**Westbrook PTA Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 2, 2018**

1. Welcome

* Intro from co-presidents Mike Buening and Taryn Rosenkrantz– appreciate everyone’s contributions; looking forward to a good year.

1. Approval of Minutes from June 2018 Meeting

* Motion to approve; seconded; approved

1. Co-Treasurers’ Report – Neil Goradia, Gilles Stucker

* We are doing these updates differently this year; the plan is to bypass expense and actuals discussion with the detailed handout every month and instead talk about cash positions. We will talk to committee chairs offline re individual budgets. We want to be more engaged with committee chairs.
* We are handling reimbursements differently. The PTA website has the reimbursement pdf form, and once it’s filled out, it can be emailed back. The address is on website. This helps volunteers get paid quicker and helps the PTA’s tracking of spending.
* Last, this year, we are working on a better way to pay out of PNC quicker via direct checking.

1. Co-Presidents’ Report

* A new tool we are using this year is Cheddar Up. We no longer use Pay For School Stuff. Cheddar Up is nice in that it allows us to centralize several school expenditures: we have rebuilt the Spirit Wear store within Cheddar Up, as well as run the Back to School Campaign. Collections, transfers, refunds, and accounting are all simpler.
* Google calendar – it’s on our PTA website and at the bottom of every Westbrook This Week email that Mike sends. From the email, just click “subscribe.” This calendar includes MCPS and PTA events. We keep it up to date, so your calendar will automatically update as we do.
* Internally we use Slack on the PTA executive board. This will save communications including attachments for future exec boards.
* PTA is part of Montgomery County Council that includes state and national PTA organizations. MoCo Council has a document circulating that’s looking for PTA priorities; Mike will share it with the list serve. One notable issue for Westbrook is “facilities” since we are undersubscribed, compared to schools with trailers out front.
* Carnival Chairs are needed.
  + Moved carnival date to last Friday in May in response to teacher feedback.
  + Taryn, who co-chaired Carnival last year, is very willing to help with this year’s chairs. Other former chairs are willing too.
  + Chairs will work with vendors and get a contract in place.
  + The late May timing will be a good time for teachers; it’s after PARCC testing, so hopefully students will be less distracted by Carnival during that testing.
  + This year is Carnival’s 75th anniversary. It’s a very important neighborhood and school tradition.
* Back to School campaign.
  + Through BTS, parents pay class dues, which in turn fund class parties.
  + Family contribution amounts are up this year; now there’s one suggested contribution amount for the entire family, not per child.
  + The PTA is counting on a certain level of participation for programs like staff appreciation and international night
  + We don’t have luxury of plugging the gap with a fundraiser like last year, so we need to hit our target.
  + If any family is unable or uncomfortable with the requested $225 contribution, there is an option to do an “other” contribution of an amount of your choosing.
  + Matching gift info – large companies often match; this is a charitable contribution. So please take note if your company matches gifts.
  + Campaign will wrap up this month.
* Thank Yous
  + Maren Matal and Tanya Hatton – Back to School Picnic
  + Caroline Smith and Jessica Deighton – Staff Appreciation
  + Leslie Moylan – Room Parent Training
  + Amanda Miller for hosting Room Parent training
  + Jessica Myrow – Volunteer Training
  + Jessica Deighton –grounds clean up

1. Principal’s Update: Karen Cox

* Thank you on behalf of staff and Karen for end of year event and welcome back breakfast
* Class size numbers:
  + We have 1 classroom in 2nd grade with one student over the classroom size guidelines now
    - Counterpart classes are down kids; but didn’t want to move children after year started.
    - Compacted math – in 4th grade, there’s 4/5 math, there are 30 students; 24 students in general ed math class
    - For 5/6 math – 31 students (2 over, but there’s support in classrooms)
  + 1st and 2nd grade reading time is between 15-19 students; 17 and 15 in 1st; 19, 18 in 2nd with reading initiative.
  + Total enrollment – 342 students
* We have an overflowing bike rack and are working with county for second bike rack for additional space. We are trying to get MCPS or MoCo to pay so we don’t use school funds for this.
* Dog waste – we are a dog loving community, but please take waste bags back home to dispose of them. The trash bins out front are overflowing with waste bags. The county picks up trash 2x/week, and our bags are stored in the building between pick up days. Bags of waste inside the building is a bad scene.
* We are forming a small stakeholder group to look at MCPS busses for use during field trips.
  + Prior to last year, the school needed MCPS bus for trips during certain time of day; those busses are inexpensive.
  + If bus use exceeds a certain amount of time, the school is forced to rent charter bus.
  + Last year, MCPS purchased more busses and encouraged schools to use them for longer trips; but we face a safety issue on busses with a lack of seat belts.
  + So, the group is now looking into this, considering what when do we use charters, i.e., for highway use, etc.
* Plaque missing from tree: Larry had a tree outside the school after he passed away from a rare form of cancer. The plaque for the tree is missing, so the school is seeking feedback.
* 5th grade musical is a go. Details to come.
* Beautification day – the school lawnmower is repaired and they’re working on grass cutting.
* Please continue to bring any school concerns to Mrs. Cox.

1. Teacher Liaison Reports:

* Miss Palmer –
  + K is covering weather in science, American symbols in social studies. They have their first field trip to the pumpkin patch on 10/30.
  + 1st grade is covering animal features in science; rules in social studies; personal narratives in writing; working with 5th grade buddies.
  + 2nd grade is covering place values to 1,000 in math; how to protect our water in science; has a field trip to the Strathmore to see the National Philharmonic.
  + 3rd grade is covering forces, gravity and friction in science; writing personal narratives about summer memories.
  + 5th grade is covering adventure stories and narrative writing; desired professions in the late 1700s; has a field trip on 10/24 to Strathmore about jazz and blues.
* Miss Pattakos
  + 4th is covering historical fiction stories, then expository text; common core literature; they’re working on grammar and completes sentences and writing an opinion pieces about plastic straws; soon will writing a historical fiction story; in science, they’re learning about watersheds; they had field trips to Baltimore Harbor, a farm, and Little Falls; in social studies, they’re learning about geography, US physical features and human made features and will soon learn about Native Americans.

1. Committee Updates:

* Jess Deighton -- Staff Appreciation
  + First potluck is Tuesday, hosted by for 2nd and 4th grade parents
* Jess Deighton – Building and Grounds
  + Cleanup is on Friday. She has gloves.
* Chris Dixon – Artist in Residence
  + Overview of the AIR program: Every single grade gets a different artist for 1-2 weeks at a time. This includes a mixture of visual artists, musicals, parodies. Arts integrations has substantial educational benefits.
  + 5th grade musical details to come
  + First residency of year will be 3rd grade in November, will get dates from artist soon.
* Chris Dixon – Trash free lunch
  + First one is Oct. 9th. Please send children with reusable, recyclable items including utensils and napkins. Chris has a couple cloth napkins. Volunteers will check all kids’ lunches; students who participate will go into drawing to get a prize of a reusable container.
* Nan Hartman – spirit wear
  + Good year so far. There are a lot of new young families, so she has put in a new order for smalls and mediums, including a blue shirt by end of month. She’ll email when they come.
* Tina Conroy – MCCPTA
  + Sept 25th meeting – she represented Westbrook; meetings are every 4th Tuesday of the month. If there’s something absent from advocacy priorities, let her know.
  + Re curriculum 2.0 replacement – stressed parent involvement
  + There are a couple new ad hoc committees – including one about safe water re lead
  + Urges clusters to submit work plan for new projects re funding.
* Jess Myrow – volunteer training
  + First training on Friday had a good turnout; she will be available for phone calls; Volunteers need to participate in her training and two additional steps.
* Iva Joseph – Book Fair
  + Book Fair is scheduled for Nov. 8-15. We will need tons of volunteers for weekday and weekend hours. The theme is “*Enchanted forest – let your imagination grow*.” Please donate props like garden gnomes, etc. It’ll be in fireplace room. Milk and cookies night will be here.
* Patricia Guroff – Special Needs
  + Reminder to everyone that there are monthly Montgomery County Schools Special Ed Advisory Committee meetings, open to all, see <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/special-education/seac/>
  + Also, we’ll be holding monthly Special Needs/SESS get together meetings for connecting in person and sharing resources. First meeting TBD.
* Sister school update – Viers Mill Elementary:
  + A Westbrook parent, who is a grant writer asked us if we wanted to apply to any grants. We encouraged him to to Viers Mill, whose budget is a fraction of ours. As an example, their total annual PTA budget is $6,000. He helped Viers Mill apply for a $5,000 grant from Lowes. Hopefully they’ll receive it.

1. Upcoming Events

* Friday, Oct. 5: Grounds Cleanup
* Tuesday, Oct. 9: Staff Appreciation Potluck – 2nd and 4th Grade
* Tuesday, Oct. 9: Trash Free Lunch
* Monday-Tuesday, Oct. 8-9: Ledo’s Pizza Fundraiser. 20% of the proceeds go to Westbrook. We do this fundraiser in the fall and spring. Teachers often go too.
* Parent socials:
  + K – Friday, October 19
  + 1st – Friday, November 2
  + 2nd – Saturday, October 13
  + 3rd – Saturday, October 20
  + 4th – TBD
  + 5th – Saturday, November 3
* October 31st: Halloween Parade
* OPEN HOUSE – Oct. 8th – Connect Ed going out on Weds (tomorrow) re open house; 9:15-10:40 (first recess/lunch); sign into office.

1. Additional Issues from PTA Members

* Jess Deighton – a couple years ago, the school offered a school supply package to pre-order in the summer and it just arrived on the first day of school. This year the lists online weren’t completely accurate, so perhaps we can think about these packages for next year.
  + Taryn: one reason we no longer do these packages was because it was hard to return items and account for last minutes changes to lists, but we will consider it.
  + Nan worked on this previously – she worked with teachers in spring time; the lists were populated from what the teachers had wanted.
  + Carolyn – Target has a similar program where teachers enter a list and parents can look it up, like a registry.
  + Miss Palmer – last year the procedures changed, likely coming down from MCPS. Teachers were given a limited list from which they could choose items. For example, it didn’t include certain paper she wanted. So it was a misleading list because some teachers couldn’t put things on it they wanted. That’s where problem arises.
  + Other schools have issues that the county list doesn’t match teacher list.
  + PTA will follow up with Mrs Cox.
* Liz Krauss – asked about Community of Caring and sandwiches that we previously made during for Martha’s Table during Valentine’s Day parties.
  + Amanda Miller – the county dictated that during MLK week, there’ll be a week of service activity. There’ll likely be a grade wide effort then, as well as fall and spring service activities.
* Neil Goradia – we are caught up on payables. If anyone is still expecting a reimbursement from last year, please get in touch. We’re closing the books out next week.
  + We started this year ahead $20K+ because of the auction and carnival (which raised about $13K). We are currently at $70K cash balance. We have lots of expenses coming up. Fundraising goal is $106K.
  + Nan – can we be transparent with expenses and go back to the earlier way of sharing the spreadsheets?
    - Neil – we can have that at the next meeting.

Next PTA Meeting: Wednesday, November 7th