

Hastings PTA Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2008  
6:30 Pm at Hastings School

In attendance: Co-Presidents J. Steigerwald, and S. Kendall, VP's C. Casey and Nancy Alloway, M. Dkeman, B. Stutzman, R. White, F. Coe, L. Conrad, L. Bisson, M. Roy, A. Leightheiser, P. Hodges, D. Biglow, A. Ratchelous, and D. Biglow,

J. Steigerwald opened the meeting by thanking those for coming and taking questions which were written on the easel paper. She then introduced our two guests, F. Stevenson, LPS behavioral specialist and Hastings guidance counselor C. Freeman.

CF: Showed a video called 'It's a Girls World,' which is a segment from the video 'Odd Girl Out.'

The video was about a girl who had been bullying other girls at school. Her mother made her go to several girls houses and apologize to them in person.

FS: Girl issues such as these start in upper elementary school and peak in middle school. There was a study where children were asked a series of questions. When children were asked about an instance where they were bullied, the most common responses were that they were afraid to say something, and that they wish their friends would have helped them.

FS: His approach is to get leadership groups to support each other, which he was able to do with Jen Clifford and the 5<sup>th</sup> graders several years ago.

CF: Adults have difficulty with bullying too. There is an unrealistic expectation that you can end bullying completely. For kids, sometimes talking to adults makes it worse. It can get to the point where children miss school, complain of stomach aches...

FS: Was unable to get the video that he brought to work, but it is called Raising Cain, and is based on a book by Michael Thompson about boys and boy psychology.

In the film one question that is asked of the boys is "What is it like to be a man?"

The responses are that you can't cry, that you have to have courage.

For boys, courage carries a big thing, but really courage could be doing your homework when you want to watch TV. There is a difference in ways that parents interact with boys and girls. Boys are usually more action oriented.

Parent Q: How does a parent react to when a child complains that another child is their friend in class but will not play with him/her at recess?

CF: Need to ask, Are they a fair weather friend or is it someone who truly values you? Do you trust that person? Sometimes a change means that someone might not be a good friend for you.

FS: It is possible to have certain inside friends and outside friends [based on interests.] Don't demean emotion, but help your child to look at the brighter things.

FS: On giving compliments, this is part of Open Circle. A compliment must be substantive. It is about deeds and actions versus appearance.

FS: In school, need to empower girls to say 'stop' doing something.

CF: There are personal boundaries, personal space. Be matter of fact. Be relaxed, but be straightforward.

Parent Q: What about the idea of a peer mediator?

FS: For that you need resources and political support.

Parent Q: What about tattling?

FS: Use the double D language. Is it Dangerous and Destructive behavior? There is a book about this read to Kindergarteners.

In terms of resources, there are several copies of the Raising Cain video in the Hastings library. It is very informative in understanding the challenges of boys.

Sometimes they don't know what they are doing that they shouldn't be. When a child is running in the halls, he says, "Why are you running?" instead of yelling "Stop running or no running!!" Then the child realizes that he/she is running when they hadn't thought of it that way before.

CF: Would like to have an opportunity for parents to view all of the video "It's a Girls World." She does not recommend that parents watch it without being able to discuss it with a professional. As another resource, she will hold a meeting for parents to learn about Open Circle in the spring.

Co-Pres. S. Kendall: There will be a well known speaker coming on April 8<sup>th</sup> to talk about Resiliency in Children and Adolescents sponsored by our PTA and 7 other PTA/PTO's in Lexington. His name is Dr. Robert Brooks. It will be held at Clarke MS at 7 pm. It is very expensive to bring him here. He lowered the cost for us and each school including us has paid \$312 to bring him to Lexington. Please go if you can.

FS: Recommended hearing this speaker. He uses some of Dr. Brooks' teachings in his work

J. Steigerwald: A sign up sheet is being passed around for anyone interested in working with FS to explore the possibility of parent volunteers in mediation. Thanked CF and FS for coming and giving of their time for Hastings parents.

M. Dkeman and J. Steigerwald: Gave an update on the Lexington Youth Forum that she attended held by CPY (Center for Parents and Youth.)

S. Kendall: Sitting in as Secretary as K. Arena could not be here. Minutes from January PTA meeting are on the website, and will be voted on at the March meeting. SK read several of many thank you notes received by PTA from teachers for the discretionary checks that were distributed.

J. Steigerwald: Announced that the PTA was seeking 2 additional members to serve on the Nominating Committee and that much communication had gone out, but only H. Pasternak had come forward so far and per our bylaws need to have 3, and need to get the committee in place now. She asked for volunteers from the floor. A. Ratchelous and F. Coe volunteered to serve on the committee.

VOTE: to approve F. Coe, A. Ratchelous, and H. Pasternak as Nominating Committee.

Vote is passed. Thank you.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.