

Brownsville Elementary School PTO

General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, September 21, 2010

In Attendance: Katherine Merhige, Sally Cushing, Karen Kelly, Mindy Beaumont, Tracy Kunkel, Denise Pinto, Heather Marcel, Betsy Grinnel, Tricia Evans, Mathew Shadel, Molly Shadel, Cheryl Carroll, Danica Plantz, Lois Laclef, Shannon Cox, Elizabeth Andrews, Melissa King, Lori Benedict, Megan Driscoll, Nora Tyer-Witek, Christina Flamm, Doug Simpson, Megan Jackson, Teresa Rogers, Charles Rogers, Lucy Aslett, Suzette Mata, Megan Sullivan, Sue Brown, Linda King, Amy Life, Jess Haden, Joanne Meier, Jeanette Abell, India Haun, Wendy Bragaw and Cady Garey.

- I. The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm.
  - A. Jess Haden moved to approve the minutes from the June 8<sup>th</sup> General Membership Annual Meeting as written. Suzette Mata seconded the motion and the minutes were passed unopposed.
- II. Reports of Officers
  - A. Principal, India Haun  
The year is off to a great start! The projected number of students this year was slated to be approximately 556 and thus far enrollment is 596, which also included Head Start students. A third grade teacher, Ms. Reon, was added just within the last week. The school is in the process of garnering grant funds to add new technologies for student use, such as iPod touches.
  - B. President, Joanne Meier  
Joanne asked that we go around the room and have everyone introduce ourselves. She explained that the meetings will be run according to Robert's Rules of Order. These rules stipulate that we all behave appropriately and orally vote on any raised topics. Joanne introduced Heather Marcel and spoke about Heather's work on the forthcoming PTO Post, an informational newsletter that will be sent home every two weeks to parents with information about the PTO and upcoming events. The first issue will be sent home on September 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - C. Treasurers, Sue Brown and Amy Life  
Taxes are due on November 15<sup>th</sup> and will be paid. The PTO's insurance has been paid. An Annual Audit was performed by Amy Life prior to her assuming the role as treasurer. And Sue mentioned that at each monthly PTO Executive Board Meeting the current bank statements were reviewed by all present.
  - D. Volunteer Coordinators, Lori Benedict and Suzette Mata  
Suzette has been working hard to recruit Room Parents, Art Print Presenters and Brownsville Publishing parents (for K-2 classrooms). Following is a list of remaining openings:

Room Parents: Whitlock, Squires, Hyde, Snead, Forrester, Bailey

Art Print Presenters: Whitlock, McCreight, Reon, Hilleary

Brownsville Publishers: Campbell, Whitlock, Bloom, Hobson, Squires, Eckerle

245 registrations by 101 parents have been made on the website. Lori and Suzette held A meeting for all committee chairs to help explain procedural details, info about delegating to decrease burn out and answer questions about volunteer responsibilities. Information will also be on the website.

### III. Reports of Standing Committee

#### A. Parent Council, Ian Sole

Ian reported that he worked over the summer with a small team to significantly change the format of Parent Council. Their goal was to become more pro-active and better reflect issues and concerns of our school and parents. Parent Council representatives will be charged with bringing issues of concern from their schools, parents and PTO's. The group brainstormed a list of possible concerns, which are listed below. Ian has already submitted 5 but asks that we, as a PTO, submit 5 as well. **Please take a look at the list below and respond directly to Ian ( [thesoles@ntelos.net](mailto:thesoles@ntelos.net) ) OR to Cady Garey, PTO Secretary ( [cadygarey@hotmail.com](mailto:cadygarey@hotmail.com) ) as soon as possible.**

**BUS ROUTES:** Increase input/have greater voice in transportation (bus) routes, rules, etc. Open forum for PC or parent with transportation on line.

**CARBON FOOTPRINT:** Find ways to encourage all schools to lower their carbon footprint.

**LANGUAGES & FINE ARTS:** Re-implementing foreign language and increasing fine arts in all elementary schools and above.

**SCHEDULE CONFLICT:** Conflict of Parent Council and PTO Meetings

**PASS SUBJECT / FAIL SOL?:** Understand better the difference between how students can continue to pass class but fail SOLs.

**SUPPORT EXPLORATORY LEARNING:** Explorative learning – teachers seem to be restricted because of budgets, SOL, etc.

**FINE ARTS FUNDING:** Protect fine arts during next budget round.

**GIFTED IMPLEMENTATION:** Gifted program – not just for helping teachers differentiate instruction but to also work with students who are “bright” and need the extra challenges and outside the box kinds of activities.

**DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS w/ PARENTS:** Can we communicate with all parents directly / proactively rather than have them come to our website, e.g., can we email them and have specific dedicated columns in each school newsletter?

**PTO FUNDRAISING:** PTO Fundraising in a downward spiraling economy.

**COMMUNICATING SCHOOL STRENGTHS:** How can schools more effectively market themselves to their communities, highlighting strengths, addressing public perceptions, and encouraging familiarity and confidence.

USE OF FUNDING: Distribution of funding.

HS 4X4 SCHEDULE: Look at the new high school 4x4 schedule – offering semester long courses with long gaps in math, language and science course offerings – how can that be an improvement or even maintain quality of education?

INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS: Increase intergenerational connections for all schools through community volunteer involvement.

PTO FUNDING & ENGAGEMENT: Help PTOs find ways to raise money; help schools recruit more volunteers; get more community involved in Parent Council.

WALK TO SCHOOL: Increase number of students walking to school; crosswalks with crossing guards, arrange “walk pools”.

INCREASED CLASS SIZES: Class size increases due to budget restrictions (Most middle school classrooms in upper grades have about 30 students).

NUTRITION: Nutrition in the schools – as in the lack thereof. Would like an Active farm to school program in all county schools. Idea: heavily promote “farm to School” in November in schools with county support.

VARIED COMMUNICATIONS TO PARENTS: Express the importance to schools that communication with parents needs to be varied, i.e., not all parents read or speak English.

INCREASED ENROLLMENT ISSUES: Assisting school division with process to deal with over enrollment at various schools.

B. Bee Program, Katherine Merhige and Sally Cushing

The Bee Program had a very successful registration period this year. 1020 seats were filled by 292 kids in classes. This percentage seems a little low, in the past, an average of 50% of Brownsville students participated in Bee classes. This is the sixth year that the Bee program has been in existence and its goals include affordability, convenience and offerings of classes not available during the day. Capacity constraints are being hit both in the ability to perform check in of students smoothly and facilities available. This year marks the second year of online registration. There is a scholarship program with a balance of approximately \$10,000 and 66 seats were requested for scholarship to 34 kids. New families represented at the meeting were concerned about getting info about the program and registration processes. Several did not know that classes would fill so quickly and that you could register for the whole year at one time. Adult Bee classes are in process, with a possibility of availability as soon as October. These classes would be held in the evening.

C. Newcomer’s Picnic, Thedra Nichols

This successful event was held in August and was for families new to Brownsville. Many Kindergarten parents also attended.

D. Family Dance and Ice Cream Social, DeAnna Robertson and Elizabeth Smith

We are all set for the dance on Friday. We have had a number of volunteers to help with the event and Elizabeth Smith had coordinated scheduling everyone. This year we are going to have two separate dance events due to the size of our growing school. The first session from 6:30 to 7:15pm and will be grades K-2 dancing in the music room

and grades 3-5 at Ice Cream Social in the cafeteria. The second session will be 7:15-8:00pm, with the groups switching. New this year, we will be distributing color coded tickets for entry into music room the dance. This will hopefully keep the two groups separate. T.D. Layman is again offering us his services. The dance format will consist of a 1/2 music with the lights on, and the final 15 minutes with the lights and lasers. He has informed me he has purchased more equipment so it should be a great dance. Also, the owner of the Ben and Jerry's franchise now has students at Brownsville and he is donating 10 gallons of vanilla ice cream. Since we have a surplus of supplies from last year and more than 1/2 of our ice cream is being donated, we had a little money to spend on entertainment. Phil Tatton of Freckles and Friends gave us a special rate and he will be performing two mini shows and strolling through the crowds with some close up magic. I hope everyone can attend.

E. Attractions, Cady Garey

Monday, 9/20, was the last day to return Attractions orders or books. We sent home approximately 442 books and currently 119 are outstanding. Letters have been sent home to parents who have not yet responded. We will process orders for (hopefully) the last time next Monday.

F. Kid Pan Alley, Terri Allard and Sally Cushing

This year Kid Pan Alley will work with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Students start with random ideas and work through the week with song writers to write a song. A concert of the created songs will be held on Friday, October 1<sup>st</sup> during the day for the school community and in the evening for families. CD's of this year's music are available for preorder to be picked up on Friday evening at the concert. Profits from this year's CD sales go to the PTO. This program still needs volunteers!

G. Arts and Crafts Fair Fundraiser, Tara Giannini, Amanda Farmer and Rhonda Reid

**Brownsville Bazaar Arts & Crafts Fair**

**Saturday, Oct 16, 2010**

**9 am—4 pm**

*Due to popular demand, the Brownsville Bazaar has expanded hours of operation to 4 pm!*

- Local artists, collectors, craftsmen, & entrepreneurs showcase jewelry, unique pottery and prints, one of a kind couture, antiques and so much more
- Bring your holiday shopping list - there's something for everyone
- Take a cooking class
- **Be inspirational!** Volunteer in the kids studio or sell raffle tickets
- Volunteer needs:
- Children's area 9:00-11:00 11:00-1:00 1:00-3:00 2:00-4:00 10:00-12:00 12:00-2:00 2:00-4:00
- Raffle Table 9:00-11:00 11:00-1:00 1:00-2:30 2:30-4:00
- Booth sitters (give breaks to vendors) 9:00-11:00 11:00-1:00 1:00-2:30 2:30-4:00
- Bake sale table contact Kara Fulop
- **Have something to sell or want to volunteer?**  
Reply to this email, contact Tara Giannini at (540) 456-6251, or visit [www.brownvillebazaar.com](http://www.brownvillebazaar.com)
- I would appreciate if you expressed at the PTO meeting that we do need VOLUNTEERS at the event. I stated that last week but got no response. Especially in the kids craft area working on crafts with kids. Right now there is no one in that area to help. Also if anyone can offer or find raffle items that would be nice too. The Brownsville Bazaar Arts &

Crafts Fair will be held on Oct 16 from 9-4. This year there will be a nice range of vendors from beautiful clothing and jewelry to kid's creations. Included will be a kid's studio area where kids can do crafts while the adults shop. And there will be food available such as bbq and smoothies. Other exciting inclusions to note are a cooking class and raffle items!

H. Golf Tournament, Jess Haden

4<sup>th</sup> Annual Birdies for the Bees will happen this year on Friday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1pm. It is the largest fundraiser of the year. A request for day of event volunteers is forthcoming. The cost is \$500 for a foursome and includes beverages and dinner for the whole family with events for the kids. Lots of prizes! Registration flyers are coming home this week. Sponsorship levels start at \$100.

IV. New Business

A. 2010-2011 Budget Presentation

Budget as it stands is presented at this meeting in order to garner comments until the next meeting when the PTO will vote as to whether to approve budget as stated or not. Sue gave an explanation of gifting and special gifting and everyone looked at last year's budget and compared to this year's proposed budget. She pointed out specifically the change of funding to the library in favor of the literacy fund and the book room.

Sue also explained that the Bee Program financial information is kept separately. It was suggested that it would be appropriate to add a running cash balance to the budget report each month.

Everyone is encouraged to give feedback about proposed budget before the next meeting, when we will vote on it.

V. Announcements

- A. The next General Membership PTO meeting will be held Tuesday, October 12, 2010 at 6:30pm in the Library.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cady Garey  
PTO Secretary