics. There were nine Merit Finalists at McLean, and 55 students were recently honored at the All "A" Honor Roll reception. The Rotary Club also honored McLean student Jessica Stillman for her community service. The Boar's Head Feast (featuring the Madrigals) was a success and the school newspaper has excelled in good journalism this year.

The FCPS budget next year will be \$63 million short, which will result in larger class sizes, particularly in electives classes. The Principal's Association will be speaking to the school board on this topic. As of now, the summer school schedule is still not out; it should be published no later than the end of March. Jean Wacaster reminded parents to sign off on their student's registration form for next year. The deadline is March 12. Preliminary schedules will be out in May, so there is some room for adjustment. But

staffing is done based on the registrations, so it is important that these forms be turned in. Dr. Jackson will send a Keep in Touch to remind parents.

President's Report: Kathy Rugh reported that the PTSA had filed the IRS 990 form. She thanked John Haffey, a CPA and former MHS parent, who helps every year with the tax forms. Kathy will be attending a Cluster I Parent Advisory Meeting on March 26 at Herndon High School. The following parents have volunteered to serve as the Nominating Committee: Jennifer Schantz; Rita Cox and Jacky Longwell.

ACTION: A motion was made and carried to elect the aforementioned parents as the Nominating Committee.

Kathy read a thank you note from Jane Strauss for the sympathy flowers and gave the note to Dr. Jackson to share with the faculty. Kathy also presented Dr. Jackson with a PTSA check in the amount of \$13,000 from the initial armchair fundraiser donations. The check was accompanied by a letter listing the fundraising categories. Any additional funds will be presented at the end of the year. Kathy thanked Jean Godla for her fundraising efforts.

Kathy said that she is still working on a date for the Community of Caring program, which she hopes can take place in April or May. She also reminded parents that Jane Strauss will hold a meeting on the FCPS budget on March 12, at 7:30 pm in the Lecture Hall.

Committee Reports

Phyllis Walker reported that the mid-year Membership mailing will be going out and requested help to stuff approximately 650 envelopes. It was agreed to meet on Thursday, March 13 at 7:30 am in the conference room. An e-mail will be sent out asking for volunteers.

Susan Perla circulated a Safe Community Coalition flyer for parents of seniors in an effort to keep seniors safe during prom and graduation season. She will send a copy to Kent Arnold for the newsletter, and to Andrea Stillman for the senior class parents. If anyone wants a flyer, let Susan know. Susan also attended a Safety Presentation at Longfellow school, given by the Fairfax County Police Department and the School Resource Officer. The Fairfax County website has a tool called "Incident Mapping" where you can view reported incidents within a specific address/location. Officer Morris, Longfellow's SRO, talked about safety at Tysons Corner Mall, reminding parents to make sure their children are aware of their surroundings. The mother of the Longfellow student who was attacked in December also asked parents to talk to their kids about safety – tell them to run away if they ever feel threatened. Jean Wacaster reported that the Safe Community Coalition is holding its Middle School Forum on March 13, and 12 McLean High School students are helping to facilitate the program.

Phyllis Yoshida reported that several Virginia county PTA's are supporting FCCPTA's position on the proposed changes to Virginia's special education requirements. A member of FCCPTA's special education committee raised the changes with Governor Kaine who said he was interested in revisiting the regulations.

Stefanie Schoepfle reported on behalf of the All Night Graduation Committee. Fundraising efforts are still on-going. She is selling tickets to the Capitol Steps performance on April 13. Five Guys restaurant in Tysons Corner Center is also donating proceeds from Thursday nights in March to the fundraising efforts.

New Business

Sara Pacque-Margolis reported that there were approximately 150 attendees at the March 6, 2008 Fairgrade Forum held at McLean High School. The group is working on getting the website up and running (www.fairgrade.org) but she wants to make sure that the data is put on the website with proper references. Some people who attended the forum are misquoting the statistics, which is why she drafted a simple petition which can be sent to the School Board. The petition recommends specific positions in order to give the school board something concrete to accept, reject or modify. If people want to write personalized letters, that would be great, too. She forwarded a sample letter from a Langley parent (with permission) to the attendees at the meeting who provided e-mails. If anyone wants a hard copy of the presentation, please send Sara a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Sara, who is a demographer by training, began this effort to collect the data, since the FCPS School Board had no data to provide when the Fairgrade group approached them about this issue. She reported that Dr. Dale responded to the group request by saying “Why do you parents want to lower the standards?” So, the burden fell on the parents to collect the data.

The board discussed the views expressed in an e-mail by Ivy Main regarding the impact this might have on C students. Sara recognized this as a potential issue – that weight given for honors and AP classes could create a greater separation between regular, honors and special education students. Some PTSA board members with special education children noted that their children work extra hard to take honors classes, and that the extra weight would help their GPA. Sara noted that the Gold Medal Schools are recognized for how all students are doing and that 31 out of the top 35 have a 10-point grading scale. At most major state universities, the grades are scanned, and a B+ automatically turns into a B. Most large state schools do not re-calculate the grades, since this takes human resources and can lead to errors.

Sara also reported that the Fairgrade group will be presenting at Langley High School on April 2 and at Herndon High School on May 7. Kathy Rugh will contact the Langley PTSA president to see if this meeting can be open to non-Langley PTSA members. (The date of the Langley meeting was subsequently changed to April 1.) It was noted that it is really important to get the middle school PTAs involved, as well as the elementary school PTAs. It was suggested that, if the Langley meeting was not open to the public, that we try to have a forum at the McLean Community Center.

ACTION: A motion was made and carried to support the Fairgrade effort. A motion was also made and carried to send a letter, on behalf of the McLean HS PTSA, to the School Board in favor of Fairgrade. Further, a motion was made and carried to request that the PTSA contact the Fairfax County Council of PTAs and contact other school districts directly. Lastly, a motion was made and carried to form a committee to help in this effort. The following members volunteered to serve: Kathy Rugh, Jean Godla,

Rebecca Davis, Jihui Kim, Reg Devlin, Stefanie Schoepfle, Wafika Albani, Phyllis Walker, Phyllis Yoshida, and Sara Pacque-Margolis.

Sara mentioned that she could use help identifying an advocate at each school in the area. She also asked for help writing letters to the media and to the school and county officials. Sara also noted the importance of keeping the momentum going between Spring Break and April 5. She will be out of town from April 5 – April 15. We also need to use the summer months to keep the issue at the forefront.

It was suggested that Fairgrade and/or the committee develop a Communications Plan that can be used by all the schools. It was also suggested that the Fairgrade presentation be video-taped (on U-Tube, for example) so that correct information can be easily disseminated.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

In Attendance: Debbie Jackson, Jean Wacaster, Karen Molloy, Christie Taylor, Kathy Rugh, Stefanie Schoepfle, Reg Devlin, Jean Godla, Susan Perla, Wafika Albani, Phyllis Walker, Jaewoo Lee, Kathy Oram Meade, Phyllis Yoshida, Sara Pacque-Margolis, Eileen Nelson.