

Brownsville Elementary
PTO General Membership Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2010

In attendance: Danica Plantz, Wendy Bragaw, Sue Brown, Lori Benedict, Jeanette Abell, Jo Vining, Linda King, Melinda Somers, Joanne Meier, Amy Life, Kathleen Haden, Katherine Merhige, Sally Cushing, and Cady Garey

The evening started with a presentation by John Hunter, gifted teacher from Angor-Hurt Elementary and Chris Farina, Filmmaker. They spoke about Mr. Hunter's work with students, his game "The World Peace Game" and the film that Mr. Farina has produced about the intersection of the two. The film, *World Peace and other 4th-Grade Achievements* will be presented at the Paramount Theater Sunday, February 21, 2010.

- I. The meeting was called to order at 7:20 by Joanne Meier. After brief discussion, Ian Sole moved to approve the General Membership Meeting Minutes from the November 17, 2009 meeting. Danica Plantz seconded and the motion was carried unopposed.
- II. Reports of Officers
 - A. Principal, Jo Vining

A "Gallery Walk" mid year review and reflection with teachers and administration will be held on Thursday, January 28. This will be an informal review of how students are doing thus far in the school year and a time to plan for the coming semester.

In reference to next year's county budget, Mrs. Vining feels that there will be many hard decisions coming. The county's goal is to preserve the integrity of the classrooms and keep children first. She urges parents to be involved in upcoming meetings but also be thoughtful and reflective about reactions and the well being of the county as a whole.

A big thank you to the Staff and Teacher Appreciation committee for a wonderful lunch during the recent workday!
 - B. President, Joanne Meier

PTO Committees continue to do so much wonderful work! The Parent Council meeting in December, which was held at Brownsville, was enlightening on many levels. Bruce Benson talked about the Budget and the intricacies and specifics of funding and spending. Parents are urged to take part in upcoming budget meetings.

C. Treasurers', Wendy Bragaw and Sue Brown

Fund raising has been above budget and expenses have been as expected. Harris Teeter recently sent a great check as payment for customers who have linked their HT cards. The amount is listed in the budget handout under "Redemption" included with Box Tops funds.

Sue asked if February was the time to send out wish lists for gifting request. Sally will look for old form which listed time line and other information about these requests. Thinks that the time line is this: March 1—gifting solicitations, April-Presentations, May-Slate, and June-Approval of gifting.

III. Old Business

250 yellow tulip bulbs from Ecotulips were planted at Brownsville. These bulbs are organic and from Holland and were given in hopes of showcasing them and Ecotulips for possible future fundraisers.

IV. New Business

A change of dates: May 3-7 will be Staff and Teacher Appreciation Week and May 14th will be the Volunteer Tea. May 14th is also the tentative date for the Fun Fair. Cady will change these dates on the Google calendar.

V. Reports of Standing Committees and Special Committees

- Parent Council, Ian Sole

The December meeting of Parent Council was hosted by BES where Jo Vining and Linda King gave a wonderful guided tour of our new building and introduced the PC to various members of staff (and students) who demonstrated some of the new technologies we are using as well as pointing out the main attractions and features of the school. The PC was very impressed. Pam Moran and Bruce Benson presented an up-date on the budget, which continues to reflect a very challenging year ahead, and will likely result in increased class sizes, longer bus journeys, reductions for lesson materials and a proposed reduction in AC staff of 18 FTE's. The next key date is Feb 2nd which is the next ACPS School Board public hearing to which parents are strongly urged to attend and lend their support for funding of education. It is possible the budget cuts will need to be even deeper depending on the direction of the new incoming governor, the decision on the use of the composite index, and the final decision by the AC BOS regards the

effective tax rate. The January meeting of the PC focused on the ever widening use of technology throughout our school system, with presentations from Crozet ES, CATEC and Becky Fisher, Asst. Director of Technology. We also heard about the goal setting and appraisal system deployed by ACS in response to a question from the PC on how we evaluate our teaching staff. There was also further discussion on the on-going budget challenges.

Ian feels that parent involvement in upcoming Board of Supervisors meetings on the budget are key. Meeting dates are 2/2, 3/3 (all are important but this one is especially so), and 3/31. Sally reminds everyone that emails are counted closely as well and are the very important; we should all email the BOS to “Keep Education at the forefront.”

Ian also mentions that Gerry Terrell of the Core Knowledge Foundation spoke at the last meeting and had excellent suggestions for parents as to how to prepare for parent teacher conferences. Joanne will add these thoughts to the website.

The Parent Council is planning on doing a survey of regional PTO looking at best practices in fundraising and looking for great ideas to share.

- Bee Program, Sally Cushing and Katherine Merhige

The BEE Program is going along well—the online program is proving to be very effective and helpful. Looking for helpers for next year as planning is already underway.

- Book Fair, Lisa Koolman and Maryann Russell

The Book Fair sold about \$16,000 of books and the library will get about 40% of this in books and cash. It was very successful.

Scholastic - Brownsville Book Fair 2009

1. Book Fair Dates

- Delivered: Wed., Nov.11
- Set-up: Thurs., Nov. 12
- Teacher Preview: Friday, Nov. 13 – 7:00 AM – 3:00 PM
- Open Fair for Students: Mon., Nov. 16 – Fri. Nov. 20 as follow

Monday, Nov. 16.....	Classes View	7:30 AM – 4:00 PM
Tuesday, Nov. 17.....	Classes View	7:30 AM – 4:00 PM
Wednesday, Nov. 18.....	Classes View/Buy	7:30 AM – 4:00 PM

.....	<i>Family Night 1</i>	5:30PM –
8:00 PM		
Thursday, Nov. 19.....	Classes Buy	7:30 AM
– 4:00 PM		
.....	<i>Family Night 2</i>	5:30PM –
8:00 PM		
Friday, Nov. 20.....	Classes Buy	7:30 AM
– 2:30 PM		

2. Receipts.

- All profits from the Book Fair are retained by the Library for the purchase of books and materials. The Book Fair is supported with planning, volunteer staffing, and promotions from the PTO.
- Book Fair profit is determined by the mean through which the librarian chooses to take the profit. As a result of our sales volume we receive the highest profit considerations from Scholastic. Taking the profit directly in Scholastic books provides for a higher profit percentage than converting profit to cash. As Scholastic does not always offer the titles needed by the library, we usually mix our profit between Scholastic books and cash.
- Total receipts from the book fair were **\$16,637.38**.
- Profits for the library can be estimated at between **\$6000 - \$8000**.

3. Classroom Wish List Donations

- Classroom book donations were the most generous of any previous Fair.
- **178 books** were donated to our classrooms and specialists by Brownsville families and friends.
- The estimated monetary value of those donations is **\$1325**.

4. PTO Book Scholarships – Books for All Kids

- This program asks teachers to eyeball the class as students purchase books from the fair during the week. They then pass on to the Intervention Specialist the names of students who they believe have not purchase due to economic constraints. On the last day of the fair, those students are given a gift certificate allowing the purchase of up to \$10 worth of books. The exact amount of the purchase is indicated on the form for exact **reimbursement by the PTO**. This system is not perfect as teachers are often going with a hunch. Allowing the students to shop with a dollar limit rather than for just one book provides a sense of normalcy that many children experience as they shop at the book fair.
- There was confusion this year as to whether or not the Head Start Classes were included in the scholarship offerings. Such has not been done in the past. However, Ms. Kiblinger did make such available to them, taking the cost from her profit. **PTO should decide if they would like to expand the program to these children as well, estimated to add 20 or so scholarships to the program.**

- The cost of books donated thru this scholarship program was **\$483.87**.
 - The number of books purchased was **78**.
 - The number of students receiving Book Fair certificates was **45**.
 - **Most students purchased 2 books.**
5. PTO Gifts to Student Teachers.
- Several years ago we suggested that the PTO provide up to **\$50 gift certificates** to student teachers here. This allows new teachers to select classroom books while in the midst of student teaching and with a supervising teacher. These student teachers are always moved by this generous show of support from the school that launches them.
 - This **expense is reimbursed from PTO funds**. PTO pays only for the exact amount of purchase up to \$50 for each student teacher
 - The number of Student Teachers receiving certificates was **4**.
 - Amount of Student Teacher Gift Certificates: **\$199.84**.
6. General Assessment & Notes
- Although originally planned to be held in the old gym, we returned the Book Fair to the library. After calculating the linear footage used in the library to display books, including shelf tops and tables, we conclude that we did not have enough free tables to complete effective displays of merchandise.
 - The need for telephone and computer access is vital as we communicate frequently with Scholastic regarding backorders and pricing questions.
 - The library offers a comfortable setting for children to look through books, allowing for a child to sit on the floor to view books.
 - The Book Fair Chairs often need contact with the librarian who would not have been accessible from the gym.
 - The regular traffic through the library adds to the excitement of the book fair I the days preceding.
 - Although book reading can be quiet, book selection rarely is; the constant drone of noise as classes visited would most likely have been disruptive to the ongoing music instruction.
 - Securing the tens of thousands of dollars of merchandise is more easily accomplished in the library with two entrances than the gym with four.
 - Opening at 7:30 AM allowed more hours for families to access the Fair.
 - Hosting TWO family nights eased the concerns about having so many families in the library on one night. Sales were solid during both events making both worthy of maintaining. Total Family Night Sales increased over the single Family Night Sales and the crowding was minimal.
 - Scholastic's upgrade to the use of registers enabled all purchases to receive a receipt.
 - Scholastic's upgrade to the use of registers while requiring much more paperwork, allowed us to track sales more effectively. We were also aware on the spot of any errors or shortages.

- Unlike other schools, we have developed an internal Purchase Order system to allow teachers to purchase books using their ACPS spending accounts without having to expend their own funds first. The paper work is tedious but we are committed to this.
- The Book Fair was open for about 50 hours of floor sales time. A teacher preview required another 8.5 hours of sales coverage. Book Fair Chairs were in the school nearly 75 hours the week of the fair.
- The Book Fair continues to be one our most labor intensive events offering not only great profits to the library and to the classroom, but wonderful opportunities for social interaction between our families. We are ever grateful for the generosity of time and funds to this effort.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Koolman, Co-chair Book Fair 2009

Maryann Russell, Co-chair Book Fair 2009

D. Teacher and Staff Appreciation, Amy Life and Betsy Grinnell

Just before the holiday break, Betsy and I presented gift cards to the teaching assistants, office staff, custodial staff, cafeteria staff, vice-principal, and principal, on behalf of the PTO. The number totaled 35 this year (which is up from 24 purchased last year). We provided lunch on the teacher workday last Tuesday. Food, drinks, and paper products were provided by: Beth Saunders, Carole Keathley, Robyn Kennedy, Heather Marcel, Amy Life, Betsy Grinnell, Colette Sheehy, Sally Wallace, Megan Jackson, and Susan Gehring. This week we plan to ask teachers/staff if there is a school supply that could use replenishing - and grant those wishes for Valentines Day.

E. Spaghetti Supper and Family Game Night, Kathleen Haden and Sue Brown
SPAGHETTI DINNER & FAMILY GAME NIGHT ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5

DINNER 5:30-7:15 PM \$5 per adult/\$3 per child/\$15 cap per family

GAMES 6-8 PM Free!

We will have spaghetti dinner in the gym. Each grade has been asked to donate food items. The board games will be at the Music Room and BINGO sessions will occur in the library. BINGO is free, but we will be handing out tickets for 3 different sessions to be sure that we all fit. Each BINGO will win a prize.

Teachers Edition originally agreed to come but had later had a conflict with the date and will not be coming this year. We will have many of the games available at Teachers Edition—they just won't be on sale.

Volunteers are still needed for both. For the games portion, we have asked the individual room parents to find someone to do two shifts (6-6:40 and 6:40-7:20). We assigned each classroom a game (with a few exceptions) which is new this year.

The new gym was reserved many months ago by an outside group and is not available. We learned that we need to get the PTO events that may use the new gym on the calendar at the beginning of the year. Albemarle County apparently assigns groups but presumably we can reserve at no cost.

Bingo is back! Several teachers have stepped up to help out. Bingo prizes are needed. It was suggested that there might be leftover prizes from the Fun Fair. Also, Tracey Pugh (B'ville parent) has opened a new Office/teacher supply store near the Great Valu and is giving a 15% discount to teachers. Could she possibly help with game night? Again, volunteers are a priority.

Spaghetti Dinner: still a big push to get enough food supplies. Any extra, unused food items will go to the food bank.

F. February Event, Kathleen and Jess Haden and others

A parent only event held at Old Trail (Old Trail is donating the space). \$25 per person. Jim Hanchett will be the host for an evening of music by the Skip Castro band, a reduced price cash bar and food. Looking for Silent Auction items. Many details still in progress.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cady Garey

PTO Secretary