

**Minutes**  
**John Eaton Elementary School Home School Association (HSA) Meeting**  
**April 10, 2007**  
6:00-8:00 pm  
John Eaton Library

**Present:** Gwen Wright, Kelley Ellsworth, Mark Boss, Eileen Langholtz, Dietra Rogers, David Shapinsky, Laura Broach, Claudia Withers, Carolyn Barnhardt, Jocelyn Drakeford, Alex Wilson, Tysan Williams, Carla Hillery, Kim Bayliss, Doreen Moses and Deborah Evans.

**Absent:** Leslie Tune, Mercedes Lemp, Phronie Jackson, Joy Carroll Wallis, Shaun Seaberry, Marla Blount, Kimberley Hughes, and Lisa Joy Woods.

**Approval of Minutes:** David Shapinsky moved that we approve the minutes from the March 13, 2007 HSA meeting. Claudia Withers seconded. Approved.

**Principal's Report:** (Dr. Drakeford)

**Chinese Instruction:** Our Chinese teacher, Rhonda, will arrive at Dulles airport at 7:30 am on Monday, April 16. Alex Wilson will pick her up. She will be staying at the home of Janelle and Joel Rynes until she finds more permanent housing. Thank you to the Rynes family and to Alex Wilson for providing this important assistance.

**Student Behavior:** On Thursday, April 12, Dr. Drakeford will be holding an assembly to talk to the kids about behavioral issues. This time of year is an important time to reinforce our code of conduct. Emphasis will be placed on the notion of the "John Eaton family" and treating one another as family members.

The LSRT and HSA will be holding a Community Forum on April 26. This will update parents about the code of conduct as well as expected behaviors and attire, in order to reinforce the lessons learned at the assembly of Thursday, April 12. This Forum is the result of a discussion from the Principal's Breakfast about teasing and racial comments. David Shapinsky suggested the teachers use the daily recitation of the pledge of allegiance as an opportunity to discuss the notion of "justice for all."

**DC CASS testing** will be held the week of the 17<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>.

**Recent Events:**

**Open House:** (Gwen Wright): Our fourth Open House was held on March 21. HSA Co-chairs Gwen Wright and Mark Boss were there to represent the school, as well as David Shapinsky and Paul Basken. Fifteen-twenty people attended.

**Enrollment for Next Year:** (Dr. Drakeford): The lottery has taken place and DCPS has sent out letters to those families who have been offered Out of Boundary admission to Eaton. All others have been placed on the waiting list. There are 60 people

on the waiting list for PreK, 45-60 per grade all the way to second grade, and 25-30 per grade for grades 3-6. Those accepted have three weeks to register their child; then we can begin to admit those from the waiting list.

Our present budget does not allow us to hire a new teacher, but we may be able to hire one in the fall. There was discussion about the timing of this, and whether it might make sense to let in a greater number off of the waiting list in order to get an additional teacher. Alex Wilson pointed out that this year, we have 406 students enrolled. The current plan is to grow to 411, which would prevent a budget cut. However, we could increase to 426 students, which would allow us to get another teacher. If we were to pursue this approach, the goal would probably be to have three kindergarten classes next year, as well as three first grades.

Dr. Drakeford just sent a notice home urging parents to let her know whether or not their child will be returning to John Eaton. April 30 is the deadline for all students to respond, so we should have a much better sense of next year's enrollment by then. Gwen will put something on the Eaton listserv as well as in the newsletter urging all parents to respond. Follow up calls can be made to those parents who have not responded.

There was discussion about how to obtain full enrollment next year. One approach would be to convey to the parents on the wait list that if they are willing to wait until the first or second week of school, they just might get in. Another is to call new parents in the fall to see if they are, indeed, planning on sending their child to Eaton. (Eileen Langholtz noticed that, when she called a list of five new parents this fall to welcome them to Eaton, two said their child would not be attending Eaton.) Trish Berman will be placing a notice on the Cleveland Park listserv asking new, in-boundary parents to register their children.

Alex Wilson suggested we hold another Open House for those families who have been accepted, but may not have attended an Open House before. This question will be revisited during the next HSA meeting.

**Ms. Natarajan:** (Gwen Wright)

The event celebrating Ms. Natarajan at the Omni Shoreham was a great success. Dr. Drakeford deserves kudos for putting that all together after DCPS dropped the ball.

**JEAP Parents Night:** (Gwen Wright and Dietra Rogers)

This was a nice event, but under attended. Those who attended expressed their desire that the event be held again next year, but that an effort be made to get more parents to attend. Ms. Rogers does not yet have the financials yet, since the JEAP board meeting is tomorrow night. JEAP generously donated the excess wine to the auction. The band that performed at the JEAP event will also be performing at the auction.

**Treasurer's Report:** (Deborah Evans)

Deborah said that she is unable to present our full financials because she has been unable to get together with Pat McLane, our accountant. They have both been busy doing taxes.

Deborah presented information about revenues which have been deposited in the last two months: she deposited \$9,220 in grocery receipts in March/April, \$115 for the

annual fund, \$1,265 for the Educational Needs Fund, \$905 for the auction (mostly for ads), and \$60 for apparel (mostly for chef aprons).

Once she is able to meet with Pat, she will pass the financials to Mark and Gwen, and they will post them.

Our taxes are due in February (?) and have been turned in.

Deborah spoke with Lee Tucker at Suntrust Bank about getting some of their employees to help with closing out our auction. This would allow Eaton parents to relax and enjoy the auction. She also talked with Tim Smith, the manager of the bank. He will get back in touch with her about how many volunteers they can provide. These volunteers will be allowed to attend the auction and eat for free. This will be a community service opportunity for the bankers.

### **Upcoming Events:**

**Auction:** (Tysan Williams and Carla Hillery)

The Auction will be held on Saturday, April 28, from 6-11, at the Ambassador Ballroom at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. Registration begins at 6 pm. JEAP will be providing childcare during the auction. Forty-five FREE parking spaces are available at the Oyster School on a first come, first served basis. Valet parking at the Omni is \$28.

Catalogues are going home Monday, April 23. Tysan went to the Class Basket meeting of the Room Parents. Class baskets should be turned in by April 23.

They will be looking for volunteers to drive the items over to the Omni. This year, there will be parent volunteers at each table to explain each item.

So far, the Auction Committee has obtained over 500 items valued at \$101,000. This does not including late submissions, such as class baskets. From talking with past auction chairs, Tysan explained that we can expect to gross 75-80% of the estimated value. Some of the items include a week in: Australia, Sanibel Island, Mexico, London, and Martha's Vineyard; a beautiful Diamond pendant; and a box at the Verizon Center.

Gwen and Mark gave the Auction Committee an expense budget of \$25,000, but right now it looks like they will be spending closer to \$15,000. Twelve cases of wine were donated, and they were able to obtain the room at the Omni Shoreham for free. (This normally costs \$20,000.) However, we must spend a minimum of \$7900 on catering, etc.

There will be an invitation stuffing party this coming Tuesday or Wednesday. There will be notification on the Eaton listserv this week. Notices of the event will run in the Northwest Current during the weeks of 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of April. There will also be a notice on WRC.

There was a discussion about how we could get enough people to purchase all the auction items. David Shapinsky suggested we get the invitation on the website to download and to send to friends. Deborah Evans suggested we send out invites. Kim Bayliss suggested that we invite the people on the waiting list. (The waiting list has close to 200 names.) Carla will email the invite to Gwen, who will forward it to all board members.

**Musical** (Kim Bayliss):

The School House Rock performance will be held on Friday and Saturday, May 18 and 19 at 8 pm. Ms. Munday obtained a \$5,000 grant for the musical from the DC Fine Arts Commission, but is not involved with the actual production this year. The previous director, Andrew Baughman is not involved, either. Ms. Wren and Mr. Washington are running the whole show, with some parent volunteers and are doing a great job. There is a need for more parent volunteers to help with costumes, etc. This is a great opportunity for parents who are interested in the performing arts, or who have younger children who are not yet old enough to be in the show. They are also looking for someone to donate their time to videotape the musical. David Shapinsky will seek such a volunteer. Kelley Ellsworth knows someone who is very talented who could do it for \$250 per night. If parents are charged a modest fee for copies of the DVD, this cost might be recouped.

**Library Printer:** (Eileen Langholtz)

David Isaacs, Eileen's husband, works at Hewlett Packard and had offered to obtain a greatly discounted printer for our library. The new HP printer is ready for Eaton as soon as the paperwork is submitted. It turns out that Eaton is not allowed to pay for this printer, so Eileen and her family are donating the cost of the printer. Many thanks to them! They will be willing to donate hardware in the future in lieu of other cash donations.

**Report from our Reading Specialist:** (Laura Broach)

Laura Broach, the part-time reading specialist employed by the HSA, gave a report on her activities. She has been attending monthly DCPS literacy workshops. Ms. Hughes had been attending these, but now Laura goes and reports back to Ms. Hughes. Alex Wilson suggested that Laura work with the teachers during the early morning professional development time to share what she has learned.

She has conducted 98% of the DBLS assessments. This one-on-one test is designed to assess phonemic awareness. The purpose of these assessments is to identify who needs reading support so deficiencies can be addressed early. According to DCPS, teachers are supposed to administer this test, but so far our teachers have not been trained. Laura plans to train the teachers for next year's assessments. In addition, Laura and Dr. Drakeford have been discussing how to implement this. Teachers are expected to assess students in their grade level, but not their own students. This is logistically difficult, and there is an advantage to assessing their own students: they get to know them better. Unfortunately, Laura pointed out, sometimes the assessments are used as a tool to judge teachers, rather than to assess student needs.

Laura then explained how she has prioritized her time working with the children on their reading skills. Last year she met with fifty students weekly, in small group settings. She took kids from each grade and each class. She is now questioning this process because it was spreading her too thin. She and Dr. Drakeford decided she should focus on K-3, with sporadic small group sessions with the upper grades. She is now working with 32 kids who need extra assistance, and has been providing weekly reading enrichment for 15 students in third grade and kindergarten. Last year, Ms. Moses, who is also a reading specialist, was able to help out. Eileen Langholtz commended Laura's

change in priorities, but suggested she include a handful of upper grade kids that might still need help.

There was a discussion of what additional steps could be taken to improve the reading of our students. Alex Wilson pointed out that if a student is eligible for free or reduced lunch, s/he can get up to \$1200 of free supplemental tutoring. American University has a reading enhancement program. Eileen Langholtz suggested that Laura hold a workshop for parents and submit some information to the newsletter about tips for parents to help their children read. Kelley Ellsworth suggested we invest in the Phonics Game or other reading resources for teachers or parents. A program called Voyager is available at the DCPS warehouse for schools, says Doreen Moses. Gwen suggested Laura research what materials she might need for a lending library and approach the HSA for funding at the end of the school year.

### **New Business:**

**Macomb Playground:** The Eaton HSA has been approached by ROMP (Renovation of Macomb Park), a committee of the Cleveland Park Historical Society, for a donation. They hope to raise \$29,000 to update the playground equipment. Gwen is on the board of the CPHS. This could wait until the end of the school year; Gwen would like to get a better handle of our finances and see where we are. Kelley Ellsworth suggested that we only make a donation if we truly have excess funds and do not have to spend any of our reserve fund this year. Eaton needs our money more than CPHS does. We decided that we should put a notice in the newsletter asking parents to donate to the playground fund in the name of Eaton.

**Volunteer of the Month:** Emily Myers was recommended by several people for Volunteer of the Month for her work on the directory and the auction catalogue. Maureen Greenwood was also recommended for her work on the annual fund. It was suggested that Shaun Seaberry might have someone she would like to nominate. We will consult with Shaun and make the decision via email.

**Video documentation of John Eaton:** David Shapinsky videotaped Girls on the Run and interviewed Emily Blakeslee. He intends to use this, and future video footage to place on the website. We could also include DVDs from past musicals.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Submitted by:

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Kelley Ellsworth, HSA Secretary