

Minutes
John Eaton Elementary School Home School Association (HSA) Board Meeting
July 31, 2007
6:30-8:30pm
John Eaton Library

Present: Kim Bayliss, Mark Boss, Sheri Carline, Kelley Ellsworth, Jeanie Mah, Shaun Seaberry, Tysan Williams, Claudia Withers, Lisa Joy Woods

Absent: Cathy Conger, Carla Hillery, Caroline Joss, April Payne-McMillian, Courtney Tolbert-Smith, Gwen Wright,

Start time: 6:54pm

Approval of Minutes: Members present approved the minutes from both the June 12th and July 17th meetings.

Report on Principal Selection Process (Mark, Kelley & Claudia): The panel sent two candidates forward to DCPS as a result of the day-long interview process on Wednesday, July 25th. Wednesday's interview process wrapped up by 5pm. To date, we have not been informed of the final selection, which is to be made by the Chancellor's office of DCPS. At the Tuesday, July 24th Meet & Greet, approximately 100 of the Eaton community attended. It turns out that the two candidates forwarded by the principal selection panel were the same as the top two preferences based on ballots returned from Tuesday's Meet & Greet.

Report on financials for 2006-07 (Mark and Kelley): The way in which the financial records were kept by last year's treasurer was not adequate for the HSA's informational needs. Now that a new treasurer (Carla Hillery) is in place for 2007-08, our former bookkeeper, Pat McLane, has agreed to return to the position this year. Along with Mark and Kelley, Pat has tried to retroactively classify miscellaneous expenses and income from the last school year. We still have about \$30,000 in income and \$22,000 in expenses that is uncategorized. We will continue to sort through these miscellaneous transactions in an attempt to clarify last year's financial picture. Mark and Claudia are looking for a third-party (non-Eaton community member) professional to conduct an audit of the HSA finances.

Discussion about financials for 2006-07: Fundraisers that did better than budgeted were:

- Annual fund
- Apparel sales
- Auction
- Politics and Prose book fair
- Box tops
- Pre-K/K fund
- Raffle (from auction)

ENF contributions (as identified) came in below budget by about \$22,000. There is a strong feeling that much of the \$30,000 in Miscellaneous income actually came in as ENF contributions. Kelley was puzzled as to why Eaton has not received any income from the spring student photos from Lifetouch, but it may have also been lumped in with other Miscellaneous income.

Expenses that were substantially over-budget were:

- Special purpose grants (includes Ms Natarajan's Teacher of the Year banquet)
- Apparel sales
- Spring musical
- Bank fees
- Dues

Expenses in bank fees were three times the budgeted amount. Claudia said that at least three checks to HSA-paid teachers had bounced during the school year and extra fees resulted. Also, SunTrust charges a penalty whenever math errors are made for a deposit. Kim said that expenses attributed to the spring musical look way off and are likely incorrect.

Instructional support salaries and expenses came in under-budget because 4th grade co-teachers were not in place until a month into the school year. Even after that, those positions were not fully staffed for the duration of the year.

Again, about \$22,000 in expenses is still uncategorized. Pat, Mark and Kelley will continue working to match-up transactions to their appropriate categories so that we can work with as accurate a reflection of last year's finances as possible for finalizing the 2007-08 HSA budget at the September meeting.

Lisa reminded us that Target, Giant, Safeway and Harris Teeter donate a percentage of purchase amounts to John Eaton when Eaton families link their customer cards to the school and then use them to shop. In the case of Target, one must use and link a Target credit card.

Report on historic budgets from FY03-FY06 (Mark and Kelley): Kelley distributed a spreadsheet containing the proposed budgets from the past five years (and actual income/expense figures from three of those years).

Discussion of history of HSA revenue and spending: Over two years ago, the HSA had enough reserve funds built up from previous years so that the entire personnel budget was covered before the school year began. This was done because payroll expenses are consistent throughout the year, but a substantial amount of the HSA's income (i.e., Christmas tree sales, the Annual Fund, and the auction) comes in toward the second half of the year.

Ideas were discussed for having a major fundraiser earlier in the year. Some brainstorms:

- Have the auction earlier in the year. It was acknowledged that school auctions have become commonplace since Eaton's first, and that the auction game is much more competitive than in years past. To plan a truly successful one takes much lead time to coordinate.
- Kim mentioned that the Capitol Hill cluster schools do two major fundraisers each year, including a House Renovators Tour in the fall. They also have businesses underwrite events or portions of events. Vendors would want data on Eaton consumers' buying habits. Kim and Tysan asserted that we need to approach businesses before they finalize their budgets for their fiscal year.
- The idea of vendors underwriting traditional Eaton events like the block party (or individual booths) or the tree sale was intriguing to all. Someone inquired if we could find a business who would underwrite an Eaton science program. Or the art program.
- Kelley said that she will work towards applying for a foundation grant for Eaton, as we are a "proven entity", unlike so many of the new charter schools that receive grants.
- Tysan made a case for the raffling off a car at \$50 or \$100 per ticket. A license is required to put on a raffle but should not pose a problem. To bring in the income earlier

in the year, and not to compete with the auction-related raffle, it was suggested that a car raffle occur before the winter break.

- There was a concern about getting people to return unsold tickets. It was somewhat difficult to manage that during the auction raffle, so we would need stringent monitoring of tickets.
 - From her auction work, Tysan already knows dealers who have offered to sell a car to the HSA at cost.
 - Mark raised that the type of car raffled off should reflect Eaton community values. The initial idea was a BMW; others suggested a Prius, a Volvo and a Mini-Cooper.
 - We would want people outside the Eaton community to participate in the raffle and would advertise accordingly.
 - It was proposed that we could launch raffle sales at the block party, continuing through the tree sale, with the drawing occurring the week before winter break.
 - **Action Item: Tysan will approach car dealers she knows to collect proposals from various dealerships.**
 - **Action Item: Kim will approach Volvo**
 - **Action Item: Kelley will approach Toyota**
- Kelley has many contacts with prominent DC artists and brought up the idea on an art auction. We discussed how we would cultivate the clientele. Traditionally, art does not do well as school auctions. We would need a majority of outside buyers, in addition to the Eaton community. In tandem, we would need to educate potential buyers on art and how to think about it as an investment, rather than a commodity, purchase. Tysan has contacts at the Zenith gallery (near Gallery Place) and we discussed partnering with a gallery as a possible venue and in order to have access to its mailing list for art collectors. We also discussed holding this event in conjunction with Jazz/cabaret night.

Discussion about, and creation of a draft budget for 2007-08: Kim distributed a draft budget for HSA-funded instructional support. In order to retain one co-teacher per grade in grades 1-6, the part-time reading specialist, music and art teachers as last year, the budget stands at \$220,326. The HSA's account balance currently stands at almost \$187,000. Kim said that she did not feel confident in hiring for all positions given the discrepancy and how much income we would have to make up to fund the personnel budget. One idea raised was to delay the payment of signing bonuses so that we wouldn't have that expense up-front. It was noticed that one instructor earns a substantially higher rate than the rest. Although cuts in personnel were discussed, in the end we decided that given the instability Eaton faces this year with a new principal and a new DCPS administration, we would keep all positions for now and support the budget by equalizing wages, holding off on bonuses until later in the year (if funds allow), considering raising the ENF amount and working towards a successful fall fundraiser.

MOTION: For now, we will keep all HSA-funded positions, though some at lower rates. We may still offer bonuses, but pay them out later in the year. It passed.

Raising the ENF Amount: During the above discussion, it was suggested many times that it is time to raise the ENF amount over the current \$350 per family. Kelley said that the amount has stayed at \$350 for about ten years without being raised, while schools such as Janney ask for around \$500 per family. Advertising materials that are going out with registration packets list the amount as \$350. It was decided that despite the late start in publicizing, given the immediate threat to HSA instructional support, the time to raise the ENF amount is this year. Kelley will make an appeal during Back to School Night. Envelopes will be placed on all chairs and parents will be urged to contribute something before they leave the Multi-Purpose room.

MOTION: It was moved that the HSA raise the ENF amount to \$450 per family for the 2007-08 school year. It passed. Future materials will be published with the \$450 amount.

Discussion of Sally Foster vs. another fundraising vehicle (Mark): The Sally Foster fundraiser under-performed by over 50% last year compared to previous years. We need to let SF know in August if we will repeat the sale this year. Meanwhile, Claire's Gourmet, which produces baked goods and other edibles, has approached Mark about doing Eaton's fundraiser. They have volunteered to bring in samples to help us decide. Due to the time crunch, it was decided that we will continue with SF in the coming year but may also work with Claire's Gourmet this year as a transitional year, if the samples are found to be tasty.

Discussion of grocery certificate program (Kelley): We need an improved process for tracking Giant grocery cards. Last year's co-chairs have agreed to continue for the coming year, however they are looking for new people to train to take it over.

Upcoming events:

Thurs. Sept. 6 – Welcome Back Social: chairs pending, maybe pizza + grills, budget of \$750
Back to School Night – date at discretion of new principal
Sat. Oct. 13 (tentative)– Block Party – Ingrid Gutierrez, chair
Dec. 7-9, 14-16 & 21-23 (if needed) – Tree and wreath sales
Feb. 2, 2008 (although materials from the June 12th HSA mtg. indicate Feb. 8th)– Footloose Dance

Other: Class listings will be posted Aug. 20th at school – only incoming pre-K and K families will receive mailings with teacher assignments. A message should be posted on the listserv to that effect. School supplies pre-orders are doing well.

Mark distributed a calendar of this year's HSA meetings. It was decided that the first meeting on September 11th would be a potluck. Depending on the success of that, we may continue to have potluck meetings or ask HSA board members to volunteer to contribute munchies for each meeting thereafter. Meetings will be 6-8pm.

Tuesday, September 11, 2007 – potluck

Tuesday, October 9, 2007**

Tuesday, November 13, 2007**

Tuesday, December 11, 2007

Tuesday, January 15, 2008

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

**These dates fall after holidays

Mtg. adjourned at 8:45pm.

Submitted by

Jean C. Mah