**SMPTO Monthly Meeting**

**January 10, 2013**

**Iron Forge Educational Center Library**

**Meeting started at approximately 7:00 p.m. and ended at approximately 8:10 p.m.**

1. **Call to Order/Welcome**

Both principals, the board with the exception for Coralita Wilson, Vice-President, IFEC, Mrs. Sunday, Teacher Representative, Iron Forge and Miss. Kuhn and Mrs. Trostle, Teacher Representatives, Rice, in addition to six parents were present. Special guest, Mr. Merlie, President, School Board.

Elizabeth welcomed everyone and noted that the board would try to adhere more closely to the agenda in an effort to have SMPTO meetings last no longer than an hour for those parents attending the meetings.

In addition, Elizabeth thanked Jen Chadwick, Teacher Appreciation Gift Coordinator, for all of her efforts each month to ensure the teachers receive a gift. Elizabeth passed around a picture of Jen’s December teacher appreciation gift for those in attendance to see.

Elizabeth also thanked Shawn Knavel, Co-Vice President, Rice for doing such a great job updating SMPTO’s website. SMPTO’s website now accepts online donations through PayPal.

1. **Principal Reports**

**Mr. Boley, Principal, Rice Elementary & Mrs. Adams, Principal, IFEC**

Mr. Boley thanked SMPTO for all of the events that took place prior to and leading up to the Christmas break. Specifically, Mr. Boley mentioned the success of the Secret Santa Shop and Breakfast with Santa.

Parents were reminded that January 21, 2013, is a make-up day from Hurricane Sandy and school will be in session.

Mr. Boley explained the students may come home and say they were “swatted” at school. The “SWAT” teams conducted an easy Curriculum Based Monitoring or Mentoring (CBM) assessment tool for all children in grades K-3. In addition, IFEC conducted the same assessments for both 4th and 5th grade. The CBM assessment is not required by the state or the district, rather it is used as a school-wide universal screening tool. Mrs. Adams explained the CBM assessment is completed at the beginning, middle and end of the school year in an effort to assess student development and if need be institute intervention for students needing additional help. Mrs. Adams added that Response To Instruction & Intervention (RITT) is a formal model used by South Middleton School District to monitor student responses to the assessments and see where, if any, improvement or additional help is needed. Mrs. Adams noted there are many models of the CBM assessment tool used by other school districts. The assessment focus in 4th and 5th grade is in reading comprehension and math skills.

The assessments are typically given at the beginning, middle (usually in January) and end of the school year. This year IFEC completed its CMB assessments the week before the Christmas break. Mrs. Adams noted different results from past years at the middle mark were seen and speculates that the timing of this year’s assessments, right before Christmas break may factor into those changes. Mrs. Adams was quick to note the CBM assessments do not affect a student’s grade.

Mr. Boley also spoke of the changes regarding safety in our schools that were beginning to take place. After discussion with staff and the administration, new policies and procedures with respect to safety in our schools will be enacted. Mr. Boley thanked the School Board for their generosity in allocating money for the safety in schools initiative. Mr. Boley noted parents will be hearing more about the upcoming changes in the weeks and months to follow and will notify parents when those changes have been enacted/finalized.

Elizabeth commented that Dr. Withum, Assistant Superintendent, visited the last SMPTO Executive Board Meeting to discuss the initiatives. Mr. Boley feels the new changes regarding school safety measures will be a cultural change for the parents of the district. In the future, aides will be asking parents for identification and Mr. Boley hopes that parents will be respectful of all of the new school safety changes. Mrs. Adams concurred with Mr. Boley but added to date she has found parents to be supportive to the initial school safety changes and are helping the school staff, administrators and parents to work together as a team.

Mr. Merlie, President, School Board and Liaison to SMPTO was asked if the school board has allocated money for specific school safety measures. Mr. Merlie explained the School Board has created three funding phases to the new school safety initiatives, the first being allocating $35,000 for an immediate review and response to action the schools will be taking to increase security measures. Over the Christmas break, the school board, along with the administrators began work on the first phase by addressing the infrastructure changes to the school buildings. Mr. Merlie anticipates these new initial changes will take place within the next 60 days and will result in tighter/tougher access for outsiders seeking to gain admittance to any of the school buildings. Additionally, measures are being taken to allow for faculty and staff, if needed, to easily contact first responders. Mr. Merlie, again noted the first phase of the three phase school safety measures will be noticed immediately and will lay the groundwork for more changes/updates to occur.

Mrs. Adams noted that faculty and administrators recognize and will have to work with students and teachers to conduct more school safety drills. Specifically, drills designed to occur at various times throughout the school day and in various scenarios, such as an intruder drill during lunch period. Mrs. Adams feels the process of teaching staff and students to drill for various scenarios will be overwhelming but will greatly benefit and prepare staff and students.

Elizabeth asked Mr. Boley if he was aware if the art teachers from IFEC and Rice were intending to have an art show this spring. If so, Elizabeth extended to Mr. Boley that SMPTO would offer assistance promoting and helping with the event.

1. **School Board Representative**
2. **Open Floor**
3. **Treasurer’s Report**

Jen reported SMPTO has a checking account balance of $32,814.41 and a savings account balance of $15,002.58. Expenses during the month of December included Breakfast with Santa. Elizabeth explained Breakfast with Santa, as well as the majority of SMPTO events, is considered a community builder and a fundraiser. IN addition, Jen is dealing with bounced checks from the Secret Santa Shop and is working with those families to recoup the monies.

Additionally, SMPTO paid for educational grants; mountain math/language subscriptions for Rice and Super Teacher Worksheets subscription for both Rice and IFEC. SMPTO paid $10.00 per 5th grade student to help offset the cost of the 5th grade field trip to Allenberry. Jen added SMPTO sold approximately $200.00 of Spirit Gear during the Breakfast with Santa event.

1. **Correspondence**

Kerrie shared various letters of thanks from staff and faculty, as well as Gertrude Hawk for a successful fall fundraiser. Mrs. Adams also noted that the Little Egg Harbor School District sent IFEC a letter thanking them for the $425.00 donation IFEC Groovy Movie proceeds made to the school district hit hard by Hurricane Sandy. Mrs. Adams noted she presented the letter during the last school board meeting.

1. **Committee Reports**
   1. Groovy Movie: In Coralita’s absence, Elizabeth noted that traditionally after the licensing fees have been paid, the proceeds from Groovy Movie are given to a charitable organization. However, because SMPTO is a non-profit and is currently experiencing lower than projected annual income to fund our various activities/events, future Groovy Movie proceeds will go into the general budget to offset budgetary needs.
   2. IFEC Winter Book Fair: The IFEC Winter Book Fair will be held Tuesday, February 19, 2013 through Friday, February 22, 2013 in the large purpose room at IFEC. The book fair will be open for students to make purchases during lunch and again during the evenings that week. Volunteers are needed to help operate the cash register during the book sale. Visit [www.smpto.com](http://www.smpto.com) to sign up.
   3. May Fair: Elizabeth reported that planning is underway for SMPTO’s annual May Fair event to be held Saturday, May 4, 2013 from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at Rice. SMPTO welcomes volunteers and is always open to hearing about new ideas or receiving guidance in planning the event. If parents have any questions or want to volunteer, please contact any of the SMPTO board members through their email addresses listed on SMPTO’s website.
   4. Box Tops: The Box Tops Across America contest is beginning. Box Tops received from a military APO address will be counted and maps will placed in both the schools shortly to track all of the locations from where box tops have been received.
   5. Spirit Gear: Jes again noted that SMPTO sold approximately $200.00 in spirit gear merchandise during the December Breakfast with Santa event. In addition, SMPTO is working to make spirit gear available online for purchase through the SMPTO website.
   6. Bubblethon: Elizabeth explained that in an effort to get away from selling chocolate and offer a healthier fundraising alternative, SMPTO will be holding its first annual Bubblethon on Friday, March 22, 2013. This is a simple program that is not volunteer intensive. Students will be asked to give up their recess that day and either read or walk. Parents will be receiving a form letter that can be sent or emailed to family or friends asking for their support during this event. A fundraising meeting regarding this issue has been held and presently the next step is working to market this upcoming fundraiser. The goal is for every child to raise $35.00. SMPTO has asked for parent coordinators and received feedback of assistance. Those parents will make up the committee responsible for creating the prize structure for the children and details of that day’s event.
2. **Old Business**
3. **New Business**

Mrs. Sunday stated she really appreciated SMPTO’s efforts for the teachers’ school supply budget. Mrs. Adams explained that the lead teachers from both schools were being polled on how best to spend approximately $1,500.00 in school supplies.

Stacey Knavel discussed SMPTO’s efforts to reintroduce the student directory. This is an initiative that would occur at the start of the next school year. The question was asked if both schools would allow parents to give their permission to be included in a student directory when completing the annual school demographic forms. This issue is going to be further researched and more information will follow in the coming months regarding the directory.

The issue of having special guests speak at SMPTO meetings was raised. Elizabeth stated Dr. Withum is a possible future speaker regarding the issue of the new core curriculum changes the district.

Mr. Merlie again addressed the new school safety initiatives. Mr. Merlie feels that while the culture of our school district is one of its best attributes it can also be our biggest detriment. Mr. Merlie is seeking parent cooperation with staff/administrators, especially school personnel working on the front lines. Parents need to be cooperative and not get offended at the new safety changes that are coming because all the initiatives are to provide a safe secure environment for our children. Mr. Boley added that one way parents can help school staff is by having clear and early communication with the school on days that children will be picked up from school. Mr. Boley noted the importance of parents sending clearly written notes and clearly indicating the name when a different individual is scheduled to pick up the child after school. A parent suggested that once the safety security measures are ironed out that a parent meeting would be helpful in communicating the new initiatives and expectations for parents . Mr. Merlie added the school board is working to create a school safety task force and may seek the input from parents.

1. **Open Floor**
2. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m.

**The next SMPTO meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 7, 2013, in the IFEC Library. Babysitting provided by Interact Club.**

**Meeting Minutes pending approval February 7, 2013**

**Kerrie Truax**

**Secretary, SMPTO**