

PLAZA PTA

Minutes of General Meeting

March 7, 2017

PRESENT: K. Albrecht, J Alomia, T. Arnold McKrizol, D Amato McCoy, C Caney, J Croshere, H Diaz, N Driscoll, C Eckler, O Estevez, C Gioe, D Gioe, N Grogan, C Hyer, K Lozada, T Mark, D McKeon, N Morris, E Notarstefano, M Ricafrente-Biazon,

CALL TO ORDER: **Christina** Eckler **at 7:12pm**

Pledge of Allegiance, Emergency exits and procedures, no smoking, cell phones on vibrate. Parking rules (*do not park on the east side of Rockville Dr.*), driving precautions.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Minutes from January 5 PTA General Meeting have been posted. Asked if there are any correction. Motion to accept minutes as written was passed.

Let the record reflect that the minutes from the January 5 meeting stand as written

Thank you to the PTA Executive Board members who organized the Founder's Day Dinner.

Congratulations to the three Honorary Life Award winners: Christine Sostack , Julie Croshere, and Meghan O'Sullivan.

Thank you to the Honorary Life Committee of Miki Hilburger, Deena Amato-McCoy, and VicMarie Sookdeo.

Thank you also to Mrs Spatenga for presenting an award.

Thank you to Doris McKeon and the PARP committee for another successful year of the program.

Thank you to Christine Sostack and VicMarie Sookdeo for chairing our Cultural Arts committee and bringing great assemblies and experiences to our children, such as the recent Black History presentation.

Thank you to **Kristina** Lozada for attending the Baldwin Board of Education Meetings and taking notes.

Thank you to Karyn Reid for chairing the Reflections Committee.

Thank you to Mary Kate Caamano for chairing Supermarket Bingo.

Thank you to Justine Chan for compiling articles and publishing our PTA Newsletter.

Thank you to Sherone Ramnarine for chairing the Box Tops program.

Thank you also to anyone I might have missed or left out. Everyone who works hard on behalf our children is greatly appreciated.

The students have been working on art projects that will be part of the Display My Art fundraiser. A sample of their project along with the order forms will be coming home shortly.

On Jan 25 at Baldwin Middle School the Reflections Winners received certificates. We also saw a preview of the Baldwin Middle School musical production of Hairspray, Jr. Come see this excellent production on March 23 (3:45pm), or March 24 and 25 (at 7:00pm) at Baldwin Middle School. Many Plaza alumni will be performing.

March 23 and 24 are the dates for parent/teacher conferences and the book fair.

Unfortunately we were unable to have our "Someone Special Dance" last month, but VicMarie Sookdeo and **Christina Eckler** will be chairing a Spring Dance **on April 21**. There will be two times depending on grade level (K-2 dance is 5:00-6:30pm and 3-5 dance will be 7:00-8:30pm).

Parents Guide for Navigating Social Media is an informational night for parents that will be held at Baldwin High School Cafeteria A at 7:00pm on March 15. Please attend this event to learn more about an important topic that affects our kids.

BOE Mtg **tomorrow night 8:00pm** at Meadow School

On **March 21** there will be a K-2 Spring Concert at Plaza at 9:30am.

The K-3 Spring Concert will be held in May during the evening.

There will be three open seats on the Plaza PTA Board for next school year: Vice President of Membership , Vice President of Fundraising and Corresponding Secretary.

Please see the form to sign up for PTA committee positions for next school year. There are many committees that will need people to chair.

We will need two chairpeople for the Fifth Grade Events Committee for 2017-18. It is a requirement that this position be held by two people instead of one.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:

Mr Gray - It is my fault there are no teachers here. The sign up sheet showed this date as a daytime meeting, so no teachers signed up to stay. However I will read the notes they gave me (see Teachers' Report below).

ELA tests are early this year. Parent Conferences are right before the tests. Normally many parents would decide about opting out of state tests at the Parent Conferences, but this year we would really prefer to know as early as possible. The earliest we can know if your child is opting out of state assessments, the better it is for our planning.

Q - Will you be sending home a letter with the information about opting out of the tests?

A - The district does not put anything in writing about that because they want opt-outs to be a parent decision that is not influenced by the district.

Children who opt out will read quietly during the test. They generally meet in the lunchroom, because it is a space that is big enough to hold a large group of children.

Q - Why was the extra help test prep program not available this year?

A - It was called the "Targeted Test Assessment Program" and there were hours allocated to it and teachers were paid to administer it. Teachers used to be able to be paid to do this during their lunchtime, but lawyers have deemed that this is no longer allowable. Unfortunately many teachers are unable to teach programs before and after schools due to their own family's needs.

Q- Can parents run the program on a volunteer basis?

A - Volunteering in schools to run programs like that often involves a whole lot of bureaucratic red tape.

Q - Is it too late to ask the BOE to add this to the budget for next year?

A - You can certainly attend a BOE meeting and speak about how much you appreciated this program and wish it was still available to students. It is not that you would have to ask them to add a line to the budget, but there is money budgeted for providing academic support for students and the Board of Education decides exactly how to allocate that money. You can always advocate for programs you feel are worthy to be funded.

Q - Please explain that students will not be denied services and interventions even if they are not taking the state tests.

A - We rely heavily on AimsWeb to determine who receives AIS (Academic Intervention Services) due to the number of kids who have opted out of State Tests. Not taking the State Tests will not result in a withdrawal of support services in school. I know that some parents choose to opt out of assessments like AimsWeb in addition to State Tests. In the past AimsWeb used to be used to evaluate teachers, but that is no longer the case. There is no need for parents to opt out of AimsWeb.

We have a new policy about emergency drills. We are required to do 8 fire drills before New Years, which we have done. Now our focus will be on doing Code 99 Shelter-in-

Place Drills. There will be 4 of these drills that must be done this spring. In this drill doors are locked and students go to a corner of the room where they can't be seen. We also have a Lock Out Drill, which is not as serious, building doors are locked so no one can come in or out. "Lock Down Drill" is the other term for the "Shelter-in-Place Drill." In this drill, only a police officer can give teachers an "all clear" to end the drill.

Q - What happens if a parent is picking up their child in the middle of the day for an appointment and it falls at the same time as the drill? Would the parent be unable to pick up the child?

A - They would not be able to pick up the child for the duration of the drill, but the drill would only last a short period of time.

In other news Regent Tilles will be coming here on Thursday, March 9 to read to a class and be interviewed by Team Orchid

Q - My daughter said that someone was at school interviewing the kids with a camera. Who was that?

A - The district hired a PR firm and an educational legacy consultant to come in and take in all the data and help the district create a bond that would then be voted on by the community. It was the Legacy Consultant who was here making an in-house video of Team Orchid.

I would also like to encourage you to attend the parent workshop about navigating social media. There is no innocent app out there. It will always be a platform for children to talk to children without adult supervision. If you attend the social media workshop, you will learn many important things parents should be aware of (for example, I learned at a similar event that you can hide apps under the calculator app).

Q - Can we do more in the future to promote the different cultures in our schools? I would also like to see the 1st-4th graders able to go on more field trips outside of school.

A - There are a lot of things done here in celebration of other cultures that you do not always see. I am always willing to chat with parents and get other ideas and things we can do. Maybe our professional developers can migrate some issues of diversity into some of the things they are asking our teachers to do.

All grades go on trips. Third and fourth grade are more difficult with tighter time frames due to a lot of curriculum they have to cover. Busses have also gotten really expensive.

Q - Can we do fundraisers to increase field trips?

A- (Doris McKeon) The PTA cannot use PTA money for field trips.

There should not at this point be any snow day make-ups needed for students.

I also need to let you know that our teachers now have about 25 days per year out of the classroom for Professional Development and their time in the classroom is very precious.

TEACHERS' REPORT:

K - no report

1-

ELA - Continuing to work on using, understanding and interpreting punctuation marks in reading and writing. Students are writing "How-To" books to showcase their expert knowledge on a topic of their choice.

Math - Studying place value and applying it to the addition and subtraction of two-digit numbers.

SS - Learning about landforms and bodies of water

Sci - Studying living and non-living things

Reminders/Events - The Spring Concert will be on March 21. Please replenish school supplies, such as pencils, erasers, glue sticks, crayons... We are in the process of scheduling a field trip. More information and permission slips to come

2 -

ELA - Poetry Unit has begun. We launched this unit by chanting poetry with musical instruments. The students are learning to view ordinary objects with poets' eyes.

Math - We will be studying money and time.

Sci - Studying red, wiggler worms and will be welcoming ants in about a week.

3 -

ELA - Drafting persuasive writing pieces. We are also preparing students with the skills and strategies needed for the upcoming NYS ELA exams that will be held the week of March 27.

Math - Fractions unit has begun

SS - We are learning about United States history and government

Reminders/Events - Please send in field trip money if you have not already done so.

4 -

ELA - Finishing non-fiction unit of study and moving into our unit on test preparation.

Math - We are working on a fraction unit

Sci - We have been learning about plants

Reminders/Events - Please check agendas to make sure your child is completing all of the homework. ELA State Tests will be giving on March 28, 29, and 30. Please encourage your children to get a good night's sleep and eat a healthy breakfast before the test.

5

ELA - Students have been preparing for the New York State Assessment. They also wrote literary essays based on short stories that were read in class. Book extension project this month will be about interesting facts we learned from reading biographies.

Students will create a project and will also dress up or create a puppet to correspond with the people they read about. Thank you for your help with the Newbery Award cereal box project. They look amazing!

SS - We finished our unit on Reconstruction and are beginning a new unit on WWI, The Great Depression, and WW2.

Sci - We will be learning about powders and crystals by acting as forensic scientists to solve a mystery. We will use our ESP kit to test each of the substances with acid, water, Btb, and heat.

Reminders/Events - We recently visited the Baldwin Middle School and were able to become more familiar with what the sixth grade will be like next year. Please discuss goals with your child to ensure a successful Middle School experience. We will use these goals on a kite project which will be displayed in the hallway.

PE

We are playing a learning about basketball for March Madness. The basketball shootout is March 22nd. The winners from the fourth and fifth grade will be announced tomorrow. The kindergarten had a great field trip to the Baldwin Bowling Alley. Warmer weather will hopefully be here soon. Please dress your children appropriately for the weather change

Student Council

Donated about \$1,000 through Pennies for Patients campaign to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society which benefits children with blood cancers.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:

1st Vice President Legislation - Susan Fisher
(not in attendance)

2nd Vice President for Membership - Christine Carney

We are currently at 75% of our membership goal

We would like to thank our two business members, Ian Lozada, who recently switched his affiliation to the Douglas Elliman Real Estate Agency and Karen Wunsch of Home and Hearth Realty.

3rd Vice President for Health and Safety Doris Mckeon

Anxiety, depression, sensory issues all overlap and kids at this age are so amenable to therapy. Untreated mental illness leads to self medicating/addiction as adults. See flyer with tips for talking to your kids.

I would also like you to please attend the Social Media workshop. If enrollment is not higher, they won't be able to hold these classes anymore.

4th Vice President for Fundraising - Mary Kate Caamaro (not in attendance)

Kim Albrecht, Treasurer

Audit - General, Savings, Fifth Grade Accounts are all in good standing

Balance in General- \$14,485.50

Balance in Savings- \$5,944.56

Balance in Fifth Grade Events- \$12,510.11

Thank you to Elaine and Khem for Co-chairing Fun Snack Committee (the funds for Fun Snack must be split between PTA and Fifth Grade Events, which is why this committee requires two chairpeople, one to represent PTA and one to represent Fifth Grade Events.)

Motion to Accept the Budget Report: Christine DeLuca

Seconded by: Danielle Gio

Recording Secretary - Kristina Lozada

Nothing to report

Corresponding Secretary - Jeanette Alomia

Read thank you notes from Julie Croshere and Christine Sostack who expressed their thanks to the PTA after winning the Honorary Life Award.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Christine DeLuca - Fifth Grade Events

Thank you for supporting candy bar bingo. Thanks to Danielle Gioe for all her work preparing beautiful baskets. We would like to compliment the kids who attended the event because they were so well behaved.

Upcoming Event - We asking kids to submit questions that would stump their parents for an upcoming Game Night/Fundraiser we are holding called, "Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader?"

Thank you for supporting us at McDonalds and Pizza Nights

Old Business: none

New Business: none

Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by PTA Recording Secretary Kristina Lozada on March 10, 2017.