

Minutes
John Eaton Elementary School Home School Association (HSA)
Meeting
March 13, 2007
6:00-8:00 pm
John Eaton Library

Present: Jocelyn Drakeford, Gwen Wright, Kelley Ellsworth, Sari Henry, Mark Boss, Eileen Langholtz, Shaun Seaberry, Jeanie Mah, Paul Basken, Margie Lidoff, Lisa Joy Woods, David Shapinsky, Laura Broach, Regina Bell, Carolyn Barnhardt, Sarah Aikenhead, Karen Hardy McAdoo, Carla Hillery, Rick Nash, Claudia Withers.

Absent: Deborah Evans, Kim Bayliss, Leslie Tune, Mercedes Lemp, Phronie Jackson, Joy Carroll Wallis, Marla Blount, and Kimberley Hughes.

Minutes: Claudia Withers moved that we approve the February 20th minutes and David Shapinsky seconded. Approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: There was no Treasurer's Report due to the fact that the Treasurer, Deborah Evans, was on her way to the emergency room with an injured hand. (She came by to drop off the food, though!) Mark and Gwen have been meeting with our bookkeeper, Pat McLane to make sure that all financial duties are being carried out. They have not been able to include Deborah in these meetings since the last HSA meeting. Gwen posed the question of whether it might make sense to add an assistant treasurer to help keep track of funds for the remainder of the school year, especially considering the increased workload in preparation for the Auction. Payroll checks are cut by the payroll service (and signed by Claudia) and most of the remainder of the checks are written by Pat McLane and signed by Mark. Claudia suggested that as soon as we can, and certainly for next year, we have ADP (the payroll service) direct deposit the paychecks for HSA employees so that checks do not have to be signed. Apparently there are times when the checks needing signatures are not delivered to the school until midday (rather than during drop-off time), at which time there is nobody left in the school to sign them. This causes our HSA employees to receive their paychecks later than anticipated.

Principal's Report:

Open House: The next Open House will be held March 20, but unfortunately Dr. Drakeford will not be able to attend, due to a superintendent's meeting at the same time.

Principal's Breakfast: The next Principal's Breakfast will be held on March 21.

Budget for 07/08 school year: Dr. Drakeford recently attended budget roundtable meetings with DCPS. At one point it looked like Eaton might lose as many as four staff-members next year, but in the end we were able to retain all staff, with the possible exception of one ELL position. However, if the number of our ELL students remains as high next year as it is this year, we will get that staff position back in the fall.

Failure is Not an Option Conference: Dr. Drakeford and Carolyn Barnhardt attended a conference put on by the Hope Foundation in Florida recently. The subject of the event was how to help all students to succeed. Dr. Drakeford will be training her staff on this subject during morning staff development time.

Chinese Instruction: The Chinese teacher arrives April 1 or 2. Dr. Drakeford will be attending a meeting this Thursday in preparation. The teacher's visa has been signed off. She will be in the US in late March, and will be processed in NY. Her English name is Rhonda. Alex Wilson is still working on finding housing for her.

Ms. Anthony: Dr. Drakeford was asked for news about what happened to Ms. Anthony and if she was alright. Dr. Drakeford received a letter from the Washington Teachers Union stating that Ms. Anthony is on medical leave until July. The Associate Superintendent said Ms. Anthony will probably be placed elsewhere next year. Ms. Anthony has not communicated with Dr. Drakeford at all, so Dr. Drakeford has no further information about the nature of the medical issue. The long-term sub replacing Ms. Anthony is Mr. Carter, who is wonderful according to Margie Lidoff. Dr. Drakeford is interested in hiring him for a permanent position. If Mr. Carter is hired, this will mean that almost every grade will have a male teacher.

Telephones: Recently the telephones have not been working properly. Eaton, Murch, Hearst and Lafayette have all had trouble with phones and fax lines. Eaton has not had internet in the last two days either. Dr. Drakeford is not aware of what is causing this problem.

Next Year's Class Distribution: Dr. Drakeford was asked how many first grades there will be next year. Her reply was that we will have three first grades next year, but not necessarily three kindergartens.

Ms. Natarajan: The DCPS celebration did not come through in a timely fashion to honor Ms. Natarajan and to celebrate her as the DC Teacher of the Year. There will be a ceremony in the Rose Garden with all the recipients in the nation in April. Dr. Drakeford and the HSA have partnered to create a celebratory event for her to take place before the Rose Garden ceremony. The event will be held at the Omni Shoreham on Tuesday, March 20, from 5:30-7:30. The room will only hold 200 people, so this event cannot be open to the whole school. There will be another, school-wide event to celebrate Ms. Natarajan in May. Both current second grade classes have been invited to attend, along with their parents. Other guests will include Ms. Natarajan's personal guests, Eaton teachers, the HSA and LSRT boards, the Mayor, and representatives from DCPS.

Reading Specialist: Ms. Broach, our part-time reading specialist, has had to redesign her schedule at Dr. Drakeford's request. She has been administering a system-wide, reading assessment test, entitled, DBLS, for grades K-3. She has been doing all the testing, with some help with Ms. Blakeslee. This has cut into the time she has available to work with students, particularly students in the upper grades. She is supporting the lower grades including meeting twice a week with the first graders and doing enrichment with third graders. A parent questioned her about why older students having trouble with reading are not a higher priority than students needing enrichment. She is working now with small groups for intensive sessions in the upper grades. She did this for Ms. Coti, and can look into working with Mr. Carter as well. The DBLS testing is now complete. The goal for next year is to train the classroom teachers to administer the test themselves, or perhaps to hire two part-time reading specialists. In previous years, ELL teachers have been able to help with this testing, but this year our whole cadre of ELL students are served by 3.5 teachers. Ms. Broach could discuss these issues further at another meeting

and suggested that we make it a topic of discussion for the April HSA meeting.

Monitors: Dr. Drakeford was asked what progress has been made in the past few months in trying to get internet access linked up with our new classroom monitors. Kim Bayliss had offered to assist in this matter with Comcast and Dr. Drakeford was working with Verizon. No progress has been made.

Recent Events:

Book Fair: Gwen thanked Sheri Carline and Sarah Aikenhead for the great work on the Politics and Prose Event. Sarah reported that there was a large turnout and that the students really wanted to get books for their teachers. She stated that Trish and Stacy did such a great job chairing the event last year that it was easy for two people who had never attended it before, to pick it up. Sarah will not at Eaton next year, but perhaps Sheri will be willing to co-chair the event again.

Results: Mr. Parodi's class, with 69% attendance, will get the pizza party. Ms Freda's class had 67% attendance. It may be possible to award them with either a pizza or an ice cream party, based on HSA direction. This year, 285 books were donated (last year's total was 199), to classrooms, JEAP, the library, and ESL. Revenue: this year Politics and Prose made \$15K. (The total was \$12,000 last year.) Money per sale went up this year. Eaton's gross revenue was \$3,047 from the bookstore and \$136 from Uptown Cathay. The expenses were about \$300, comprised mostly of purchasing bookplates, and printing flyers to put in backpacks. Eaton did not receive the 50% discount from Kinkos because we are out of date in our paperwork (at the Georgetown Kinkos). Therefore the net revenue was approximately \$2900. Sarah suggested that next year we could improve our revenues by contacting alumni through email. Politics and Prose does forty of these book fairs each year and told us that ours is the biggest. A suggestion was made that story time be extended to bring in more customers. The hard part is getting the teachers to do the reading, especially at midday. Perhaps we could get each teacher to read for 20-30 minutes and spread it out throughout the day.

The Last Mimzy Sneak Preview: This event was great fun for all, especially to have a theater full of Eaton families. We sold 171 tickets, which is \$1710 in profit.

SURPRISE: a cake was brought out by Theo and Toby Shapinsky to celebrate the birthday of David Shapinsky.

Upcoming Events:

There are many events happening next week:

Tuesday, March 20: Open House. Please post fliers. We will need volunteers.

Tuesday, March 20: Ceremony for Ms. Natarajan at the Omni Shoreham, from 5:30-7:30. (Invitation only.)

Wednesday, March 21: Principal's Breakfast.

Friday, March 23: School pictures. These will be the Spring photos, which include a class picture (to be purchased ahead of time) and a more casual picture (with a backdrop of a porch, a tree, etc., to be purchased after the photos are received). Kelley and Phronie will need help. Paul Basken offered his assistance.

Friday, March 23: JEAP Parent's Cabaret. Tickets will be on sale starting this Friday. The event will include a live band and/or a DJ, as well as wine and beer, but no childcare.

Auction: Carla explained that they have gotten some terrific items. Deadline for the catalogue is middle of next week. After that, submissions will go into the addendum.

Discussion Question:

Drop Off/Pick Up: Recently, Eaton parent Mary Ann Nash sent an email to the school listserv with her concerns about safety issues during pickup and drop-off. Attached is the text of some of the recent emails about the topic, including two emails from Police Commander Andrew Solberg. Margo Berkey and Nancy Rivera contacted Gwen about a pro-bono traffic study that was done in 2001. Margo sent Gwen a flyer created as a result of that study, and Christine Newman sent one to her which was distributed last year.

Rick Nash, Mary Ann's husband, reiterated their family's concern about drop off and pick up traffic. He is willing to dust off the old plans and update them based on new circumstances, with anyone else who would like to work on it. David will help with this. There was some discussion about whether or

not it is appropriate for parents to confront other parents about their parking and double-parking practices (such as blocking crosswalks) as well as how to work with the neighborhood on these issues. Gwen and Mark will ask Dr. Drakeford to direct the crossing guard to place the cones every morning and afternoon to block cars from driving east on Lowell Street in front of the school.

New Business:

PTO Competition: The national Parent Teacher Organization is holding a Parent Group of the Year competition with a grand prize of \$5000 cash and \$3000 in school supplies. This is an award for the best run home-school association. Kelley will write a draft of an essay to enter into the competition, and David will do a second draft.

Elections: At our April meeting we will need to discuss elections for next year's HSA. Gwen urged those present at the meeting to start thinking about the slate for next school year: whether you wish to hold your current position again, whether you are interested in another position, etc. Even though the elections were in April last year, given that the Auction is in April, we should push the elections to early May.

Newsletter Advertising: Paul raised the issue of advertising in the newsletter. He was approached by a business (a realtor) that would like to advertise in the newsletter. In the past a decision was made not to accept ads. Since our circulation is irregular, will this be a problem for advertisers? It was suggested that some ads might not be appropriate, such as ads for soda. Gwen suggested that we tell this current business that we cannot accommodate them since we have no policy in place. The realtor has already been steered towards advertising in the Auction catalogue instead.

Meeting adjourned at 8:11.

Submitted by:

Kelley Ellsworth, Secretary