

Notes from PTA meeting on 1/8/13:

PTA President's update by Eris Norman:

- We had a 21% increase in membership, which qualifies us for a silver award from MCCPTA - we're only 18 members away from the gold award - try to get that by March.
- if you know anyone who hasn't joined the PTA, ask them to join!
- Success: 169 skaters at skate night. Thanks to Sean and Stacey Twombly for organizing.
- winter enrichment is underway
- international night is coming up and we need country presenters - Raxa Harris and Sabina ?? are organizing
- geography bowl in May is for grades 3-5 - we need volunteers
- also the PTA art reflections contest was a huge success; 14 Bells Mill students will move onto the county contest; thanks to Stefie Heidemann for organizing
- we still need recess and lunch monitors - please sign up
- Thank you to everyone who donated to the staff lunch, and Haylie Iseman for coordinating.
- The book fair funds have been allocated - \$8751 was allocated - \$3000 went to Mrs. Floyd; \$3000 to core curriculum; \$2500 to the teachers - \$251 is going to be used for overages
- Room parents - if you need ice cream cakes you can get kits from Sam Coleman, a BMES parent and owner of Baskin Robbins
- School supply kits will be put together for each grade that you can order to be delivered at the end of the summer - the supply list has to be approved by the county first. Thanks Debi Denney.
- We're also going to be putting together packages for the teachers: tissues, wipes, etc.
- Jan. 21 and 22 there's no school
- Jan. 26 is next Club Bells Mill
- Jan. 28-Feb. 1 is the book drive that Debi Denney will be coordinating
- Feb. 1 is the book exchange so every child can pick a book to take home
- Feb. 1 is movie night; Feb. 5 is the next PTA meeting

Treasurer's report from Kurt Shanfield:

We finally booked all read-a-thon revenue and \$1,000 for Innisbrook - we're a little under budget but can make it work - want to think about making a \$268 gift card donation to the Sandy Hook PTA to help them bring in equipment suitable for the younger kids in the holding school, which is a middle school. Greer has a friend who's there. The PTA voted to make the donation.

Principal's report - Mrs. Thomas

Thanked the community for support during her transition to principal.

The staff luncheon was a huge success; many teachers took the opportunity to sit down and eat lunch, which they don't always do.

* The first week back has gone well. Dr. Jones had an emergency at home so he couldn't be here tonight to meet everyone.

* Thanks to the BMES community for following the new procedures for checking in and out - have to scan driver's license now. Please understand that the staff has to stop everyone and follow the procedures for sign in/out.

* on Jan. 17 there will be a 7 pm kindergarten orientation meeting for new parents - if you have families or neighbors with a rising kindergartener let them know.

* on Jan. 16 there will be an instrumental music concert - the advanced band will perform.

* over the next few months the gifted and talented testing will begin, WETA testing for students in ESOL, also reading inventory assessments

* Please make sure your children are in school so they can be assessed/tested.

* But if your child is sick please keep them home - we've had a run of flu. Also please make the boys wear pants. If you're missing a jacket check, the lost and found.

* keys for reading program will begin soon - the keys mascot will come out on Jan. 24 to get the kids excited about reading.

* we'll receive a brochure after Jan. 14 that will go over the new math procedures for the curriculum 2.0 in fourth and fifth grade - they'll also have a parent meeting

Crisis Plan Overview - presented by Mrs. Thomas and Montco's Michael Harting

Each year every school has to come up with emergency/crisis plans that are reviewed and approved by the Dept of School Safety and Security.

It includes an on-site emergency team - OSET - they're trained every year.

Mrs. O, Mrs. Kanter, Mrs. Thomas, etc. are part of the OSET team

The plan is put in place in the event of a:

1. Lockdown
2. Shelter in place
3. Evacuation
4. Parent/child reunification

1. Lockdown alert = there's an imminent danger at the location and everyone must be safe & secure. The OSET team members make sure they're securing doors, blinds, kids aren't talking. Then OSET has a meeting to process how it went and communicate what needs to be worked on.

2. Shelter alert = there's an emergency nearby; school doors are locked. Maybe public safety; severe weather; hazardous materials. They practice those kind of drills.

? - is it practiced during recess?

Mrs. Thomas - yes, they will do a drill, and the kids will go to a secure location.

Mr. Harting - we've been training para-educators and recess/lunch aides - so they know where to take kids to a safe location - wouldn't want to bring kids at recess back into the building if there's a threat IN the building. I have 36 schools in my cluster where paras are being trained. Also, talk about how to get the students' attention. Instead of just the whistle, tell the kids about an emergency blast to get their attention urgently.

Mrs. Thomas: the staff have a binder that has all the kids' names - they hold up the red side if a kid is missing - all the kids know that system - also created a blue binder so they know it's a lockdown and they need to line up in the fire drill line - There is an annual parent volunteer meeting - maybe we need to have another one to review and retrain them.

? At recess - how do you know who is there?

Mr. Harting - the accountability may be calling to the police 911 - we have 200 students at Cabin John - we're doing a lockdown - when we get to the safe location, line them up in class order and that's when you keep track. In Newtown the final count of kids didn't take place until several hours later. Six students fled and end up at a retired psychologist's home - he called the police. There's no way in the world to get an immediate attendance.

?What if there's a fire?

Mr. Harting - We can line up the kids by classes - the kids know where they're supposed to go -

Mrs. Thomas - if you're a non-classroom teacher or para-educator - they have the whole school roster in the binder -

Mr. Harting - we're empowering the staff - depending on the situation, to call it a lockdown vs. a shelter in place.

? What happens with the ID scan?

Scans it against the Md state predator's list. Shows if it's valid and the address. You can swipe anything. i.e. out of state ID

?How secure is the main office?

22 schools at a time are going through access control improvements - costs \$14,000 per school - we're projected to get the system at the end of the summer or beginning of the year - will have a camera so the doors are always secured - the secretaries will be able to see who's outside and buzz you in through the doors.

Right now the staff has a panic button so they can hit that to lock the exterior door. Our building service worker comes at 6 am to unlock the doors - we've decided as a school to not have him unlock the door until 7 am - except for Bar-T dropoff at 6:30 am - they also are making people knock on that door to make that area more secure. The new access system is part of the capital program.

3. Evacuations

we're required to have 10 fire drills - one per month - must have 4 shelter and lockdown drills every year - leave building by nearest exit; meet on bball court

4. parent/child reunification

Staff members are only allowed to hand a child to someone who's on the list for an emergency - make sure those cards are current.

?how would parents learn of a real lockdown?

Mr. Harting -

For lockdowns - we want to make each classroom or office look like it's unoccupied - so staff in main office aren't going to be calling or testing - lockdown will be announced on 2-way radio and PA system; they call 911; call OSI and they will notify parents via ConnectEd or other methods.

i.e. there was a bus accident in another cluster and OSI notified parents

Stacy Kahn said you can sign up for 411-911 Montgomery County alerts
They'll tell you if there are accidents or problems.

Also can sign up for Quick Note through Montgomery County.

?how long does it take for help to come?

In Newtown it took 20 minutes to get there and he was only in the building for 8 minutes.

Mrs. Thomas said the paramedics come in 5 minutes when we've had to call them.

?how do you make the BMES cubbies more secure?

Generally we try to have the kids stay away from the windows and doors.

It takes a long time to process any information from an incident like this.

<Comment to reinforce to our kids at home to take the drills seriously and follow instructions.>

?how do we secure the playground better?

Mr. Harting - We are teaching para-educators to spread out so that they can constantly be checking for other adults or problems.

Mrs. Thomas - they should be vigilant to question adults on the playground.

?What is Georgetown Hill's role in the emergency plan?

No formal role.

?How do the teachers lock the door?

Mrs. T: Depends on the teacher. Some keep the doors locked at all times; others keep them open but locked so they can just swing them closed. Every teacher has keys. One change they've made: the building services person used to unlock everyone's door. Now the teachers unlock the doors themselves.

Mr. Harting - having that conversation with teachers about relocking the handle so they aren't fumbling with keys - one of the first things the teachers are taught is sweep and scan of the hallway - if they see someone in the hallway they'll pull that person into the room.

?any plans for metal detectors?

No. Maybe at a football game they'll wand people. But feel free to pass suggestions up the chain of command.

?any thoughts of putting armed guards in the schools?

No. One of the first questions after Newtown to Montco chief of police = all these retired police officers are qualified to carry. Should we have them protect schools? No, he said.

Every school has an emergency services manual. Gives guidance in the first 5-10 minutes of an emergency, announcements to make, lockdowns, etc.

7.5 minute long video just created - Montgomery public schools website - search for "emergency preparedness" - tells you everything you need to know about lockdown, emergencies and shelters.

Mr. Harting - they give staff a 3 hour OSET course -

LAST ANNOUNCEMENT

On Jan. 22 Kelly Dorfman is giving a followup presentation to the PTA talk in downtown Silver Spring on nutritional benefits in children and meal planning - free - just send her an email RSVP.