Notes from PTA meeting on 2/5/13:

President's update from Eris Norman:
We just had our book drive and there were 9 boxes and several big bags donated from Bells Mill families. Cabin John also donated 9 boxes of books, which worked out well to have enough books for the older kids. All children should have brought home a book on Friday. 16 boxes were left over, which were donated to 4 nonprofits. Stepping Stones, National Center for Children and Families, Washington Hebrew, Patty Goldberg for power hour. Thanks to Debi Denney for working so hard on it.

Club Bells Mill was a huge success. 26 students dropped in. Movie night also a hit, with Hotel Transylvania.

We're excited to announce that with PTA support afterschool enrichment was able to provide 13 full scholarships, so thanks to all the providers for their support and Mrs. Kanter for running it.

Petition on high school start times - 27% of the signatures were from Potomac - The report is on [External Community Resources](#) section of BMES PTA site.

We're very close to being recognized as a gold award - we need 18 more people -

Next Thursday is the Valentine's Day parties - start at 2 pm - No school Feb. 18 and early release Feb. 22. On Feb. 25 we have a black history celebration - 7-8:30 pm.
March 5 is PTA meeting
March 15 is the talent show -

Treasurer's report -- not much to say

Mrs. Thomas - Principal's report - internship program
Mrs. O will be back Feb. 19 - but she'll be in the assistant role until March 1 when Mrs. Thomas moves back into her old office - if she decides to interview, those conversations will happen in March - will know by end of April if she has another job
Health tech asked parents to please keep kids home if they are sick - with fever they must be home for 24 hours.
We're going to get a new security system before the end of the year where you have to be buzzed in - also with cameras - we've been moved up on the list.
Dr. Staff will be in the building on Feb. 7 - coffee with the teachers - also will be visiting some classrooms. Dr. Hollingshead is our community superintendent.
Reminder to let parents of incoming kindergarteners' schedule for Feb. 8 open house.
We should get staffing numbers in mid-March about how many teachers per grade.
Grades K/1/2 are 26 maximum per class grades 3/4/5 is 30 maximum per class

Stacy Kahn - delegate's report -
The county council approved more money for security systems
Also talked about upgrades to the math instruction under curriculum 2.0 - they have focus groups and work groups. They're asking for volunteers to join work groups. Curriculum 2.0 is tied to the core standards that 45 states have elected to adopt for college readiness. Summer opportunities fair is Feb. 28 for camps at Richard Montgomery High School 7-8:30. The BOE meeting on Feb. 12 will be budget review. Feb. 11 and 12 is application deadline for fifth grade students to apply to magnets. The lottery deadline for language immersion schools is April 12.
Talked about Dr. Starr's community meetings - Feb. 27 at Walter Johnson - April 11 at Gaithersburg Middle School -
Feb. 13 the county has a historically black colleges fair.

Shelly Lipton from Montgomery County Police Department talked about cyber security for young children:
She's a civilian employee of police dept. in pedophile unit of the family crimes division. In 95% of cases of child sexual abuse, the child knows the offender.
She manages the sex offender registry - 4 detectives work on child porn, sexual solicitation on the internet,
The bulk of our investigations are in the area of sexual solicitation of children - there's an endless pit of those.
In Montgomery county there are 385 sex offenders - most but not all offended against a child - they've been convicted of a sex crime -
Those who have to register are in three tiers - either every 6 months for 15 years or every 6 months for 25 years or every three months for life.
The age of consent in Maryland is 16. If the offender has care/custody of the child
We track and monitor sex offenders and work closely with parole and probation.
We have cases going on all the time.
The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children - started by John Walsh
There's an education arm called NetSmartz - very talented, creative, mission-driven
You can pull up this presentation on their website - also videos to watch with your kids. Preview them first but they're age appropriate and not too scary.
They have quizzes and fun stuff to do - good way to open up dialogue w/ child.

Three areas of safety:
* Cyberbullying - it's an explosion/epidemic - can happen as young as 7 - it can be deadly and very damaging
* Online predators - it's a bottomless pit - can't catch them all
* Communicating with your child - not to reveal too much on the internet

There seems to be a lack of boundaries with children -
You can send an email to NetSmartz with questions you may have about internet filtering software or other cyber safety issues.

Keeping your children safer online.

Need to have an ongoing dialogue with your children about staying safe online - stay calm -
Lots of different online tools - cell phones, laptops, gaming devices
They can talk to people all over the world and you don't know what they're saying - can't tell if the person talking to you is 11 or 21. There's also bullying in online gaming. What are they doing with phones/computers/camera - they're uploading to youtube - sometimes they're goofing off - sometimes risky behavior
They can go to another child's house where they aren't monitored closely.
Colleges and employers routinely check out candidates' Facebook page.
You should report any cases of child pornography or sexting to police - they'll talk to the parents and the kids.

Risky online behaviors:
Sending or posting provocative images
Sharing passwords with friends
Embarrassing or harassing people
Posting personal information
Clicking on pop-ups

Open up a discussion with your kids - teach them personal boundaries - there's a place in life for privacy - where is it appropriate to wear a bathing suit?

Teach them: once it's out there it's out there forever - email, photos, comments, etc.
NetSmartz has a great video called "you can't take it back"

Cyber bullying reaches inside the home - there's no safe place - important for them to know they should tell - report it -
Signs of cyberbullying - they might stop using computer/phone; more nervous about getting text/IM; uneasy about going to school; withdraw from friends and family.
You can ask: has anyone said anything bad about someone else on the internet/sm
There's a charge for electronic harassment unless the kids have been repeatedly warned or are making threats to harm someone.
Recommendations if your child has been cyberbullied - on the presentation
Report, report, report
You can also call the cyber tip line if you think someone's a predator
Every day is Halloween on the Internet - you can be anyone you want on the Internet.

Tell kids to listen to their gut - if the hair on their arms stand up - pay attention to that - honor that feeling because they're probably right

The underlying theme is to communicate with your kids. You can chase the technology and it will win. The kids will figure out a way around it. Make it safe for them to tell you. Stay calm and don't overreact.

Larry Wong is with the school IT department and is really good on security