

MINUTES OF PTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 1ST OCTOBER 2008

Call to order and prayer

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by President Mr. Nathaniel George. Mrs. Glenda Bertrand said the opening prayer and Mr. George welcomed the parents, guardians and teachers.

Executive Committee members present

Mr. N. George
Mr. S. Cadette
Mr. S. John
Ms. J. Andre
Mr. E. Xavier
Ms. A. Austrie
Mrs. J. Dublin
Mrs. G. Bertrand
Ms. A. Fontaine
Ms. J. Bruney
Mrs. G. Shillingford
Mr. D. Bobb

Amendments to Agenda

The agenda had been circulated prior to the meeting. Under the sub-heading 'New Business', two items were added: Creole Day and St. Cecilia House Feast. Mr. A Mitchel moved a motion to adopt the agenda as amended and Mrs. G. Bertrand seconded the motion.

Ms. Austrie apologized to the meeting on behalf of Mrs. Bannis who was absent due to illness.

Reading of minutes of last AGM, 9 October 2007 and amendments

Ms. A. Austrie read the minutes of the last AGM. Mrs. Angela Fontaine (pg 5) was amended to Ms. Andreline Fontaine. Ms. Clara Charles moved a motion that the minutes be accepted as amended. This was seconded by Ms. Corinthia Carbon.

Matters arising from minutes

School fees

Ms. Fontaine inquired whether an official response had been received from the Government regarding the increase in school fees. The Principal's report would include a response to the question.

Principal's Report for the Academic Year 2007 –2008

The Principal, Mrs. Josephine Dublin, welcomed the parents and guardians and presented her report for the academic year 2007-2008.

School fees

No official acceptance for an increase in school fees was received from the Ministry of Education. There had been a verbal agreement only, for an increase to \$525 annually or \$175 per term. The Catholic School Board, representative body of all the Catholic Schools on the island, had made a decision to increase the fees, commencing this academic year.

The student handbook was completed. First Formers and other new entrants had received copies. Suggestions for improvement of manual were invited.

Evacuation drills continued at the School. More work was needed to upgrade the level of the drills for different emergency situations. Efforts at formulating a **School Safety Plan** had stagnated in the past school year.

Retreats were held as usual. The Principal thanked parents for their support and prayers. The **COR** (Christ in Others Retreat) had been held.

The School continued to meet with its **at-risk students**. Individual meetings had taken place with over sixty (60) students and their parents or guardians, between January and July 2008.

Progress reports continued in each term. Suggestions for improvements were invited.

School Masses and Prayer services form an integral part in the School's Program. A joint Thanksgiving Mass for the SMSS, SMA and CHS opened the academic year. The Bishop of the Diocese of Roseau was the main celebrant. It was also World Diocesan Day. A special Penitential Service was held on Ash Wednesday.

Special Assemblies are weaved into the life of the Convent High School. On January 22 2008, the School had a joint celebration of World Respect Life Day and the Feast Day of the St. Agnes. House Feasts were being celebrated in a grander manner to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the School. House Feasts had been celebrated for St. Ann's, St. Rita's, St. Joan's Houses in the past school year. St. Theresa had recently celebrated its Feast Day this current academic year, and St. Cecilia's Feast Day would be celebrated on 22 November 2008.

Participation in competitions continued: essay, quiz, Spelling B and Science Fair. The School captured third place in the Spelling B competition.

Graduation 2008 had been a grand celebration at the Botanic Gardens, as the School continued its 150th Anniversary celebrations. The feedback received had been positive.

Teacher turnover was high at the Convent High School. Teachers who had left were Ms. Alfred, Ms. Nesty, Ms. John and Office Clerk, Ms. Laud. New staff members were introduced: Ms. Kamila Bell, Ms. Dhanelle Cuffy, Ms. Tshei Grell, and Ms. Alicia Lestrade, all former students of CHS. Ms. Tamisha Meyers, former member of staff, resumed teaching at the School. Also returning on the staff were Sr. Aless Williams, ICM, Ms. Inese Stephenson, Mr. Gabriel Ceasar and Office Clerk, Mrs. Greenaway.

The Principal ended by thanking parents and guardians for their support and prayers. She reminded the audience that the School has to manage 575 students with their individual personalities as well as the personalities of those at home. She thanked the PTA executive members for their support, guidance and counsel.

President's Report

The President, Mr. Nathaniel George, expressed great satisfaction with how the executive had performed in the last school year. He reported that 5 executive meetings had been held for the last academic year and that the turnout had been impressive. Meetings had been interactive and members had shown a keen sense of interest. He encouraged parents to come forward to assist the School and to get involved in a more meaningful way.

Mr. George expressed disappointment at the parental attendance at Form Level meetings and hoped that parents would make a greater effort to attend meetings this academic year. He emphasized the importance of parental involvement and shared how it personally benefits his family.

Mr. George highlighted the main activities of the PTA executive for the past year. These included discussions on several key issues confronting the School, namely:

- Review of the existing homework policy;
- Building of a lunch facility at an estimated cost of \$603,000;
- Review of the School development plan, with particular emphasis on improving student performance and enhancing reading;
- Safety concerns, with particular emphasis on fire extinguishers and off-site storage of school records

The President thanked the members of the PTA Executive who served for the 2007-2008 academic year. He commended the Principal and staff for an excellent job. He described the June 2008 CSEC results as a reflection of the hard work of all. He ended by thanking Mrs. Dublin and the staff, for welcoming him into the School.

June 2008 CSEC Results

100% passes were obtained in 14 of the 18 subjects offered by the School, namely: Biology, Chemistry, English B, Geography, IT General, IT Technical, Integrated Science, Math General, Math Basic, Physics, POA, Spanish, EDPM, and HSB.

Commendable pass rates were obtained in the other subjects as follows: English A, (98.5%); POB, (92%) and History (91.5%).

The results for Music were not yet available. This gave the school an overall pass rate of 98.3%.

In June 2007 CSEC exams 33% of the passes were Grade I's. In the June 2008 examinations, 42% of the passes were grades I's ; a significant improvement.

16 students had 5 or more Grade I's.. 5 students had 7 or more Grade I's.

Review of the Anniversary Celebrations for the period January to September 2008

Some key events that had taken place during the Anniversary celebrations were highlighted, including:

- The Media Launch in January 2008
- The Anniversary March and Street Parade
- The House Feasts
- The Easter Bonnet Parade
- Sports Day
- CHS Queen of Queens Pageant
- PTA Lecture Series

The events were largely successful, with the exception of the PTA Lecture series, to which the turnout was poor. The Old Girls were commended for their participation in Sports Day 2008.

Upcoming events for the Anniversary Celebrations

Creole Day; Pretty in Pink (for students) and Shades of Pink (for adults) were among the activities to mark the remaining months of the celebrations.

Unfinished business

Desks

To date, 208 desks and chairs had been brought in at a cost of \$60,000.

Construction project for lunch area

The proposal of a 2 level building to accommodate a lunch area and additional classrooms, at an estimated cost of \$603,000 was discussed. Suggestions for fundraising were sourced. The executive had already discussed 'Donate a block', where the total number of blocks for the project and the cost would be worked out and parents and other donors would support. Other fund raising ideas were given:

- Every 1st Monday, parents would give their child \$1.00
- Jeans Day (once a month)
- Barbecues
- Funding from Private Sector and Funding Agencies.
- Talent night
- Boat Cruise
- Raffles (cake, vehicle). The School had successfully raffled a laptop at Easter. However, raffles posed their own problems.

New Business

Creole Day

Ms. Kimone Joseph gave an update on plans for Creole Day and the customary CHS Wob Dwiyet Pageant. Parental support was solicited for the sale of snacks.

St. Cecilia Concert

This was carded for November 14 2008 and was still in the planning stage.

AOB

No matters were raised by the parents and guardians.

Principal, Mrs. Dublin, raised several matters.

She made an appeal for parents and guardians to ensure that students wore the correct uniform. The short skirts and folding of shirts over the waistline were of particular concern

Payment of school fees on the same day that report cards are issued was presenting a serious problem for the School Office. Report cards withheld for payments, will be issued only if payments are made before the final day of term. Payments made on the final day will be accepted, however, report cards will be issued at a further date.

Students with afternoon classes are not allowed to leave the school compound. Parents should desist from asking children to leave the School Compound. The lunch may be brought to the School's Office, students could carry a packed lunch to school or lunch could be purchased from the School Canteen.

Students should not purchase icepops, due to diarrhoea associated with contaminated water.

Parental disturbance

Mrs. Dublin issued a strong statement condemning the disruptive behaviour of a parent, a week earlier.

Christmas concert

Mr. Daryl Bobb, executive member, invited parents to form a planning committee for a Christmas Concert. Names were to be given to Ms. Austria after the meeting.

Elections

The President announced that all the members of the Executive had indicated a willingness to continue serving. Mr. Irish nominated all persons who had consented to serve. The nomination was seconded by Mrs. Jean Jacques. Nominations were closed since the current executive was unanimously voted in by the gathering.

Passing of the Hat

\$627.53 was collected.

Thanks & closing prayer

Ms. Austrie thanked parents and guardians for attending the meeting. The meeting ended with a prayer at 6:30 p.m.