

Minutes of the Summer PTA Board Meeting on 6/27/13

Members Present: Mandy Lemar, Greer Bautz, Kakki Lewis, Cristin Caine, Lang Lin, Diana Gallagher, Kurt Shanfield, Stacy Kahn, and RobBee Fredricks.

Meeting was called to order at 10am at the home of RobBee Fredricks.

Items Discussed:

1. Responsibilities of Board Members:

There is a Montgomery County PTA website, <http://mccpta.org>, that has information about PTA Board Member positions and responsibilities. It also has a link to the Maryland PTA website. PTA Board Members are to come to all PTA meetings throughout the school year. Bar-T will be providing babysitting at all meetings again this year.

2. Calendar:

Tentative Holidays, half-days, and PTA sponsored events were reviewed. Dates were obtained from the MCPS website. The tentative calendar needs to be given to the BMES Webmaster.

Monthly calendars of PTA events should be sent home via student backpack every other month. This would be similar to the lunch calendar, with two months on one piece of paper. We have a volunteer to head this up next year.

3. Kangaroo Math Competition:

The possibility of a new, math enrichment program, featuring the Kangaroo Math Competition, was discussed. If the PTA supports it, then there would possibly be a school-wide competition, similar to The Geography Bowl. Fears of confusing this with the ways of learning Curriculum 2.0 were discussed. The possibility of this new program needs to be discussed with Mrs. Ogelsby. Clarification also needs to be made to determine if this would be a parent-run club or an organized, after- school activity.

There was further discussion having of a "Math Night" next year. This would potentially help to clarify Curriculum 2.0 Math for the parents. It was suggested that the teachers teach a lesson to the parents, so they can experience the new curriculum first hand.

4. Special Education Awareness Week:

The Special Education Awareness program would like to coordinate a special week next year. The specific week, as well as the details of this program, need to be clarified with Mrs. Ogelsby. The politically correct vocabulary used to refer to children in these programs was discussed. This new vocabulary needs to be shared with all of the children in the school. Autism Awareness is in March.

5. Procedure Books to be made for the various PTA positions (new for this year):

Each chairperson needs to compile a folder of helpful information to pass down to the incoming chairperson for the next year. Each current chairperson should record notes, contact information, helpful hints, etc. in a provided folder. This folder will then be passed on from chairperson to chairperson, from year to year. This will give the incoming chairs guidelines for their specific tasks.

In addition, each board member has been assigned to oversee various PTA committees. Sheets were handed out to each board member with his or her specific, committee assignments. Each board member will email their committee members at the beginning of the school year to introduce themselves, etc.

6. Possibility of Curriculum Chairmanships vs. extra Room Parent Responsibilities:

The necessity for Curriculum Chairs (e.g., parent volunteers to help regulate information about the new curriculum to the parents) was presented. These volunteers would explain some of the new terminology used in the classroom (i.e., decompose versus subtract). It still needs to be determined if this would be a Room Parent responsibility or a new PTA chairmanship.

It was further mentioned that the information distributed to the parents by all of the classroom teachers needs to be uniform across the grades.

The need for parent volunteers in the classroom was discussed. It was mentioned that not all teachers are receptive to parents in the classroom. The Room Parents should check in with the teachers quarterly to see if they need volunteers, as well as to offer to create a Sign-Up Genius for any volunteer tasks needed in the classroom. The Room Parent Coordinator needs to remind the Room Parents to do this throughout the year.

7. In-School Curriculum Nights:

Attendance at In-School curriculum nights is low. The information for these meetings needs to get out to the parents in a timely manner. The PTA should help the school disseminate this information. It might be helpful to show the parents how the children are being taught, similar to the proposed "Math Night," at one of these evenings.

8. Initiatives for 2013-14:

A. There is a Fundraising Change:

The PTA will no longer be participating in event-fundraising. Direct-appeal fundraising will be used instead. Donation request letters will go out to the parents in August. The PTA will be asking for at least \$100 per family, although any amount a family can give would be appreciated. There was discussion on how to word financial requests on the letter. There will be a Corporate Matching program, as well. Families are encouraged to ask friends and family to donate, too.

Receipts will only be given upon request, unless the donated amount is over \$250. Paypal will also give receipts. The possibility of placing a Fundraising Thermometer in the front hallway was also mentioned.

The Book Fair will still occur because it is not a fundraiser. Books will go to the classroom.

Spirit Wear will still be sold, but the PTA will not make any money from the sales. Spirit wear will sell the following items: shorts, t-shirts, sweat pants, hoodies, and car magnets, with the same logo as last year. If a family donates \$181 (one dollar for each day of school), they will receive one, free t-shirt.

It was reported that money was lost on the School Supply Kits (pre-ordered kits). The money from that would have been used to provide supplies to the teachers.

B. Safety:

Safety will be a big push this year because of parental and school concerns. The physical safety of the school, recess safety, enrichment safety, and cyber safety are areas to be addressed. The school secretaries have asked the PTA for help with specific tasks (e.g., showing ID, not propping open doors, etc.). Board Members need to educate and set examples for all parents. A safety handbook will be put together and shared with all of the parents. The first PTA meeting, on October 1st, will highlight safety.

C. PTA Member Push:

The PTA needs to make sure that everyone joins the PTA this year. All events will be referred to as "PTA Sponsored Events".

There was discussion regarding the distribution of student directories to PTA members only, as an incentive for families to join the PTA. This would be a change in that, in the past, everyone received a directory, whether they were PTA Members or not. Language and cultural barriers were mentioned as possible reasons why people do not join the PTA. It was determined that it should be the PTA's responsibility to educate all families about and to invite all families to the PTA.

The Board Members had differing opinions regarding the directory distribution. As such, a hand-vote was taken regarding the distribution of directories to PTA members only (this includes on-line access, as well). 7 members were for, 1 abstained and 1 was against. All the FARMS Families will be given directories. Extra directories will be ordered for new families who come during the year (Mrs. Kantor gives these to new families) and for those who really complain.

Volunteer tables will be at Kindergarten Night, Meet the Teachers Day, Family Picnic, and the two, Back to School Nights. A board member will be at the table at each of those events to educate and invite people to join the PTA. Board Members need to reach out to all families at these events. Sign-up Geniuses will be made prior to August 5th. There is a need for as many people as possible the first couple of events. Pre-orders for shirts will also be taken at these tables. Informational flyers with all of the Back- to- School PTA information will also be sent home.

D. Recess Walking Club:

A Recess Walking Club will start next year in an effort to keep recess safe and fun. This will most likely start in October, possibly linking in with Walk for the Homeless, which is October 17th. A walking path needs to be established.

E. Club Bells Mill:

Costs last year were \$15 at the door and \$30 for pre-sale for 4 nights. The possibility of a sibling discount was discussed. This is not a fundraising event.

F. Speakers:

If any board member has suggestions for speakers, ideas are welcomed. The PTA should use the people in BMES community, such as teachers, and parents, who have expertise in related topics to lead discussions. It was proposed that experts discuss healthy ideas and meals, sports injuries, and the Power of Play, and the Guidance Counselor from Cabin John discuss life in middle school. Another suggestion is to invite Parent to Parent, a special education resource group in Montgomery County, to speak, perhaps in March, during the proposed Special Education Awareness Week. As a side note, PEP 2 will be offered again at Bells Mill in the fall.

G. Brief By-Laws discussion:

The possibility of a Treasurer-Elect position was mentioned.

Meeting was adjourned at 12pm.