

DRAFT Minutes
John Eaton Elementary School Home & School Association (HSA) Board Meeting
September 11, 2007
6:00-8:00pm
John Eaton Library

Present: Jennifer Azzariti, Carolyn Barnhardt, Sarah Bax, Kim Bayliss, Stefanie Berger, Mark Boss, Laura Bowman, Laura Broach, Sheri Carline, Pamela Carter, Karla Choice, Cathy Conger, Kelley Ellsworth, Anne Henrich, Christina Ianzito, Caroline Joss, Eileen Langholtz, Margie Lidoff, Jeanie Mah, Karen McAdoo, April McMillian, Darrell McNealy, Connie Ridgway, Shaun Seaberry, Raquel Snowden, Courtney Tolbert-Smith, Richard Wagner, Mary Oates Walker, Joy Carroll Wallis, Steven Weinberger, Stuart Weiser, Susan White, Tysan Williams, Claudia Withers, Lisa Woods, Gwen Wright

Absent:

Start time: 6:30pm

Welcome and Introductions, Time to Review Proposed Budget and New Financial Procedures

Approval of Minutes: Claudia Withers moved that minutes of August 21st, 2007, be approved, Kim Bayliss seconded and the minutes were approved.

Principal's Report (Principal Gartrell):

- Eaton's student enrollment as of today is 409, but by Sept. 14th, we should have 411, the number for which we are budgeted.
- Chinese education classes have kicked-off for 4-6th graders.
- Ms. Gartrell is the process of scheduling a one-on-one meeting with Chancellor Rhee.
- The U.S. Chess Program will get started soon, and students will have the opportunity to play chess during their lunchtime break.
- DCPS standardized test results are out for 2007 and a report will be presented to the HSA in the near future. The results will also be distributed to all Eaton families. Eaton dipped in both reading and math in 2007 as compared to 2006. The percentage of students meeting Performance standards in math was 57% in 2007, compared to 62% in 2006. The percentage of students meeting the standards in reading was 67% in 2007, compared to 74% in 2006. There is a gender gap in the scores that needs to be addressed. How Eaton students can achieve measurable improvement, based on the most recent data, will be topic of tomorrow's staff meeting.
- Staffing: The candidate who was to replace Ms. Anthony in the 4th grade decided today not to accept Eaton's offer. It was especially disappointing because the prospective teacher had already been introduced to the students. Ms. Gartrell has asked Laura Broach to be the long-term substitute, beginning tomorrow (9/12/07), and she has accepted. Laura is familiar with the students and had been preparing to assess them in reading. This position in the 4th grade is the only one that is currently unfilled. Joy Carol Wallis reported that the students were disappointed, of course. But Ms. Gartrell has been spending a lot of time in their class and helped the kids "mourn" the loss and prepare to move on. A couple of parents have volunteered to help Laura in the classroom as well. Laura is certified as a D.C. reading teacher and has worked with many of these kids via

her role as reading specialist. She has been downtown today to get the necessary processing she needs to start as a DCPS substitute instructor.

Reports on Recent Events:

- School Beautification Day occurred Aug. 25th. Thank you to all who lent a hand. Before and after pictures available from Kelley.
- School Supplies Program (Kelley Ellsworth) - Two years ago, Michelle Koerner started this program in which supplies are ordered in bulk prior to the beginning of school. As a result of the level of participation, the HSA has received free perks, including an Encarta encyclopedia on CD.
- Welcome BBQ and Apparel Sales (Sept. 6) – Tysan Williams and Shaun Seaberry coordinated this year's fabulous event. Tysan said that some businesses had donated to the event this year. Margie Lidoff liked that there weren't many booths asking for money for sales or donations. Cathy Conger reported that apparel sales totaled \$1,050 that night. Jeanie Mah asked if the Welcome Back event could be on Friday night in future. Reasons raised for not doing it on that night included the conflict with other organized activities/sports and the conflict with the Sabbath. Cathy Conger said that at the Room Parents Meet & Greet, some suggested that there could be gathering tables for each class, so class families could meet each other. Mark Boss said that Ms. Tate was very pleased with the condition of the kitchen facilities after the event. Dedicated volunteers stayed until 10pm scrubbing to make it look that way! Connie Ridgway suggested that, in the future, the Welcome Back event occur on different night of the week than Back-to-School (this year, both occur on Thursday). This would exclude fewer people who have standing commitments on certain weeknights.
- Room Parent Meet & Greet (Sept. 5; Cathy Conger) – Cathy apologized that the Meet & Greet last week was so last-minute, she and Courtney are preparing for Back-to-School night on Sept. 20th, and teachers are mobilizing to solicit volunteers. Cathy elaborated that the job of Room Parent is to facilitate communication between teachers and the class families. Room Parents also crucial in conveying information from the HSA about activities and volunteer opportunities to Eaton families. Cathy provided her e-mail address (cathy.conger@gmail.com) for anyone interested in being a Room Parent.
- LSRT Meeting of Sept. 11 (Claudia Withers) – Claudia explained the purpose of the LSRT and that the team works closely with the principal and teachers, as well as on the Eaton school budget. This week they talked about assessment scores and what plans to implement going forward. They are breaking down and analyzing the data to make is usable for each grade and class. Teacher morale is good and no major issues (aside from the 4th grade vacancy) have arisen. Facility repairs are on-going (e.g., stone steps on 33rd St.). Chinese education will not be limited to what is taught within the classrooms but is meant to be holistic and pervasive. There is visual evidence of Chinese vocabulary and culture placed all over the school so that the children's language education will not be an isolated experience and easily forgotten. LSRT minutes will be posted on the Eaton website and on the HSA bulletin board.

Budget Issues:

- Update on Financials for 2006-7 (Mark Boss and Kelley Ellsworth): There is still approximately \$7,000 in miscellaneous income and we are still working to classify as much of these funds as possible. Mark said that Sally Foster gift wrap sales initially looked low, but that as more miscellaneous transactions were classified, it became

- Discussion of Grocery Certificates – The Eaton HSA buys grocery gift certificates and gift cards from Giant Food and Brookville Markets for a discounted price, and sells them to families and friends of Eaton at face value. The rationale for this fundraiser is that since groceries are a staple, if families simply use the gift cards to buy their groceries, they are automatically making a contribution to the Eaton HSA without spending any extra money. The biggest problem with the grocery certificate program is that it has been difficult to track the inventory of gift certificates and cards we have. Also, people buying the gift certificates and cards have not always paid upon delivery, which makes balancing the books difficult.
- Giant and Safeway stores also issue “savings club” cards, which entitle shoppers who register for these cards to special discounts. Shoppers can also link their club cards to Eaton (either at the store location or online) so that the school can receive a percentage of the amount spent at each shopping trip. Shoppers must re-link their club cards to Eaton every year; the relationship does not automatically get carried over year-to-year. Linking one’s Giant or Safeway savings club card to Eaton is a separate fundraiser from buying the Giant and Brookville gift certificates and gift cards. Connie Ridgeway said that she hadn’t been aware of the difference and that the HSA needs to clarify that. Margie Lidoff volunteered to staff a table to sell the grocery certificates. There was support for continuing both of these fundraisers because of their simplicity; however parents also said that more publicity and education directed toward Eaton families is needed in order to make them successful. Marianne Eby said that she would work with the co-chairs of the grocery certificate program to analyze the income from grocery certificates versus the savings club cards to assess these fundraisers.
- Box tops - Ms. Barnhardt asked that the HSA publicize this fundraiser and also provide a volunteer to process them and mail them in. Ms. Anthony did this job previously and the box tops expire, so they need to be processed in a timely fashion, about twice per year. Ms. Barnhardt said that class competitions for bringing in the most box tops have worked well. Laura Bowman requested that the HSA do a better job of communicating the specific financial impact of various fundraisers, like box tops, linking one’s savings club card to Eaton, etc. With that information, parents could prioritize the efforts they put into the various fundraisers. Gwen Wright said that last year the HSA made a conscious decision not to spend much energy publicizing the less profitable fundraisers. Kelley Ellsworth curbed further discussion due to time constraints.

Presentation, Discussion and Voting on 2007-8 Proposed Budget:

- Car Raffle - In order to better support the HSA personnel budget, the HSA board is looking into a car raffle. Tysan Williams explained that the idea would be to sell raffle tickets, probably for \$100 each, from October until December. We would have special opportunities to sell tickets to people outside the Eaton community at events like the Block Party and the Christmas Tree Sale. The winning ticket would be drawn right before winter break. Tysan is confident that she can find a car dealer to sell the HSA a car “at cost” and also plans to request that the dealer throw in a “donation”, which would further offset the price. Several car models have been suggested for the raffle, but a BMW appears to be the likeliest choice. Tysan said that she has found a volunteer to process incoming calls from the community and has also investigated publicity outlets.

- Educational Needs Fund (ENF) - Connie Ridgeway suggested that maybe more energy should be directed towards promoting the Educational Needs Fund (ENF). Someone asked why the proposed income for 2007-8 is equal to last year's if the HSA is raising the suggested ENF contribution this year. Gwen Wright said that in 2005-06, the ENF received two large and unexpected gifts. Someone said that at Horace Mann, the suggested ENF contribution is \$1,000; at Janney it is \$500. Eileen Langholtz suggested that those promoting the ENF need a creative way to reach the parents of kids in the higher grades because parents naturally tend to have looser ties to classroom and school activities as their kids get older.
- Personnel - Karen McAdoo said that we should have a discussion about the co-teacher program because other elementary schools don't have co-teachers, yet perform better on assessments. Some questions that should be investigated: How much value do co-teachers add? Is the value added equal across grades? Kim Bayliss said that teachers in the older grades have told her that they rely on co-teachers to meet with kids in small groups, especially in math. This is an important function because Eaton does not have a math specialist. She said that Ms. Gartrell plans to be much more hands-on with co-teachers. Kim acknowledged that there is movement to get an HSA sub-group to focus on co-teachers.

Marianne Eby moved to approve the 2007-8 proposed budget, Kim Bayliss seconded and the proposed budget was approved.

Discussion of New Financial Practices and Vote (Kelley Ellsworth): Connie Ridgeway asked if a financial expert had reviewed the new procedures. Claudia Withers said that the HSA's paid bookkeeper, Pat McClane, and treasurer Carla Hillery, who has owned a small business and whose husband is an accountant, both reviewed the procedures. Gwen Wright moved to accept the new procedures, the motion was seconded and the procedures were approved.

Discussion of Personnel Issues and Changes (Kim Bayliss): The HSA is still looking for 4th and 5th grade co-teachers. Someone asked if the positions had been advertised on HSA listserv. Kim said that she will post them.

Discussion of Upcoming Events/Issues:

- Treasurer vacancy: Carla Hillery is no longer an Eaton parent. The position has been advertised on the HSA listserv. Sheri Carline and Lisa Woods need volunteers for small jobs related to fundraising: process box tops, annual fund mailings (targets alumni, friends of Eaton), Sally Foster giftwrap chair, selling ads in the Eaton directory.
- Claire's Gourmet Tasting: Claire's baked goods and giftwrap is a new candidate for a fundraiser, suggested for spring.
- Back-to-School Night: Thurs., Sept. 20, 7pm.

- PEP Parenting Class starts Thurs., Sept. 27, 7-9 pm. Cost is \$125 but scholarships are available. Contact Kelley Ellsworth on how to register. Registration info is also posted outside the Lowell St. entrance.
- Meet with Chancellor Rhee: Mark Boss has been in contact with her to attend our Oct. HSA mtg. **Due to no school because of parent-teacher conferences, both the LSRT and HSA meetings have been rescheduled from Oct. 9 to Oct. 16th.**
- Principal's Breakfast and Snack: Wed., Oct. 3, 8-8:45am and 2:30-3:15pm, respectively.
- Block Party: Sat., Oct. 20th; Dana Grasty will chair.

Discussion of Eatons' drop in scores on Standardized Tests: A breakdown of the results through 2006 is on the DCPS website. Kelley Ellsworth noted that Eaton's demographics are much more diverse than schools exceeding our scores. Someone noted that four or so years ago, prior to a change in the assessment tool, Eaton's scores were closer to Janney's, Lafayette's, etc., and our demographics haven't changed. Kelley voiced her opinion that Eaton's drop in scores during that time period has been due to a lack of leadership at the top. Claudia Withers said that the LSRT is looking into how exactly the assessment tool changed so that they can better understand why our scores have dropped. Laura Bowman said that the complete raw and historical data should be distributed to all Eaton families, including those who may not have access to the DCPS website.

Mtg. adjourned at 8:05pm.

Submitted by

Jean C. Mah