

**Franconia Elementary School  
PTA Meeting Minutes  
November 15, 2011**

**Attendees:**

Carylin Waterval – President  
Tracee Gartman – Vice President  
David Noguera – Treasurer  
Cory O’Meara – Secretary

Merrell Dade -- Principal  
Katheryn Kennedy-Labat, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher  
Anna Yortzidis, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher  
Traci Richardson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher  
Trevia Younger, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher

Roger Baskin, Bob Flynn, Cheryl Flynn, Anand Karunakaran, Greta Loggins, Cary Yarbrough, Nancy Rothermel, Deena Pagliaro, Christina Quilaqueo, Anna Ellis, Maxine Maloney

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Carylin Waterval called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Mrs. Waterval introduced the PTA Board members to the group.

The minutes from the October 11, 2011 meeting were presented.

**Motion to approve minutes from October 11, 2011: Bob Flynn.**

**Second: Katheryn Kennedy-Labat.**

Teacher’s Report: Second Grade Team – Mrs. Katheryn Kennedy-Labat, Mrs. Trevia Younger, Mrs. Anna Yortzidis, Mrs. Traci Richardson

- Discussion of the current testing and assessment cycle (CogAT, DRA, MRA, etc).
- Discussion of plans and units for Social Studies, Science and Math.
- Discussion of Second Grade Team collaboration, committee work and general planning for the school year.

Principal’s Report: Ms. Merrell Dade

- The annual Thanksgiving Luncheon and Open House was very well attended. Thanks to the volunteers and school families for excellent participation.
- Thanks to Mrs. Pemberton and Mrs. Baybas for the coordination of the Teacher Appreciation Breakfast and the lovely meal.
- Renovation Update. The building is now expected to be finished near the end of February 2012.
- Reviewed a schematic of the school grounds and shared ideas regarding changes to the playground plans in order to fit county program requirements. The change would move the playground closer to the Second Grade classroom wing. \$100,000 in funds has been secured to buy more playground equipment to enhance the playground space, as well as providing for a soccer field, baseball field, basketball area, and green space. The blacktop area will be repaved and painted. Staff had input into what they wanted for playground options, including items like swings, climbing apparatus and a ‘wall ball’ unit. Mr. Baskin suggested that a (running) track be painted around the basketball court. The staff will have further opportunity to make a ‘wish list’ for the playground area. The list will be given to Design and Construction for feasibility study.

- Ms. Dade is working to see if noise levels will be an issue for classrooms if the new playground plan is approved. Decibel readings will be taken to ascertain if the noise is within acceptable levels.
- Ms. Dade informed the group that there was no damage to the school from the earthquake in August 2011.

#### Treasurer's Report: Mr. David Noguera

- Mr. Noguera presented the current budget to the group for review. PTA accounts are sound.
- He told the group that the overall, PTA membership and dues collection are higher than last year. Unfortunately, extra donations to the PTA fund are lower than last year.
- Restaurant Night at Uno's went very well and \$318 was earned.

#### New Business

- Carylin Waterval gave kudos to Franconia volunteers for their hard work since the beginning of school. Special thanks were given to the efforts of the Teacher Appreciation and Thanksgiving Feast volunteer Chairs.
- Anna Ellis gave a briefing on the first Mustang Read-a-Thon fundraiser. Discussion included a recap of the program, goals/results, challenges, successes, improvements for the next Read-a-Thon, thanks to the program volunteers and staff, and how to close out the event. The program netted an estimated \$4700.00 for the PTA to be used for school needs.
- Carylin Waterval reminded the group that the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Family Fun Run will be held on December 3, 2011. The Fun Run is held in support of New Hope Housing and is being coordinated by Michelle Weinstein.
- Tracee Gartman reported on the status of the After-School Committee programming progress. This program seeks to provide enrichment for Franconia students by offering clubs and classes in a variety of subjects. Progress is impeded by the Franconia renovation project. The committee has been researching opportunities and plans to put out a survey to school families to assess needs and wishes.
- Cory O'Meara updated the group on the PTA Facebook page. The page is still not well known; there are only 15 'friends' currently. Information is intended to supplement news found on the school website and the monthly newsletter. No photos of children will be posted on the Facebook page in order to assure privacy.
- Maxine Maloney gave a report on her participation on the Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council (SPAC). The meeting was held on October 25, 2011, and the main focus was e-textbooks and Fairfax County Public Schools' (FCPS) progressive use of technology in the classroom. The organizers of SPAC sought to explain that the e-textbooks and iPads were useful tools for learning and not just 'toys.' Other topics discussed at the meeting included FCPS drop-out rates and causes, improving parent/teacher engagement and relationships, intervention/support for students and families, investment in the child from an early age, and the support of FCPS's robust data system to identify and help at-risk kids. The SPAC website has a link to the slideshow presentation shown at the meeting.
- Roger Baskin, FES representative to the Fairfax County Council of PTAs (FCCPTA), reminded the group to attend the November 19 "Emerging Minority Leaders" conference. This county and regional event will feature vendors, workshops and networking opportunities.

Parent Forum of Communication: Ms. Merrell Dade

- Ms. Dade discussed the importance of solid communication between the school and school families. She seeks to enhance current methods of communication and find out if there are other ways by which school families want to hear from Franconia. Communications tools such as a newsletter, website, calendar, and featured articles are how information is disseminated currently. Ms. Dade would like to convene a Parent Forum of Communication early in 2012 to discuss potential enhancements and/or changes.

Announcements/Dates to Remember:

- November 29, 2011 is the next restaurant fundraiser at Noodles and Company in Kingstowne.
- December 3, 2011 is the Family Fun Run.
- December 13, 2011 is the next PTA meeting. It will be a Board meeting, not a general member meeting.

General Discussion:

- Merrell Dade told the group that Mrs. Diane Gawalt, School Librarian, would like to address the group during the January 2012 meeting to discuss FCPS online resources.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by: Cory O'Meara, PTA Secretary.