

MIAMI PALMETTO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL PTSA
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - OCTOBER 17, 2007

The meeting was called to order by President Andrea Shosfy at 9:13 a.m.

Guest Speaker: School Board Member, Evelyn Langlieb Greer, addressed 2 issues: facilities (overcrowding) and programming (academies). Florida has the largest high schools in the USA in terms of the number of students per school. At this time for high schools on average, no more than 25 students are allowed in any classroom. Our area schools currently have a declining enrollment. Even though the numbers are declining, our schools are still overcrowded.

In our Palmetto feeder pattern, we have 2 overcrowded schools – Palmetto High and Palmetto Middle. A plan was abandoned to build a new middle school west of Dixie Highway. Instead, Vineland and Leewood Elementaries will become K through 8 Centers starting in Aug. 2008. Palmetto High will be relieved by a new high school to be built on SW 86th Street and 107th Avenue. The money to build it is still in the budget. It will take 2 years to build.

The School Board is in negotiations with the University of Miami to build a high quality math and science magnet high school in conjunction with UM's urbanization project. We also have a contract with Baptist Health Systems to open a medical arts high school as an integrated program to recruit and train students. Finally, there are preliminary talks with the County to open a New World School of the Arts-type magnet high school at the new performing arts center being built on SW 216th Street.

In regard to programming, all high schools are going to be offering academies. Research shows that smaller environments and classes are more conducive to learning. There is a big push for career counseling along work expectations, but we still want to maintain gifted, honors, and AP programs. Ms. Greer advised that not much money is available for future remodeling or improvements at our school.

A parent asked if there were any plans for block scheduling. Mr. Weiner stated that block scheduling is part of secondary school reform and it gives kids a chance to take additional courses, especially electives. Studies have shown that electives are the courses that motivate many students to stay in school. The decision to switch to block scheduling is made by the faculty. Sixty percent of the high school faculty must vote in favor it; but, we are far from that at our school. Ms. Greer encouraged the PTSA to convince the staff that block scheduling is a positive thing. We have block scheduling now in a number of high schools and it works. It is good for the teachers and staff. Teachers have a longer class; but, they have more down time. Mr. Weiner said that for the high performing student, he or she can go from a 24 credit model to a 30 credit model. Each year, they can add 2 additional AP courses if they wish. Ms. Greer thinks that block scheduling would be a huge benefit for our school. She encourages the PTSA to support it. Send her an email if there is an issue we are concerned about or need help on (evelyngreer@greerco.com).

Principal's Report: Principal Howard Weiner reports we have ordered and are waiting for a part to repair the marquee. For safety issues, it benefits us to keep it on at night as it is the only light source in that area. We had a successful College Fair and he thanked the PTSA for buying the new gym floor protective covering. Over 85 colleges were represented and we had the largest group ever in attendance. Homecoming was last week and we won the football game. The Panther Prowl was outstanding and the kids did a great job. The PTSA is in the process of upgrading the lobby showcases, including new lighting and painting. He thanked the PTSA for its efforts. On Oct. 9th, a program was held for all current 10th grade students explaining how the academies and majors curriculum works. On Oct. 25th, the 9th grade program will be presented. Each academy has a strand of courses that a student can select. They choose an area of concentration, as far as electives and content areas are concerned. Students will pick an academy and then, select a strand. Students were given handouts explaining that 10th graders must pick an academy for 11th grade and 9th graders must select an academy and a major. Majors can be changed at will at any time without penalty. Incoming 8th graders will select a major and an academy for 9th grade. If you have questions, send him an email at hweiner@dadeschools.net.

Kaplan SAT Testing: On Dec. 8th, Kaplan Testing will be offering a practice SAT. Registration starts at 7:30 a.m. in the Media Center (for up to 115 students). Email Claudia Glasson at Glasson@bellsouth.net to register. Students must bring a calculator and two #2 pencils. Cost is \$5 per student and they will get the test back before the holiday break.

Treasurer's Report: Isabel McBrayer handed out a copy of the current budget.

Board/Committee Reports:

Book Sale: Becky Herget said we had \$8,000 more in revenue this year and made about \$15,000. She thanked Lynne Schaefer, Jennifer Wollmann, Barbara Berg, and other volunteers who helped make the sale a success.

College Fair: It turned out great and the new gym floor covering that the PTSA paid for helped make the event as successful as it was. Thanks go to Athletic Dir. Yvette McKinney and her kids for helping set up and take down the covering.

Membership/Donations: We have 975 members (including 108 teachers) and have received approx. \$2,000 in donations for teacher appreciation and \$3,000 in general donations. We have implemented a new "Project Proposal Form" for teachers to request funds for special projects. The request goes through the teacher's Dept. Chair, Mr. Weiner, EESAC, and, then, to PTSA.

Volunteers/Holiday Luncheon: The Holiday Luncheon is scheduled for Dec. 18th. Debbie Rosenthal and Robin Laidlaw need volunteers to donate food and to help set up, serve, and clean up. Contact them at foreverash@aol.com or debralrose@aol.com. General volunteers are needed for special projects in the office or with certain teachers involving short term commitments. To assist, email Mary Steele at Mes6841@hotmail.com.

Newsletter: The deadline to get information to Jill Bloom is Nov. 7th (Bloomsie@gmail.com).

Health Programs: Sima Miska distributed flyers about the "Underage Drinking, Substance Abuse and Driving" program scheduled in the Auditorium on Nov. 14th, at 7 p.m. She asks our help in bringing family, friends, and students to the program. Anyone who has children who drive should come. She asked for suggestions as to other health programs we might be interested in learning about. Send her your ideas via email at SHMiska@aol.com.

Legislative: Jennifer Wollmann asked us to communicate with our legislators and keep informed on the tax reform issue and its effect on school funding.

EESAC: EESAC approved funding for 3 items: registration for students to attend a TV Production Conference in Jan. 2008; registration for 2 teachers to go to a Science Teacher Convention; and, purchase of a leadership program ("8 Habits of the Heart"). An EESAC member has resigned and a second parent representative has left. Alternate Claudia Glasson has become a member. An election was held for a new EESAC alternate. Jennifer Wollmann nominated Pat Bucciero which was seconded by Sima Miska. All voted in favor of the selection.

Old Business: The minutes of the Sept. 19, 2007, General Membership Meeting were presented. A motion was made by Sima Miska to approve the minutes. It was seconded by Ellen Genet and approved.

New Business: Florida PTA/PTSA offers 4 scholarships that students can apply for by Feb. 1, 2008. See YourClassPage.com on the school's website. The United Way Campaign ends on Oct. 31st. Orders are still being taken for class rings and make up picture day is Nov. 14th. The Junior Class Magazine sale starts the first week of Nov. and ends on Nov. 21st. Junior Parent Night is Nov. 1st, at 7 p.m., in the auditorium. The Drama Club is selling discount cards for \$10 and has a Garage Sale planned for Nov. 10th. For more information, contact Ellen Genet at Efg929@aol.com. Our next General Membership Meeting will be held on Nov. 14th, at 6:30 p.m., in the auditorium.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Roxy Lancellata, Recording Secretary

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