

Jan. 7, 2014 Bells Mill Elementary School PTA meeting

President's message by Stacy Kahn: Thank you to Sean and Stacey Twombly for the terrific ice skating event!

Treasurer's message from Kurt Shanfield: We're up to 700 members; little on revenue side - gave winter staff appreciation gifts. \$25,000 is net income to date. The PTA passed a budget amendment to add \$200 to defray costs of the winter dance, by voice vote.

Cristin Caine: A math and literacy game night is coming up on Jan. 16 - will be a lot of fun - she has the list of games - Quirkle, Headbandz - looking for families to lend games on the list for game night. Others were purchased with the budget for indoor recess games - will be distributed to the teachers after math night - a sign up is going out for SSL hours and other volunteers.

Diana: Thursday is the parent resource group - third meeting - the purpose is to reach out to parents whose kids have special needs - either trouble in school or any other need - to help people find resources - Cristin Middlebrook is coming from parent-to-parent, which is a county program - they have parent mentors - if you have a child with needs and you're new to it they can put you in touch with a family that's been down the same road. Also can help with health insurance for kids with needs. You can just come and listen. Please help us spread the word. Thanks to Mrs. O for being supportive.

Kakki: winter enrichment starts next week so please spread the word. The enrichment providers were very slow to give us registration links and information so we are at risk of classes being cancelled if enrollment doesn't happen ASAP.

Principal's message -- Mrs. O:

Thanks for the staff luncheon provided before the holiday break.

Also thank you for listening to the weather news. Seems to be quite a tough winter. I appreciate how all the parents have stayed informed and they haven't had tons of phone calls asking about school being on. When it's too cold they will keep patrols in the building and will have adults out on the curb. Try to carpool with neighbors.

Coming up on the end of the semester quickly. This is an important time: halfway point in the school year. It's really important for kids to attend school unless they are sick. For kindergarten families, this is the first report card you'll receive. The expectation is that they need to master these topics by the end of the year - they're not there yet. Don't hesitate to ask teachers if there's any questions.

For next year, we need incoming kindergarten families to spread the word in the community that they're starting the process of registering incoming kindergarteners. Jan. 23 at 8 pm is the first meeting for parents. The numbers are

very important because the county is determining staffing - next year are projected at 598 students - already have 600 enrolled this year. Have 26 in a class for kindergarten this year.

Also very important time of year for fifth graders. Teachers have met with the sixth grade staff in December. CJ counselors will be meeting with kids on Feb. 5 and the parent meeting at Cabin John is Feb. 6.

Mrs. Kanter and Mrs. Hall-Bell presentation on social-emotional learning:

Need kids to excel at all three areas - academics, social-emotional learning
Social-emotional learning is critical for all to discuss

Mrs. K: highlight how we're supporting that at BMES
Guidance lessons on diversity - in Dec second graders paired up to learn from each other their traditions around the holidays - international night in the spring celebrates culture - best buddies program

Relational aggression - don't see pushing into lockers but see more gossiping, exclusion, whispering - kids feeling they don't have someone to buddy up with.
Used books by Trudy Ludwig to teach fourth graders - culminated in Skype session with author - PTA paid for it -

Give kids a heads up about peer pressure - when kids are targeting another student - examples of making smart choices -
Safe online behaviors for fifth grade - used to be just one lesson - now more kids on twitter and instagram than ever - used Dr. Starr's tweets as an example and it was a real eye opener for the students. Want them to have more tools

Mrs. H-B: Want to build resilience, perseverance, self-awareness and growth mindset.

Mrs. O - can open up for discussion in your home the opportunity for growth.

Mrs. K - third grade guidance lesson is: what are the messages we play in our heads? "I'm not good at math" instead of saying that what happens if you say something else in your head, "I'm going to try." Teach them to listen to the messages they say to themselves

Lots of opportunity for collaboration - class meetings where the kids can share what's working about the way they interact and what's not working -
Guidance lessons on empathy - also cross-mentoring across the grades -
School-wide consensogram asks students to answer a statement anonymously about how many positive relationships they have at school.

Three table discussions about bullying.

Feb. 10 at 7 pm the counselors are doing a YMCA parenting program on social learning at home -- Beverly Farms ES

One comment on how it would be nice for families new to the area to have a buddy family to help with advice on the area or how to handle situations.

Article on relationship building - build democratic classrooms - be informed - silent bystander, stand-up bystander, join-in bystander

The bully project - website that's a good resource - there's a preview of the documentary that says what parents can do to help kids
Pacer kids against bullying - great website for kids -

Diana:

The Parents Place of Maryland does bullying awareness in October every year - they do a run/walk