

BUTLER PTA Board Meeting, October 15, 2013
Minutes
Taken by Claudia Haydon, Recording Secretary

Present:

Laura VanderHart	Mary Jo Peterman
Emma Robichaux	Vitaly Serbin
Miriam Lapson	Jo Ann Endo
Mike McAllister	Rose O'Neil
Sarah Squires	Tracy Podol
Mira Hotoauski (spelling?)	Karen Gutterman
Maria Samson	Bill Like
Andrea Russo	Jessica Mutch
Julie Crockett	Tamil Rajendran
Frank Dill	Jamie Johnson
Heather LaPierre	Barbara Bulfoni

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS/GUESTS

1. Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE), presented by Jamie Hood Shea, President.

Jamie presented an overview of FBE, a non-profit independent and volunteer-run charitable organization dedicated to improving educational opportunities for Belmont's children and teachers. FBE awards funding for a diverse array of projects and the Butler has been a top recipient of grants in recent years. Included in these were last year's award for Mr. Chu's 2nd grade field trip to the Underground Railway Museum, Ms. Beauchemin's 4th grade inquiry groups (which received national recognition), the Shakespeare Company's performance of "Henry" for grades K-4, book purchases and more. Funds for FBE awards are raised by parents. New activities of the FBE this year will include the Dan Scharfman Memorial Run, a 5k to be held on November 17. Marketing and Communications Coordinator Ginny d'Arbeloff appealed to the group to consider volunteering for FBE's many events, including the upcoming Spelling Bee, the Scharfman Run and more. Volunteers can register online at www.fbe-belmont.org.

2. Belmont Special Education Advisory Council (BSEAC), presented by BSEAC Co-Chairs Heather LaPierre and Mary Jo Peterman.

BSEAC is Belmont's special education parent advisory council, mandated by Massachusetts state law, run by family members of children with disabilities who educate each other, collaborate with school professionals, and exchanges ideas and information. BSEAC's primary activities include advocacy, advising of the Belmont school administration and school committee on SpEd issues, assisting of families through monthly parents information sessions, a listserv and various annual events. Information nights are held periodically at the Butler Elementary library (see website for schedule). Heather and Mary Jo encouraged PTA members and parents to attend these sessions, whether or not they have a child with special needs: all tips and technologies shared can be applicable to typical kids as well. BSEAC needs volunteers for the following:

- Superintendent Search Committee -- questions for candidates can be submitted to BSEAC via email or the listserv for possible inclusion in search process;
- Parent Information Sessions;
- Special Education Trends Advisory Team;
- Parent Mingles (with each other and Special Education experts/providers);
- Parents Helping Parents lists, a resource for confidential peer support;
- Belmont Abilities Carnival, a new event envisioned for the fall of 2014 that would serve kids of all abilities, but with sensory activities targeting those kids with needs who might otherwise not be able to enjoy a typical carnival. Sponsors by town PTAs are particularly desirable at this point in planning.

Contact for BSEAC is as follows. To join the listserv, email BSEAC-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Website is www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bseac. Co-Chairs Mary Jo can be reached at [617-721-2634](tel:617-721-2634) or info@familyyoga.us and Heather LaPierre, at [617-872-0774](tel:617-872-0774) or heather_lapierre@yahoo.com.

3. New Envision Math Curriculum, presented by Jessica DeFrances, Curriculum Specialist.

Jessica walked the group through an overview of the Butler's newly-implemented (as of school year 2013-2014) Envision Math curriculum, circulating a handout of sample problems for each grade. Guiding principles for Envision include activities, coherent sequencing, innovative use of technology, college readiness/real-life use of math, math literacy as well as routine assessment for teachers on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Outcomes have shown that Envision Math successfully improves student fact fluency and builds upon facts with emphasis on conceptual understanding, the "story behind the numbers", i.e. why we "carry the one" in long addition as well as learning this basic rule. Envision's strategies include problem-based, interactive learning, visual learning bridges, independent practice and daily "quick checks" for teachers to ensure that students have successfully learned the day's curriculum before moving on to tomorrow's. Jessica ran through some current models for learning math concepts such as number sense, estimation, operational meaning, operational relationships and "bar diagrams".

Jessica addressed questions from the group, including whether or not Envision is tied into MCAS problems (yes), if the curriculum is applicable for younger grades (yes, and currently implemented), if the curriculum can be differentiated for students showing more advanced skills (yes, per individual teacher) and when the website will be available for parents to fully inform themselves of what their child/children are learning (in about 2 months). Jessica shared that teacher feedback has been very positive to date: Envision has received the highest ratings in ease of use for teachers, especially in assessing student progress. Mike also shared that he's heard from teachers that they are "doing more math than ever", and that Envision has been well embraced as a good fit.

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4. Treasurer's Report on Budget Planning and Initial Budget, presented by Julie Crockett.

Julie circulated the proposed 2013-2014 Daniel Butler budget showing a total of \$16,078.93 in income and \$25,987.67, -\$9,908.74 in net operating income offset by \$10,000 in 2012 carry-over Auction income as expected, yielding a balanced budget with \$91.26 surplus. She noted also in her budget summary that BASEP accounting is done separately and is designed to be "cost neutral". Some (the Fall portion) of the Book Fair proceeds are Scholastic Dollars but that spring 2014 will include cash income. Emma noted that the budget will have variances throughout the year and will be both monitored as well as potentially adjusted on a monthly basis by the PTA Board.

Miriam raised an issue from last month's minutes regarding the availability of wall-based hand sanitizers at the Butler and whether payment from these had been removed from the proposed 2013-2014 budget. Frank noted that he'd looked into buying them but available models are only compatible with certain products, and that Bob the custodian had advised against the wall-based models due to leakages that stain the carpet. Plus, teachers have asked parents to contribute regular pumps for classroom use. Mike agreed to ask teachers about their preferences and bring his findings to the next meeting. Either way, funds can be made available to support sanitizer purchases if needed. Mike also noted the 2013-2014 line item of \$2,000 for Fund-a-Need at the PTA's future discretion.

VOTE. A motion was made by Frank Dill to approve the 2013-2014 initial budget as presented, seconded by Miriam Lapson. All approved. None opposed.

5. Update on Room Parents and School Directory, presented by Rose O'Neil.

Rose shared that all grades are now fully enrolled with room parents. Teachers have expressed primary interest in using Room Parents as volunteers for Color Day. Class lists have been made available for grades 1-4; Kindergarten class lists are available through Carol in the main office. The 2013-2014 Butler School Directory is not available yet due to complications in the online registration system and despite multiple efforts to encourage parent enrollment through emails with individualized links. Mike assured that we are "working out the kinks" in this transitional first year of moving from paper forms to online data entry/approval: like online registration for parent-teacher conferences, which was once a difficult transition, he expects that by next year Butler families will be accustomed to the newer and overall improved data collection process. For those parents who are either non-responsive to the email prompts and/or having trouble with online registration, Mike will generate a list and calls will be made.

There was a question as to whether Room Parents are still responsible for supporting field trips (yes) and whether completion of a CORI form is still required (yes, every three years although this may be extended in future with implementation of a fingerprint-based system per Mike).

6. Membership Drive, presented by Frank Dill.

As of today, the PTA has an all-time high of 204 enrolled members and has raised

\$5,500 to date, also a higher total than in previous years. This success is due in large part to the increased number of teachers and staff who have recently enrolled, with thanks to PTA members for their outreach. Letters to donors who gave \$100 or more and are entitled to a Book Fair gift certificate will go out this week.

7. After-School Enrichment, presented by Barbara Bulfoni.

19 classes are enrolled, up and running, with 229 registrants. One class was cancelled -- Global Art Trek -- due to low enrollment.

8. In-School Enrichment, presented by Karen Gutterman.

In-School Enrichment is going fine and on track with its budget. Two new activities have emerged: the 2nd graders will be visiting the Museum of Science for a new activity on Balances and Weighing, and the 3rd grade will take a field trip (subsidized in part with a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council Big Yellow School Bus grant) to a local sustainable farm. Both activities may go slightly over their budget, but this will likely be compensated for by the increase in the overall In-School Enrichment line item in the 2013-2014 budget.

9. Ways and Means, presented by Maria Samson.

The Committee is looking into different funding opportunities, doing an operational assessment and is gathering information on in-school enrichment opportunities. Karen noted that we need better communication with the 1st grade teachers regarding plans for this year's field trips.

10. September/October in Review:

- **Picture Day**, presented by Emma Robichaux. Photos will be coming in soon. We may wish to consider a different format in future for a smoother process, perhaps even moving the setup inside. The morning shoot was cold and there were some inefficiencies due to changing morning light.
- **Curriculum Nights**, presented by Laura VanderHart. Laura and other representatives had a chance to visit every classroom on Curriculum Nights to promote the PTA. We had a great turnout of parents this year.
- **Walk to School Day**, presented by Rose O'Neil. We had so many walkers this year that we didn't have enough prizes and supplies. It was suggested that in future we just stamp hands to show participation -- it's cheaper and won't run out. There were some issues with parents not seeing enough teacher participation and a suggestion that walking begin earlier in the day next year.

11. Upcoming Events:

- **Fall Book Fair** and **Book Fair Ice Cream Social**, presented by Sarah Squires. These activities are happening this week. Volunteers for 1-2 hours shifts are still needed for setup and breakdown of the Book Fair. Mike will

send a reminder email. Scoopers are also needed for the Ice Cream Social. Budget-wise, we're fine this year but we will need to account next year for an increase in ice cream prices.

- **Fall Clean Up**, presented by Emma Robichaux, is all set to take place on Saturday Oct 26th, 9:30-11:30. Rain date is Sunday October 27th, same time. Everyone is welcome. Cara Cogliano is in charge, and has run it for many years.
- **Box Tops**, presented by Laura VanderHart. The first collection flyer will be sent out soon, likely at end of October, once the Book Fair is over.
- **Conley's Night**, presented by Laura VanderHart. 10% of all proceeds from Conley's food and bar tab for Monday, November 4 will benefit the Butler PTA. The restaurant will be open to regular patrons as well as Butler families. We still need a volunteer to sell raffle tickets.
- **Movie Night**, presented by Jo Ann Endo. Movie Night has been rescheduled for November 22 and will feature "Monsters University", of particular appeal since it is one of few current G-rated movies. Siblings encouraged. A new coordinator will be needed for next year when Jo Ann will move on.
- **Art Show**, presented by Karen Gutterman. The Art Show is scheduled for December 5. More as plans develop. A new feature this year will be holiday gift items.
- **Reflections Entry Deadline**, presented by Barbara Bulfoni. This year's theme is "Believe, Dream and Inspire". Once the Book Fair is over, the Committee will accelerate its plans and report and future meetings.

12. PTA BUSINESS

- **Approval of Minutes.** Motion made to approve September 17, 2013 minutes by Laura Vanderhart, seconded by Mike McAllister. All approved. None opposed.
- **Announcements.** No further announcements.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.