

**Minutes**  
**John Eaton Elementary School Home School Association (HSA) Board Planning Meeting**  
**August 21, 2007**  
6:00-8:00pm  
John Eaton Library

**Present:** Kim Bayliss, Mark Boss, Sheri Carline, Kelley Ellsworth, Carla Hillery, Caroline Joss, Jeanie Mah, Pat McClane, April Payne-McMillian, Shaun Seaberry, Lisa Joy Woods

**Absent:** Cathy Conger, Courtney Tolbert-Smith, Tysan Williams, Gwen Wright

**Start time:** 6:14pm

**Approval of Minutes:** Kim moved to approve the minutes of July 31, 2007. Mark seconded and it passed.

**Introduction of Principal Gartrell:** We informally and briefly welcomed Ms. Gartrell as our new principal. She reported that to-date, almost all teacher slots were filled. Eaton has hired a special-ed teacher. The teachers are busy this week with meetings, including breaking up into teams by grade and specialty to plan the calendar and strategize for the year.

**Report from LSRT Meeting held August 21, 2007 (Kelley):** The LSRT elected Laura Broach (parent rep.) and Noah Steinberg (teacher rep.) as co-chairs, and Claudia Withers as secretary for the coming year. They voted to have their regular meetings from 4-6pm on the second Tuesday of the month: same days as HSA meetings. Mark suggested that HSA board members rotate attending the LSRT meetings in order to report back so that no one person is unduly burdened.

- **April volunteered to attend the Sept. meeting.**
- **Mark volunteered for Oct.**
- **Sheri volunteered for Nov.**
- **Carla volunteered for April**

An air-conditioning leak early in summer resulted in moldy carpet in Mr. Parodi's classroom and the LSRT is working on replacing it pronto. Kelley said she would post something on the Eaton listserv to solicit help in providing and installing a new carpet. Carla suggested that Kelley contact Karen McAdoo as she had helped out Hearst with a carpeting problem. [*Follow-up by Kelley: the custodian found carpet squares in the storage closet and replaced the moldy portions of the carpet. The mold issue seems to have been resolved.*]

At the LSRT meeting, Ms. Gartrell had said that we had been budgeted for 411 student at the end of last school year, but Eaton will begin with 416 students, due to the No Child Left Behind act, which gives families the prerogative to move their child to a different school. We can be assigned students even if we are at our desired capacity. DCPS had done a walk-thru with Dr. Drakeford in the Spring and suggested that Eaton had room for 35 teaching spaces above 411, but Ms. Gartrell told them that our physical classroom space could not tolerate an increase of that magnitude. Ms. Gartrell will keep an eye on our enrollment numbers after the beginning of the year to guard against us losing staff mid-year, as has happened in the past. **Next LSRT meeting is September 11, 4-6pm.**

**Update on financials for 2006-7 (Mark, Kelley, Pat):** Through Claudia Withers, we have found an independent auditor who will audit HSA's financial records for a fee of \$2,500. Mark said that we will be writing processes for the treasurer and bookkeeper into the HSA bylaws, in

addition to the audit, to avoid some of the disorganization we experienced with last year's records.

Discussion 2006-7 Income line items:

*Election Day Cantina* - Kim brought up that there will be no elections in 2007-8, and therefore no income from election day cantinas. Kelley asked what the date will be of D.C.'s presidential primary. Kim will look into that date for a possible cantina in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2008.

*Student Directory* – The income documented here were most likely from miscategorized corporate/grant money. We get \$5,000 annually from Ms. Fotheringill's family trust towards the ENF. We also get matching funds from Freddie Mac towards the ENF when Freddie Mac employees contribute. Last year, many of the ENF contributions did not get to the ENF chairs for review before they were deposited. As a result, much of the actual ENF income was miscategorized.

**Discussion of new financial practices (Carla, Pat, Kelley):** Carla distributed draft instructions for volunteers seeking reimbursements and disbursements for HSA projects. She suggested that we enforce a system of checks and balances by requiring that if a person writes a check, that same person cannot sign said check, but must get another person with check-signing privileges to sign the check. Caroline suggested that 2 people be required to sign checks written for amounts over a designated minimum. Currently, only Mark, Kelley and Carla have check-signing privileges on the HSA account.

Pat said that SunTrust has told JEAP, which requires two signatures per check, that SunTrust will not enforce that policy and that is purely up to the organization to enforce it. Pat volunteered to cut checks in Quickbooks. In the past, requests for checks would go to Shannon Pemberthy (past treasurer), then Shannon would hand-off the requests to Pat, who would cut the checks and bring them back to school for the appropriate signatures. Pat suggested that the HSA set up vendor accounts to relieve volunteers of having to pay large out-of-pocket expenses upfront when they take on HSA projects, e.g., copying expenses.

Sheri noted that Eaton is supposed to have a discount at FedEx/Kinko's, but the Georgetown store doesn't recognize it, while the Friendship Heights store sometimes does. Kim recommended QwikCopy on Wisconsin Ave., as they are neighbors of hers and she thought that we could negotiate a discount with them. Kelley was concerned that QwikCopy's prices are generally higher than Kinko's.

Kelley asked how we would guard against the inappropriate use of these accounts. For example, Eaton has an account with B&B Publications for duplication of the newsletter. What if someone not affiliated with the newsletter or Eaton submitted an order to B&B and we didn't know any better than to pay it? The vendor accounts discussion was tabled until a later time.

Pat said she would prefer that any expense be signed-off by a committee chair and that the check then be signed by Carla, Kelley or Mark. Carla said that reimbursement forms will be made available in the treasurer's mailbox. They will also be available on the website. Volunteers should complete and return the forms to that mailbox to apply for reimbursement. However, we no longer want checks to end up in the treasurer's mailbox (as happened last year), but would rather have income checks put into a lock box. Lisa is willing to provide a lock box for ENF contributions. Kim suggested that we make procedures for applying for reimbursement easy to find and near the reimbursement forms to make things simple for volunteers.

Pat raised a concern over events that raise a lot of cash, like tree sales, musical, etc. She said that it would make her feel better if we could make night deposits so that cash wouldn't accumulate over the course of a big fundraiser. Kelley and others raised that two people should always be present when cash is collected for events.

Lisa requested that all checks for ENF be directed to either Sheri or herself before they go for deposit. The same procedure should apply for the annual fund and the annual fund chair.

**Action Item: Carla and Pat will work on drafting the financial procedures and will circulate them in advance of the Sept. 11 HSA meeting. Procedures should include that no checks can be written to oneself or to "cash".**

Currently, ADP cuts the payroll checks and then the checks are brought to Eaton for signatures. Pat suggested giving ADP permission to debit the HSA account directly so that ADP could sign the checks themselves, debit our account for the appropriate amounts and then distribute the payroll checks. Kim proposed the following procedure: 1) she screens the timesheets to approve the hours and paycheck amounts; 2) she contacts ADP with her approval or changes; 3) ADP cuts, signs and distributes the paychecks; 4) ADP debits the HSA account for the payroll amount. The payroll process happens once a month. The HSA would need to give ADP authorization to debit the HSA account. ADP statements should go to both Pat and Kim. Also, Pat will reconcile the payroll account and send that information to Carla.

**Action Item: Kim and Pat will work on drafting the payroll procedures.**

**Discussion of Personnel Issues (Kim):** Ms. Gartrell had asked Kim to brief her on HSA's funding of co-teachers and other instructors. The concept of a parent organization independently funding staff is new to Ms. Gartrell and she expressed the desire for co-teachers to be integrated and utilized to their maximum potential. This would include administering more rigorous evaluations to ensure the HSA is getting our money's worth. Ms. Gartrell has requested that a *Co-Teacher Scope of Work* be appended to the co-teachers' contracts. Informally, Kim has spoken to some co-teachers, and they themselves sometimes feel underutilized and are enthusiastic about being better integrated into the classrooms. Kim distributed a draft of the *Co-Teacher Scope of Work* proposal. Mark brought up that some of our teachers, such as Ms. Natarajan and Ms. Ballou, started out as co-teachers.

Kim also reported that the HSA-funded music teacher agreed to return to Eaton under a lower rate. (We had been paying her far more than the other HSA-funded teachers.) We are still looking for a 1<sup>st</sup> grade co-teacher. Ms. Stone is willing to be a 5<sup>th</sup> grade co-teacher but cannot work the full 35 hours.

Carla raised that the proposal requires more hours at school, for p/t conferences, professional development, etc., which would raise payroll expenses. It was suggested that we could cut co-teacher hours on other days to keep the payroll expenses stable. Carla also said that the teachers should be able to evaluate their co-teachers. Kim said she expected that would be integrated into the proposal.

**Discussion of Giant and Brookville Grocery Certificates Program (Pat, Kelley):** This program appears to be profitable on the income reports, but on balance sheets, the income is quite small compared to how much money we have spent on these grocery gift cards.

Eaton families and their friends order these gift cards. Who tracks the payments once the gift cards have been distributed? We purchase the gift cards monthly. There is a long lag time between income deposits from the gift cards. Pat has seen unclaimed gift cards at school in unlocked drawers in the cabinet. We wonder if the work managing this program is worth the 5% donation we receive from the grocery stores. Pat suggested we tighten the transactions by requiring payment upfront for gift cards, either immediately upon receipt or in advance. Kim suggested that we implement this new payment policy for a year and then evaluate whether it is profitable to continue for the following year.

Kelley raised the issue that the HSA has not pursued bounced checks when they occur. This has happened across all fundraisers, including the ENF, auction, etc. Pat removes bounced checks from the income line and passes the information on to the committee chair. Kim suggested that we include a line item in the budget for "bad debt". Pat said she would be willing to follow-up on delinquent checks since she isn't an Eaton parent and it might be less awkward for parties involved.

Lisa asked if there was a chair yet for the block party (there is: Ingrid Gutierrez), auction or Sally Foster. Sheri suggested that multiple chairs on the Sally Foster fundraiser would be beneficial.

**Presentation and discussion of draft budget for 2007-8 (Kelley):**

Proposed income = \$342,000  
Proposed expenses = \$317,450  
Proposed surplus = \$24,550

New/notable income line items:

*Car raffle:* at \$50-\$100/per ticket, theorized net income is \$50,000 (see Car raffle expense at \$20,000 for car purchased "at cost")

*Art auction:* questionable as to feasibility, so no amount attached yet

*Educational Needs Fund (ENF):* \$75,000; same as last two years

*Student Directory:* \$1,000 (up from \$500 last year) as we should be able to increase the income from ads.

Notable expense line items:

*Instructional Support:* Kim asked that the \$200,000, which does not include bonuses, be raised to a number like \$208,000. Even if we eliminate the signing bonus, we may want to have bonus money, especially if co-teachers will be held to more rigorous standards under Ms. Gartrell's proposal. We should at least be prepared to fund their extra hours needed to attend parent-teacher conferences and training.

*HSA meetings:* These funds are used to reimburse volunteers who provide food for the meetings. Last year, most volunteers did not seek reimbursement. Mark said that the HSA pays for the cost of the pizzas served in JEAP during our meetings. Shaun suggested that we raise the JEAP rate for care during meetings from \$5 to \$10, to cover the pizza and care. Kim suggested we reduce the line item expense for HSA mtgs. to \$200.

*Apparel Sales:* Per Cathy Conger's e-mail prior to this meeting, we will reduce this line item to \$0. Last year we spent more to replenish our inventory.

*Classroom funds:* It was suggested that we reduce this amount to \$1,600.

*Annual fund:* Kim suggested this be reduced to \$1,500. A couple of years ago we bought mailing lists, which was an unusually large expense.

**Discussion of Upcoming Events:**

- Welcome calls to new parents
- Newsletter: former editors resigned, 3 new editors in place
- Meeting with Chancellor Rhee, Wed., Aug. 22, 6:30-8:30pm at Murch
- School Beautification Day, Sat., Aug. 25, 8am-1pm; We'll have forms for kids who need school credit for community service.
- Apparel sales: Cathy Conger, during Welcome BBQ (Alex Wilson) and Back-to-School
- Welcome BBQ, Thursday, Sept. 6, 6-7:30pm
- Kickoff HSA meeting Tuesday, Sept. 11, 6-8pm - POTLUCK
- Fundraising update and Claire's Gourmet Tasting at HSA mtg. Sept. 11
- Back-to-School Night, Thurs. Sept. 20, 7pm
- PEP Parenting Class, starting Thurs. Sept. 27, 7-9 pm
- Principal's Breakfast and Snack, Wed., Oct. 3, 8-8:45am and 2:30-3:15pm
- Block Party

Mtg. adjourned at 8:20pm.

Submitted by

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Jean C. Mah