

BEYE PTO MEETING MINUTES

September 21, 2010

Susan Cruttendon Gibson Commons

Free childcare was provided in the Art Room and refreshments were served.

I. Introductions

Maggie Testore called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Three new staff and plenty of new parents were in attendance for the first meeting of the year.

Mr. Ellwanger introduced the new staff and asked each to say a few words and answer his most pressing question: "If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?"

- **Barb Smith, school nurse** shares time at Mann School. She has been a nurse for 20 years spending the last six in Elmhurst. She has been married for 16 years and has three children. She loves to play sports and has never been to Hawaii.
- **Amber Mabry, 1st grade** taught 1st and 2nd grade in the Chicago Public Schools for eight years. Although she would like to go on an around the world cruise, if she has to go to one specific place, it would be the Greek Isles.
- **Laura Saliny** is the **Cross Categorical teacher** for Kindergarten through 2nd grade. She grew up in Oak Park and went to Holmes School. This is her sixth year in District 97. Her top three destinations are Hawaii, Italy and Greece.

II. Old Business

Two new amendments to the Bylaws that were introduced at last May's meeting were brought to a vote:

- **Article V. Officers and Their Duties**
 - Section 1: Added Vice President of Wellness and Vice President of E-Communications to list of Officers of the PTO
 - Added Section 15. The Vice President of Wellness shall oversee the coordination and completion of all Beye PTO Wellness initiatives including Green, Nutrition and Fitness.
 - Added Section 16. The Vice President of Electronic Communications (E-Communications) shall oversee the coordination and completion of all Beye PTO Electronic Communications.
- **Article VI. Executive Board**
 - Section 3. Changed the frequency of our meetings to being held every other month.
 - Article IX. Meetings
 - Section 1. Changed the frequency of our meetings to being held every other month and listed the months (September, November, January, March and May).

2010-2011 PTO Budget: Kate Ulrich

Introduced last May. Copies will be made available at <http://beyeschoolpto.org/website/>

Budget highlights include expected income of \$29,050 from fundraising and an additional \$2,525 from interest and membership contributions. Expenses are budgeted at \$30,251.25. "**Additional School Support**" is a new line item to handle extraordinary teacher requests once field trips allocations were exhausted and will be administered by Mr. Ellwanger. It is budgeted at \$500. The **Field Trip line item** has changed with the new bus contract. Each Homeroom and Specials (Art, Music, Physical Education and Spanish) teacher will receive \$332.50. While these funds are typically used for field trip bus fees, they can be used for other expenses or items at the discretion of the teacher.

Andy Kaczowski moved to approve the budget. **Jenna Russell** seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Special Projects Committee There was a \$22,488.65 balance in the PTO account as of June 30, 2010 carried forward from last year. The PTO tries to maintain a \$10,000 minimum balance. In the past, it has been customary (most recently 2005), to consider proposals from the Beye School community as to how to best use the surplus funds. These funds have been used to purchase microphones for the Auditorium, books, aquariums, etc.

Byron Lanning asked if the proposal would be made public. It was noted that they have been published in the past.

Laura Derks moved to establish the committee and request proposals. **Maggie Testore** seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

It was resolved that all available avenues will be used to solicit proposals to ensure an open process. The Executive Board will select a **Special Projects Committee** at its October meeting consisting of parents, teachers and staff selected by the Executive Board to allocate the funds. The Board will also finalize the application process and set a deadline for submission.

III. Presentation: Lisa Schwartz, Curriculum Coordinator; District 97

"How to Do Homework Without Being Done In"

Lisa started off by asking parents to think about their elementary school homework memories for a few minutes. Some recollections included dioramas in a shoebox, World Book Encyclopedia and book reports. While it was noted that current parent involvement in children's homework has increased with their level of involvement with education as a whole.

Lisa noted several points:

What is "**meaningful homework**"? Ideally, homework should:

- Connect students to their class work.
- Reinforce curriculum.
- Help students master basic skills.
- Cement big ideas.

Why do teachers give homework?

- Reinforce daily class work.
- Develop students' study skills.
- Promote students' independence and responsibility.
- Develops students' time management skills.

There are several different **types of homework**:

- Practice a skill.
- Prepare for upcoming material.
- Extend what is being taught
- Integrate multiple skills and materials into one project.

What should be a **parent's role** in their child's homework?

- Provide a consistent space. Most think it should be quiet, but this is not always possible or necessary depending on the student.
- Provide a kit for children to be prepared to do their homework. This can consist of “project making tools” on hand: pencils, calculator, glue, dictionary, etc.
- Schedule a routine. Plan your week in advance to accommodate your family’s time constraints.
- Emphasize the importance of doing homework. It shows that you value what your children are doing.

Parents’ **checklist** to their child successfully do homework:

- Be available to answer questions.
- Encourage breaks. Set a time a timer if necessary.
- Review your child’s work with them. It helps parents know what (and how) their children are learning.

Helpful tips to reduce the pain often associated with homework:

- This is not the parents’ homework. Encourage a child to ask questions, but not have you do it for them. If they do not understand the material, ensure that they ask their teacher for help.
- Praise your child’s effort, not just the end product.
- Help your child take ownership of their homework. It fosters pride in what they are doing.
- Make it fun:
 - Games: mini spelling bee w family, white board,
 - Incentives tailored to the student. Not just candy or money. Reward good time management.

What can a student do if they have **no homework, but extra time** in the evening?

- Read
- Write a letter
- Practice math fact families
- Review newspaper

Positive feedback parents can give to teachers:

- Identify areas where the student is struggling and seek additional support.
- Ask for changes if homework is not challenging enough

Online resources for parents to use:

- www.childdevelopmentinfo.com: “Welcome to our website designed to provide the information and tools parents need to understand their unique child/children and to enable them to help each child develop into the successful human being they were meant to be.”
- <http://school.familyeducation.com/>: “At School.FamilyEducation.com, you’ll find information for parents on the educational issues affecting your child in every grade level -- from preschool through high school. Find homework help, skill-building tips in every school subject, educational printables and worksheets, plus advice on report cards and talking with the teacher.”
- www2.ed.gov: US Department of Education

Questions:

How can working parents be more effective in helping their children be successful with homework?

A: Designate the items a child can do on their own and review it with them. It will often be necessary to occupy younger siblings to ensure effective communication.

It can also be helpful to post a visual schedule and calendar with movable events posted in a visible place for the whole family to see.

IV. New Business

Maggie Testore introduced two more amendments to vote at the November 16th meeting:

- **Article IV. Membership**
- Section 2: 5) verbage will now read: Approval of single item *net* expenditures more than \$1,500 not already included as part of the approved budget.
- **Article V. Officers and Their Duties**
- Section 13. 1) The Treasurer will both sign and receive written approval from another executive board member all checks written in excess of \$1,000.

Committee Reports:

Wellness: Ellen Pimentel

Fun Run Tuesday, October 5th is a pledge-based fundraiser where students get sponsors to pledge any amount they feel comfortable giving. While it was emphasized to the students that no amount is too small, there was some confusion as to the goals and requirements involved. Ellen will contact all of the room parents to clarify that the **Fun Run** supports the mission of Beye School’s wellness programming and our D97 wellness policy--to encourage healthy practices among our children--while at the same time supporting the PTO. There is an “early pledge” due date of Sept 28th if a student wants to earn their pedometer prize by the event, but they can turn in pledges up until Oct 8th and still earn the prizes. More information is available on the Beye PTO web site: <http://skitch.com/bilanning/dau4m/movin-max-reminder-beyebites.pages>

Trekkers walking program is getting wide participation during the students’ lunch time.

Second Grade Tasting will be held tomorrow, September 22 focusing on Australia.

Ellen distributed a two-sided handout with healthy breakfast and lunch ideas and recipes.

Special Events: Victoria Brown-Wipf

Come on Beye Nights are starting up. Kindergarten through 3rd grade events will be this Friday September 24. The 4th and 5th Grade events will be Friday October 15. As is customary, Beye PTO will offer babysitting in the Commons from 7:00-9:00 PM.

130th Anniversary: Lisa Kitzman

Last school year, **the Committee raised over \$20,000** through sales of **yard signs** (\$1,200), the **Fitzgerald’s Event** in April (\$8,000) and the **Capital Campaign** (74 families donated over \$12,000). Another Fitzgerald’s Event is in the planning stages for this year. Please contact **Deb Poe** or **Lisa Kitzman** if you are interested in hosting a Beye In Party.

Purchases:

- Some money was spent on the **Open House** at the beginning of the year and on the **130th day of school**.
- **Three Smart Boards** are installed in the classrooms of **Mrs. Baker** (3rd grade), **Mrs. Rajashekar** (4th grade), and **Mrs. Bauman** (5th grade).
- **30 I-Pod Touches** with a charging/syncing cart.
- **5 I-Pads** for use by all classrooms.

- **Responseware**, a student response application.

Additional **I-Pod Touches**, that can take photos and shoot video, will be purchased with leftover funds expected after District 97 accounting is finished.

Fundraising: Maria Nitsche

BeyeWear: New stock has arrived that includes **ladies long-sleeved shirts, winter hats, commuter-style coffee cups and aluminum water bottles**. The committee is also looking for a **yoga pants** vendor. More sales opportunities were discussed outside of the normal tables at major school events. These include an online store and scheduling a specific time and date for parent or student volunteers to operate a physical "store" at the school. **Byron Lanning** will investigate the online portion.

Book Fair: Heidi Groulx

Fall Book Fair October 20-22 will use **Scholastic Books** instead of **Magic Tree**. This is a trial run because of accounting and operational problems last year. **Scholastic** offers lower price points, more control over inventory and different incentives that will increase **Beye's** shares of the profits in either cash, books or "**Scholastic Dollars**" that can be exchanged for other products, including **Smart Boards**. Some parents expressed reservation about going outside of the Oak Park community to a "big box" vendor, but it was decided that the **Fall Sale** will be monitored closely. The **Spring Sale** will remain with **Magic Tree**. It was also noted that other local vendors, including **Book Table**, are interested in participating in future events. Beye PTO's options remain open.

There are several new ideas that **Heidi** will integrate into the **Fall Sale**:

- **Family Night** on the Thursday to coincide with Conferences
- **Wish List** from teachers where the children can purchase a book outright or contribute money towards one to make it more affordable and encourage participation at any level.
- **5th graders** will be asked to help staff the sale.

Please contact **Heidi Groulx** to help.

Communication: Jenna Russell

Directory is on the way, ahead of schedule. Please contact **Jenna** if there are any errors.

Programs: Byron Lanning

BASA has 145 registrations for the current session. It is in its second week. The few scheduling issues are getting resolved.

V. Principal Update: Jonathon Ellwanger

Mr. Ellwanger welcomed the exceptional level of attendance at the meeting, particularly new parents.

Back to School Picnic was well attended.

Al Roberts, the new **District 97 Superintendent** visited Beye School today and introduced himself to teachers, staff and students. **NWEA MAPS Testing** is underway to track students' progress throughout the school year. There will be more information sent home with students.

Positive Behavior, Intervention and Support (PBIS) will be done again this school year. Most parents know this program as **PAWS Passes** rewarding good behavior with weekly drawings for prizes.

Cuyler Avenue construction should be finished in one to two weeks. Thank you for your patience.

VI. Question and Answers

Q&A will be added at the end of each General Beye PTO Meeting to foster communication with the membership as a whole. Any questions, news items and discussion points will be addressed during this time.

Laura Derks reminded everyone that a guest speaker is still needed for the **March General Meeting** on March 15.

It was also asked where to find minutes for past PTO meetings. They are available at: <http://beyeschoolpto.org/website/>.

In the near future, they will be indexed by year.

VI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM

Next Beye PTO Meeting is November 16 at 7:00 PM

ISAT Report Card will be featured.