

Minutes
John Eaton Elementary School Home & School Association (HSA) Board Meeting
October 16, 2007
6:00-8:00pm
John Eaton Library

Present: Carolyn Barnhardt, Sarah Bax, Regina Bell, Stephanie Berger, Laura Broach, Mark Boss, Monica Boyd, Sheri Carline, Cathy Conger, Liz Craig, Susan Eastman, Tanya Edelen, Craig Edelen, Kelley Ellsworth, Lynne Englert, Jacqueline Gartrell, Dana Grasty, Shelley Grasty, Sari Henry, Caroline Joss, Jeanie Mah, Helen Matthews, Karen McAdoo, Matt Paul, April Payne-McMillian, Stratton Penberthy, Connie S., Jeff Schwartz, Courtney Tolbert, Joy Carroll Wallis, Stuart Weiser, Tysan Williams, Claudia Withers, Lisa Joy Woods, Gwen Wright

Absent: Shaun Seaberry, Kim Bayliss

Start time: 6:10pm

1. Socializing and Looking over Budget

- 2. Welcome, thank yous, and review of agenda (Kelley):** Kelley Ellsworth apologized to all about Chancellor Rhee's cancellation for today. We had thought we had secured the day and time of her visit with us for tonight, but when Ms. Barreto checked-in with the Chancellor's office today, her office said that we were not on her calendar. Subsequently, Chancellor Rhee's office has rescheduled her visit to Eaton for Wed. Nov. 7th at 4:15pm. The HSA board is aware and regrets that the afternoon time is not as convenient as the evening time for most parents.

Kudos to:

Michelle Koerner - She single-handedly organized Eaton's advance bulk school supply purchases over the summer, working with teachers, publicizing to Eaton families and placing orders. The Eaton HSA received \$511 in income from this effort.

Stephanie Berger and Jennifer Azzariti – They enthusiastically stepped up to chair our Sally Foster gift wrap fundraiser, even though they had to work in a truncated timeframe. They have done a great job and we are swiftly closing in on our income goal of \$10,000.

Shaun Seaberry and Tysan Williams – They chaired the successful Welcome-Back-to-Eaton event in September and set a shining example that set the tone for events this year.

Dana Grasty – She has taken on chairing the block party this year, which takes place this Saturday, October 20, from 12 – 5pm.

- 3. Approval of the Minutes of September 11 Meeting:** Mark Boss moved to approve the minutes, the motion was seconded by Sheri Carline and it was carried.
- 4. Intro of new Treasurers and Treasurer's Report: (Mark, Kelley, Stratton and Matt):** Matt Paul and Stratton Penberthy were elected as the HSA's co-treasurers as a result of the Oct. 4th election. There was good voter turnout. Budget rundown: We

have \$165,042 in the HSA bank account. We expect to receive a \$2100 refund back from an overcharged credit card transaction. The income to date from the Annual Fund is underreported in the budget: it is currently over \$2400.

Amendments to the 2007-8 Budget (Kelley): Kelley proposed three amendments to the budget that was approved at our September 11th meeting. The amendments concern expenses that the board had agreed to include but were inadvertently omitted from the budget presented at the September meeting.

2007-8 Budget Amendments:

Girls on the Run (includes Girls on Track): \$300 expense; this program was launched last year to support girls' fitness and self-esteem. This is a national program with annual dues of \$300.

U.S. Chess program: \$500 expense. This is a new program to Eaton this year in which volunteers from the U.S. Chess Program work with 3rd and 4th graders during classtime to teach chess skills. This program is meant as a supplementary activity to math and will expand to include lunchtime chess sessions as well. The total expense to Eaton for participating is \$750, of which the HSA will pay \$500.

Audit: The HSA Financial Policy and Procedures passed at the September meeting called for an annual audit by a party independent of the Eaton community. Someone has already been retained to conduct an audit of the 2006-7 finances. The cost is \$2,500.

Joy Carol Wallis inquired why it appeared that the Auction has already been assigned \$20,000 in expenses. Mark clarified that this amount represented residual expenses from last year's auction. They came in after June (the end of the HSA's fiscal year) and had to be carried over to the new fiscal year. However, last year's auction expenses as a whole came in under-budget, so these late expenses will not encroach on the funds devoted to this year's auction. Kelley moved to approve the amended 2007-8 budget, Caroline Joss seconded and the amended budget passed.

- 5. Principal's Report (Principal Gartrell):** In response to the recent DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DCCAS) results, Eaton is developing flexible groups in the 3rd through 6th grade classes. Eaton students did achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in both reading and math; however, the 2007 scores in both areas were lower than in 2006. The DCCAS tests students in several categories within math and reading, including measurement and constructed responses. Each child has been placed in a flexible group according to his/her level of understanding in each of the categories per his/her performance on the DCCAS test. In cases where we don't have the DCCAS data for a child, a flexible group assignment was made based on the teacher's assessment. The flexible groups were constructed across each grade, not by classroom. The flexible groups are small and work with their grade-level staff, with support from teacher aides and ELL staff, to improve their skills in the areas where they need the most help. As the children's understanding in a subject change and progress, they will transition into more appropriate flexible groups.

6. Brief Reports on Recent Events:

LSRT meeting held October 16 (April and Caroline): There was much discussion on how teacher aides can be better integrated into the teaching environment that Eaton has set-up to address the decrease in DCCAS scores. The LSRT is working on a “vertical plan” where the teachers in a certain grade would plan their lessons in consultation with the teachers from one grade above and below. Also, work has been on-going in planning for the transition of Eaton’s 6th grade to Deal (a firm date for this transition has not been received from DCPS). Once the policies for these topics have been firmed up, Caroline and April (Co-VPs of Public Policy for the HSA) will be responsible for disseminating the information to the wider Eaton community. The LSRT also had a discussion about Eaton outreach, i.e., inspiring a greater awareness of Eaton within the local community. One idea was to invite the ANC Commissioners to convene their meetings at Eaton.

The LSRT will hold a Community Meeting on the evening (tentatively at 6pm) of Wednesday, Nov. 14th. At this meeting, the LSRT will present a strategy for raising DCCAS scores and update the community on their other work.

Sally Foster gift wrap fundraiser (Jennifer Azzariti, Stefanie Berger): About \$8,000 in orders has been collected to date (includes online sales). The deadline to turn-in orders has been extended to this Friday, October 19th.

Grocery Programs fundraiser: Margie Lidoff and Emily Myers, the two most active volunteers with this program, were not present at meeting. Kelley said that Brookville market so wants our business that they are offering Eaton gift certificates at a 10% (compared to 5% in past years) discount. Unfortunately, this fundraiser has yet to get securely off the ground because we still need someone to co-chair this project with Emily. Kelley reminded folks to also link their savings club cards with Safeway, Giant and Harris Teeter to Eaton. We actually raise more money via savings club card expenditures than from selling the grocery certificates/gift cards.

Back to School Night and ENF (Lisa Joy Woods): Kelley’s direct plea on behalf of the Educational Needs Fund yielded \$25,000 in pledges on Back to School night. Year-to-date, \$39,000 has been received in the ENF. Mr. Parodi’s class is ahead in terms of percentage of class families pledged to the ENF. This is the first time in recorded history that this distinction has not belonged to Ms. Steinkamp’s class. The first class to reach 100% participation in the ENF will receive a special treat, and the teacher will receive a gift certificate from last year’s auction.

Principal’s Breakfast and Snack, October 3 (Mark Boss): Due to minimal publicity for this event, a lucky parent enjoyed a private audience with Principal Gartrell during the Principal’s Breakfast. The next Principal’s Breakfast and Snack will be on Wednesday, Nov. 7th in the Eaton library. These events are scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month. Linda Adams has volunteered to provide the breakfast goodies.

Annual Fund (Sheri Carline): The Annual Fund consists of a mailing sent to friends, neighbors and alumni of Eaton. The mailing list for the Annual Fund contains about 3,000 families. The mailing is usually done in early December, but this year a preliminary mailing containing an “update on Eaton” was sent at the end of September. Though it was not an overt fundraising mailing, we received \$2426 from it. Janelle Rynes and Laura Bowman are chairs of this year’s Annual Fund.

Box Tops: Sheri pointed out that Oct. 31st is the submission deadline for Box Tops (found on Ziploc, General Mills and Cascadian Farms products, among others). Stacy Merenstein is chairing the Box Tops fundraiser and collection points include all the pre-K and K classrooms.

Foundation Funding (Kelley Ellsworth and Lenna Aoki): Kelley and Lenna submitted a grant application to the McGowan Foundation in mid-October and we’ll hear about the results in about two months. Lenna is researching grants appropriate for the Eaton HSA and is devising a yearlong strategy. Their goal is to apply for about 10 grants this year. Susan Eastman asked if the bulk of the information collected about Eaton could be made available to teachers, who sometimes apply for teacher grants. Lisa Woods also has a PowerPoint presentation containing key data on Eaton that she can make available.

Newsletter: Three volunteers have taken on this project and the first issue is coming out this Thursday, October 18th. It features a fantastic interview with our Principal!

Claudia Withers commended the Eaton “school dispatches” that have been regularly appearing in the *Northwest Current*. Regina Bell has been coordinating this effort.

7. Upcoming Events/Issues:

Positions to be filled (Mark): Our VP of Communication, Gwen Wright, has had to resign due to other pressing commitments. This job includes overseeing publication of the newsletter and keeping the content of our website (www.eatondc.org) informative and up-to-date. Danna McCormick technically maintains the website. If you are, or know of anyone who might be, interested in filling this crucial position, please contact any HSA board member.

Block Party, October 20, 12 – 5pm (Dana and Shelley Grasty): This year we are organizing volunteers a bit differently than last year. Instead of having each class be responsible for a specific block party station (e.g., cotton candy, spin art, etc.), we need parents to sign-up for any 1 ½ hour shift between 12pm and 5pm. We are hoping for at least five volunteers from each class to fill the shifts between 12 and 5pm. Additionally, we need a crew of volunteers for set-up between 10am and 12pm and a crew to tear down the block party between 5pm and 7pm. It was suggested that room parents solicit volunteers by time slot to ensure that all shifts are covered. Then on Saturday, volunteers will report to a central “volunteer booth” and be sent to

where they are needed. The Grastys estimated that at least 100 volunteers will be needed for the block party. Ice, pizzas and popcorn will need to be picked up the day of the block party. There will be 20 stations, and they would like to have 3 volunteers per station per shift. It was suggested that some volunteers be designated as “floaters” to ensure that no volunteer gets stuck working a daylong shift. There was some debate as to the profitability of selling wristbands at the block party. In the end, it was decided that 100 wristbands would be available at \$60 each.

8. Car Raffle (with vote?) (Tysan Williams):

- BMW of Sterling has agreed to sell the Eaton HSA a 2007 Mini-Cooper at cost. Since we are tax-exempt organization, the total cost is \$19,376. The HSA would need to put down \$1000 for the car to be ordered, to be ready in 6 weeks from the order date. We would order a red car with a white top.
- The proposed structure of the raffle is to sell a maximum of 2000 tickets at \$50 each.
- Tysan has arranged for BMW of Sterling to deliver a Mini-Cooper to be displayed at the block party from 12 - 5pm, if we wish.
- Tysan said that the DC Lottery Commission has given her permission to take orders and contact information for raffle ticket sales at the block party. Then after we have obtained the license and printed tickets, Tysan would contact those who ordered tickets and send them their tickets.
- According to the DC Lottery Commission, it would take three days to obtain the appropriate license, at a cost of \$100.
- The Lottery Commission forbids children from selling raffle tickets; the selling agent must be an adult.
- Tysan has found a vendor who is willing to print the tickets and flyers for \$225. She has also found free advertising outlets in radio, internet and print.
- Our biggest draws for selling tickets to the community would be at the block party this Saturday and at the tree sales in December.
- An class competition could be an incentive for parents selling tickets. The winning class would win a pizza and ice cream party, with supplies donated. The winning teacher would win dinner at the Omni Shoreham, including transport to and from.
- The raffle winner would need to pay taxes and title on the car, as with a typical car purchase.

Tysan has consulted with St. Sophia’s, which does an annual car raffle and they claim that they sell out of raffle tickets at \$100 per ticket. Someone thought that it is possible that St. Sophia’s constituency may be larger than Eaton’s. Karen McAdoo shared her experience with raffles and suggested that it would be less risky to raffle off a large cash prize than committing approximately \$20,000 upfront for a car. In the worst case scenario, we would not be able to cover the cost of the car with tickets sales, as it wouldn’t be realistic to expect each family to sell or purchase a ticket. In the end, there were enough people present who felt that the risk was justified, that we would be able to cover our costs and wanted to

try a bold new fundraiser. There was a motion to approve the car raffle, Kelley seconded and it passed.

9. Meeting adjourned at 8pm

Submitted by

Jean C. Mah