

Minutes
John Eaton Elementary School Home & School Association (HSA) Board Meeting
January 15, 2008
6:00-8:00pm

Present: Carolyn Barnhardt, Kim Bayliss, Mark Boss, Laura Bowman, Laura Broach, Sheri Carline, Susan Eastman, Kelley Ellsworth, Jacqueline Gartrell, Sari Henry, Shari Jonas, Erica McKinley, Caroline Joss, Michelle Koerner, Margie Lidoff, Jeanie Mah, Matt Paul, April Payne-McMillian, Shaun Seaberry, David Shapinsky, Joy Carroll Wallis, Steven Weinberger, Tysan Williams, Claudia Withers, Lisa Woods, Gwen Wright.

Absent: Cathy Conger, Stratton Penberthy, Courtney Tolbert

Start time: 6:30pm

1. **Socializing, stuffing envelopes and enjoying potluck dinner**
2. **Welcome, thank yous, and review of agenda:** *Thank you to everyone who helped stuff over 300 envelopes for the auction team tonite!*
3. **Approval of the Minutes of December 11 Meeting:** Mark Boss moved to approve, Kim Bayliss seconded and those present voted to approve the minutes as submitted.

1. Treasurers' Report: (Matt Paul):

- The treasurers will defer presenting the 2007 year-end budget wrap-up until next meeting, when Stratton can also be present.
- Treasurers met with the auditor on Dec. 31 and so far the 2007 audit is going well.
- The holiday tree sale made about \$23,000 profit, about \$1500 over budgeted expectations.
- The car raffle made about \$10,000 profit.

1. Principal's Report: Principal Gartrell:

- The faculty has been having grade-level meetings to address the wide range of abilities within classrooms, assess the use of time in the classroom and in an effort to improve communication with parents by grade level. We are focusing on the use of DEAR time as a time of productive instruction to strengthen reading skills. In the older grades, students read independently during DEAR time.

Future issues:

- Staffing and professional development for SY2008-9
- By the end of this month, every teacher will have written a "prescription" for each student, i.e., an individual report on each student and his/her instructional needs. Ms. Gartrell had identified a specialized coaching software from Triumph that would aid teachers in identifying and recording each student's "prescription" and the relevant learning resources. However, Ms. Gartrell hoped to have this software by Feb. 1, so that teachers could start using it immediately. There are funds in the school budget to cover the cost of the software, but going through the procurement process couldn't guarantee the software's timely arrival. Subsequently, the HSA Co-presidents authorized \$800 from the HSA budget towards the direct purchase of the software. Ms. Gartrell will make every effort to have the HSA reimbursed from the school budget.

6. Brief Reports on Recent and/or Ongoing Events:

- a. **Fundraising** (Lisa Joy Woods & Sheri Carline): We are very close to our annual goal of \$75,000 in pledges, though over \$16,615 is uncollected. Among large donations were \$5,000 from a trust, \$1,000 from a corporate donation, and a \$10,000 donation from Ms. Fotheringhill's neighbor (thanks to the persuasiveness of Ms. Fotheringhill).

- b. Instructional Support and Music Instruction** (Kim Bayliss): Music Instruction plan is still in early stages; HSA positions are fully-staffed with the final co-teacher hired just before winter break. Ms. Gartrell plans to conduct an evaluation of co-teachers, which will incorporate teacher input.
- c. Grocery Program** (Marjorie Lidoff and Emily Thornell): Sales of gift cards/certificates are going strong. Margie has suggested that a robocall be done to help boost sales. Margie proposed that the HSA donate grocery gift card(s) to the LaCores. Kelley and Mark responded that the HSA, as a school-affiliated body, encouraged and helped organize food and monetary donations from Eaton families who wished to volunteer; however they feel that making a donation with HSA funds would not be appropriate.
 - Jan. 24th will be next sell date.
 - Sell dates will be two Thursdays per month instead of every Thursday.
- a. LaCore family update** (Karin Leuthy, Marianne Eby)
- b. Car Raffle** (Tysan Williams):
 - 591 tickets were sold
 - Ben Wilson's (Biglow) family won the raffle.
 - Abigail Koerner's (Goldsten) family was the biggest ticket seller.
 - Our sincerest appreciation to Tysan, who helmed this Herculean effort!
- a. Christmas Tree Sale:** (see Treasurers' Report)

At this point in the meeting, Kelley asked those present whether they would like to get Upcoming Events/Issues out of the way in order to spend the remaining time on the Principal Selection Process. There was general agreement for proceeding in that order, so the order of these two agenda items was switched.

7. Upcoming Events/Issues:

- a. Election Cantina, Feb. 12** – DC primary elections will be at Eaton on Feb. 12th. This presents a fundraising opportunity if we do another Election Cantina. Kim Bayliss has headed this up in the past and volunteered to help as a consultant if others would lead. Caroline Joss, Margie Lidoff and Jeanie Mah volunteered to organize and lead the effort. If all the food were donated by parents or restaurants, all income would be profit. Polls are open 7am – 7pm.
- b. Footloose Dance, Feb. 22** (Sari Henry, Stuart Weiser): Date was originally Feb. 8, but that conflicted with the Eaton ski trip. **The date needs to be updated on the Eaton website.** Volunteers are needed to sell items during the dance. We again need families to lend their holiday twinkly lights for décor (be sure to label them so they can be returned) and volunteers to help hang the lights on the 22nd. Margie Lidoff volunteered to pick-up supplies at Costco but asked for volunteers to help her unload everything.
- c. Politics and Prose Book Fair, March 8 & 9** (Karin Leuthy): Save-the-date notices will go home in backpacks soon. Uptown Cathay restaurant will again donate 15% of meal purchases. Can anyone else get nearby restaurants to give discounts/donations? Buck's and Comet pizza have not warmed to our advances. One idea raised was to see if Cactus Cantina would donate a percentage of meal purchases over P&P weekend, with the thought that families may make an "event" out of it.
- d. Auction, Sat. May 17th** (Joy Carroll Wallis, Erika McKinley): The venue will be St. Albans School refectory (dining hall). Informational packets will go out through the classrooms on Thurs. or Fri. Packets will also be available in the lobby. We are asking each family to make 3 donations, if possible. As people bring in their donations, a rainbow will be posted with the name of the item(s) donated. T-shirts and lapel pins have been made that display the auction motto: *Together We Can*. Pins were made at a cost of \$1 each and will be on sale for \$5 each. An auction table will be set out before school next week offering hot chocolate to drum up some buzz.

e. **6th grade activities** (Monica Boyd, Karen McAdoo)

f. **Spring Musical** (Kim Bayliss, Angelo Parodi, Lauren Munz): The spring musical is “Seussical”!. Eaton applied for and again received a grant from the DC Arts Commission to help defray the costs for the musical. Funds will help pay for our director, Mr. Baughman, who has worked with Barbara Munday. Auditions are going on this week. The date of musical will probably be the weekend after Memorial Day.

8. **Update and Discussion concerning Principal Selection Process**

Noah Steinberg, pre-K teacher and LSRT member, spoke with John Davies from the Chancellor’s office regarding the DCPS procedures for schools that currently employ interim principals. Mr. Davies described the process for hiring a permanent principal as follows:

1. The Chancellor will meet with and evaluate each interim principal during February and determine whether he/she is eligible for a permanent principal position within DCPS.
2. If an interim principal is approved to apply for a permanent position, then DCPS will convene a selection panel sometime in March. The panel will be comprised of 11 school representatives, including teachers, parents and community members, who will be elected by the school community. At that time, the panel can choose to hire the interim as the permanent principal if 80% of the panelists vote to do so.
3. If the interim principal is not approved for a permanent position, then the above selection panel will meet with candidates personally approved by the Chancellor for Eaton in April and select their top candidate.

It is still a question as to whether the selection panel process mentioned in 3. has changed, as past panel participants have found it highly unsatisfactory.

Kelley read aloud the e-mails (about a handful) that were sent in to contribute to the principal selection discussion. Opinions expressed in the messages included:

- Support for including Ms. Gartrell with other qualified candidates in a principal search and expressed concern that the HSA and LSRT might take steps to directly hire Ms. Gartrell based on the Community Survey results.
- Support for hiring Ms. Gartrell directly based on the merits of her term at Eaton so far and the benefits of leadership continuity.

The following ideas emerged as next steps in the principal selection process:

- Create opportunities for the entire community to be present and voice concerns and questions and be educated about the selection process.
- Have the principal selection process be communicated by the Chancellor’s office directly to Eaton families so that there is a clear understanding about what the policy is and who has authority over it. Apparently the Chancellor’s office is preparing a letter to that effect.
- Have an open forum for Ms. Gartrell to elaborate and respond to questions regarding her “state of the school” report, to provide an opportunity (aside from the monthly principal’s b’fasts and snacks) for anyone who wants to learn more about Ms. Gartrell and her vision.
- Ideally, any forum meant to garner as much community participation as possible would be offered during an afternoon and an evening time.
- We have heard many teachers voice their support for hiring Ms. Gartrell directly. How could faculty views be communicated to parents, as this is the type of information that parents would want to know?

Kelley indicated that at today’s meeting, the LSRT members proposed and unanimously voted in favor of hiring Ms. Gartrell as Eaton’s permanent principal. This action was intended to make public the LSRT’s opinion and support for Ms. Gartrell.

9. New Business

10. Adjourn (8:05 pm)

Submitted by

Jean C. Mah