

**Brownsville Elementary PTO
General Membership Meeting
November 17, 2009**

In attendance: Danica Plantz, Sue Brown, Wendy Bragaw, Amy Life, Suzette Mata, Jaime Mata, Jeanette Abell, Jo Vining, Jess Haden, John Herrmann, Joanne Meier.

I. Meeting was called to order at 6:35 by Joanne Meier, PTO President.

II. Jess Haden moved to approve the October 20, 2009 General Minutes, this motion was seconded by John Herrmann. The motion passed unopposed.

III. Reports of Officers

A. Principal, Jo Vining

1. Ms. Vining reports that third grade teacher, Mary Gordon Hall has returned after an extended medical leave. Her full time substitute, Ms. Davis, will move into a half time position as an intervention specialist. Janet Connelly and Ms. Morris welcomed to Brownsville as new teacher assistants.
2. The second round of HINI flu shots is due at school in early December.
3. John Hunter, a teacher at Agnor Hurt, will speak at the January 26st PTO meeting to discuss his World Peace Games. The entire school will be encouraged to attend.
4. The first Quarter review has been finished and the pass rate is strong, however, the school is still working hard to improve in some areas. This is part of the No Child Left behind program.
5. The December 1st, Parent Council Meeting will be held at Brownsville.

B. President, Joanne Meier

1. Meeting with the Web designer, Category 4, went well and they are willing to make needed changes to the web

site under the original plan.

2. The matching grant money we needed has been secured.

C. Treasurer's report, Wendy Bragaw and Sue Brown

1. Taxes have been finished and include the addition of The BEE Program for the last 4 years.

2. Teachers and staff were informed and encouraged to use their budget from the last years PTO gifting.

3. Sue mentioned the addition of "showing you the money" that will be included in the weekly Buzzing so Brownsville families can see how PTO money is being spent.

4. Budget was reviewed and numbers were finalized from last meeting.

a. Attractions fundraiser may be under budget, but paperwork is not complete.

b. Family Dance proceeds were over budget.

c. Golf tournament should be right at budget, all paperwork not finalized.

D. Volunteer Coordinator, Lori Benedict (absent due to family emergency)

IV. Reports of Standing Committees and Special Committees

A. Parent Council: Ian Sole

We had a fascinating presentation from Gerry Terrell of the Core Knowledge Foundation on how to prepare (as parents) for a teacher conference and I have some terrific handouts that I believe our parents and teaching staff would really benefit from having. However, since we've just finished with our conferences it may be best for me to cover this at our December meeting and discuss how this information may best be distributed to our parents and used at the next round of teacher conferences.

A second presentation was on PREP - Parent Resource Center - for families of children with disabilities and SEAC- Special Educational Advisory Committee. I am sure Jo Vining is familiar with both organizations, but if not I have some brochures on these also.

Finally we heard a very sobering, but frankly not unexpected report from Pam Moran, County Superintendant, on the latest news regarding next years' budget which as a result of reductions in State and local funding together with a negative "composite index" could result in an \$8m to \$11m shortfall! Given the fact that 82% of the \$148 million budget goes directly to teaching (the balance to basic operating

expenses including buildings and transportation, which has already suffered major cuts) she described this as a real crisis and has asked the PC and all PTO's for help as she moves forward with the process. To this end, she will shortly be sending out more information and requests for input.

B. School Directory: Jean Petrell and Leah Daniel

We did a last focus mailing at the end of October and received about 30% response back. The file has been sent to the printer. We will be ordering 380 copies to cover the families wanting a hardcopy, the teachers, admin support and several extra copies for new families. If the family has missed being included in the hardcopy directory, they can still add their information onto the online system and be available there. Hopefully the hardcopies will be in backpack mail by Nov 30 if everything is ok with the printer.

C. BEE Program: Katherine Merhige and Sally Cushing, no report

D. Attractions: Becky Hughes (updated from email received 11/20/09)

We sold 275 books @ \$12.50 ea. = \$3,437.50 (that's the amount we owe to Attractions - I put the invoice in with today's deposit envelope & left it with Marianne). Joilyn asked if we could send the check ASAP.

Our profit was \$3,432.50 so we almost made our goal of \$3,500. The reason the profit is \$5 less than the amt we owe is b/c someone paid \$20 instead of \$25.

We still have approximately 70-75 books outstanding, even after sending letters home to parents, which is a higher percentage than they like, but not much else we can do. Attractions was very generous & gave us 59 free books. 26 to classroom teachers & 9 to assistants, 15 to the office staff & parent volunteers, and 9 to parents who earned extras for sales.

There are a couple issues we're trying to resolve, and Becky is working with the treasurer's on those issues.

The 2 winning classrooms of the pizza parties will be determined and announced soon.

E. Family Dance and Ice Cream Social: DeAnna Robertson and Danica Plantz

The event was very well attended and all the families seem to enjoy themselves. DJ services provided by TD Layman were a huge hit and we again thank him for his generous donation of his services. Also, thanks go out to Leah Moore Dance Explosion, who provided entertainment in the cafeteria. The event raised about

\$700, which was over expected budget. There may be a need to discuss how the event is structured for next year now that the student numbers are larger.

F. Book Fair: Lisa Koolman and Maryann Russell

Taking place this week with two family nights scheduled. Mrs. Kelly is helping identify students who may not otherwise be able to purchase books, and provide them with \$10 gift cards from the school. The PTO has offered to provide student teachers (there are currently three) at school with \$50 gift cards to purchase items at the Book Fair. Jess Haden moved to approve the gift cards, and Amy Life seconded. Providing Brownsville student teachers with a \$50 gift card from PTO for use at Book Fair was approved.

G. Teacher and Staff Appreciation: Amy Life and Betsy Grinnell

Amy reports that the committee provided lunch for staff at the November 2nd staff meeting, and thanks to all those who helped. There were creative notepads given out to teachers this Fall and other tokens of appreciation are planned for the Thanksgiving week. There are many creative ideas underway for the Holiday season for teachers and staff, including gift cards for support staff. A luncheon will be provided to teachers at the January workday, but not for the April workday. Amy states it is too close to Spring break.

H. Spiritwares: Wendi Foster

We are selling short and long sleeved tie-dyed t-shirts for \$12 and \$15 respectively.

We make \$3-\$4 on each t-shirt.

We sold a lot! I am STILL sorting everything out and hope to place the order in the next day or two. Shirts will be delivered before the holiday break.

I had also been looking at some other items to sell....I personally liked the bags Jo gave the staff, and received permission from her to sell those, but am also looking into more of a cloth grocery bag....something like what they sell at Henley (I can send in one if you would like, so that you all can see).

I am hesitant to buy a bunch of things and have them sitting around. I love the pencils that were sold in the past, but something like that the PTO is going to have to spend the money up front and hope to sell them. Smaller items are sold in large bulk and so it will be harder to do a pre-order. I've also been looking at water bottles. I'm definitely open to other suggestions!

I. Family Game Night: Sue Brown

The date is set for February 5th, along with Spaghetti dinner. Not sure we will use Teachers edition this year. They did not profit much in sales at last year's event, so not sure they would want to return. Sue will contact them to explore the idea. The idea of just bringing in family games boards will also be explored. It looks like Bingo will happen again, as it was very popular last year. Jeanette Abell suggested a possible "old fashion" type game night with checkers and other old time favorites.

V. Old Business

A. Nothing to report.

VI. New Business

A. ACPS Parent Council meeting will be held at Brownsville on Tuesday, December 1st. Jane Kulow (ACPS President) warmly invites the PTO and school community to join us for that meeting.

B. Announcements

There will be no PTO meeting in December.

The next PTO Meeting is Tuesday, January 26, 2010 at 6:30pm. We will have a special guest at that meeting. John Hunter, gifted teacher at Angor-Hurt will present about his program "The World Peace Game." His work is showcased in a new upcoming documentary which will be presented at the Paramount Theatre on February 21st at 6pm. The game is played by 4th graders who work together to raise the assets of all countries and solve problems. The film is called "World Peace and other 4th Grade Achievements" and is directed by Chris Farina.

VII. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 pm