**Westbrook PTA Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, January 8, 2019**

1. Welcome

* Call to order at 7:43pm
* Motion to approve December minutes – seconded – passed.

2. Co-Treasurers’ Report

* Reminder: Room Parents please submit for reimbursements for class parties
  + We have a lot of money to spend on class parents committee.
  + Kerry Lawrence suggested that it’s helpful to have a hard deadline to submit for reimbursements.
    - We do have a reminder on the form about submitting for reimbursement within a certain number of days of the event, but even with that, we haven’t seen much in terms of reimbursement requests.
  + Suggestion: perhaps it’d be helpful to have at least one room parent from each classroom or the room parent coordinator attend the PTA meetings so that information is circulated.
    - It would be hard to make it a requirement for room parents to attend PTA meetings, as that could be a deterrent to volunteering.
  + Suggestion: if class dues are collected simultaneously with PTA dues and it’s difficult to collect one or the other, do we even need to collect class dues anymore? Could we do away with class dues? If at the end of year, we need cash for specific items, maybe room parents could collect dues then.
    - Historically, we spend all our money, but it’s slower on the front end of the year.
    - We did talk at the exec board meeting that there can be hurdles to submit the forms for reimbursement, so we are looking at ways to make submissions of receipts easier.
* It’s been a quiet month, and we’re in a good cash position. Since the last PTA meeting, there’s not been much action.

3. Co-Presidents’ Report

* Upcoming PTA Volunteer Opportunities
  + Aaron Harcourt, Maureen Kramer – science chairs. We need speakers for the upcoming Science Assembly. Volunteers would share information about professional opportunities in STEM-related opportunities. They do not need to be scientists; it’s more about how you use science or math in your career. The goal is to have one speaker per classroom.
  + Bingo Night – can help with that.
  + Talent Show – can help with that too.
  + For these three opportunities (Science Assembly, Bingo Night, Talent Show), we are especially looking for parents who want to start school volunteering. These one-day events are good, easy ways to get started with school volunteering. We always love new faces.
  + The Talent Show, Skate Night, and Bingo Night have volunteer parents who have older children, so it’s a good time for parents of younger children to get involved.
* Notification About PTA Tax-Deductible Financial Contributions
  + Mike will do an email merge with all your information. It’ll come to whatever email was used on Cheddar Up, and will be sent out in the next month. This will reflect the Back to School contribution.
* Carnival
  + Theme is Happily Ever After
  + Date is May 31, 2019 – after PARCC; rain date is June 7.
  + Volunteers – subcommittee chairs that are still open:
    - Concessions Volunteers – this position pre-orders the concessions and will be there on the day of the event to oversee the concessions, bottles of water, etc.
    - Prize Chair – this position involves picking out fun prizes for the various Carnival games and taking inventory; there is no day of responsibility.
    - Bake Sale Chair – this volunteer does not need to be there for every shift, but he/she secures goodies and volunteers ahead of time.
    - Signage and publicity
    - Volunteer Coordinator for Day of the Event
    - Lots of Shifts to fill
    - Jeff Senne is the Carnival Chair – Taryn has his information to give out to any interested volunteers.
  + T-Shirt Contest
    - Encourage your children to submit their artwork. It needs to be in by Feb. 8th, and it needs to be their own hand drawn work.
* PTA Cards will be in the front office. Please collect them.
  + Suggestion – bring to Bingo Night.
* Holiday Collection Wrap Up – we finished out by collecting over $7K; it was fantastic. The Staff Appreciation Committee had already allocated $1K, so we had over $8K. It was great to deliver the gifts cards to teachers and especially staff who often are overlooked.
* Thank Yous
  + Jessica Deighton & Caroline Smith – Staff Appreciation Potluck Lunch
  + Alison Goradia – American University Basketball Westbrook Day
  + FOWS – Media Center Project
  + Sacha de Lange – trash free lunch (and please note a new date for next one!)

4. Principal’s Update: Karen Cox

* On behalf of staff and herself, thank you for your overwhelming generosity for the holiday gifts. Many staff members were not accustomed to that appreciation because they don’t have their own classroom. People were very touched. This new structure that PTA did with the group collection was really nice. I saw one teacher over winter break, who had not typically received a gift of that magnitude, and it came in handy. It made a difference to staff.
* Larry’s Tree’s Plaque showed up underneath the tree. NO idea who put it there, but that was wonderful.
  + As a backstory for any new parents, Larry was a child who attended Westbrook in the late 90’s. His parents moved back to England after he attended. Larry, sadly, had a rare form of cancer and passed away. We had a dedication ceremony and planted a tree here in his memory. The tree in the front of the building, between 1st and 2nd grade door. During the school’s renovation, the plaque was moved. At some point, Larry’s dad contacted Mrs. Cox and saw that plaque was missing, so we put a call out to the community to track down this plaque. Larry’s dad again called in December, and he was planning to come back in April to do a rededication with a new plaque. Mrs. Cox agreed to this plan, and then the very next day the plaque reappeared. The father was overwhelmed, and he still may come back in April to do something.
* We have been working on traffic and parking issues. We are working on cluster security with MCPD, and they’ll do a survey. There seem to be some signs missing on nearby streets about parking and traffic restrictions by the school. The no left turn sign is clear. Mrs. Cox is trying to get outside at pickup to help direct traffic. Mrs. Cox spoke to bus drivers, and they explained if they go all the way around to come to the front of the school, the busses sometimes can’t get around the corner because of illegally parked cars, so they sometimes must wait 10-15 minutes. We are hoping to get someone stationed outside in morning and afternoon to incentive proper traffic rules.

5. Teacher Liaison Reports: Nina Pattakos/Kim O’Connell

* K – they wrote personal narratives inspired by Knuffle Bunny; they planted beans and studied the life cycle of plants, soon they’ll study the life cycles of beetles.
* 1st
* 2nd – they’re reading fables in literature and folk tales; in writing, they’ve worked on ecosystems books; in math, they’re solving 2 digit equations with money; in science, they’re studying land forms geography
* 3rd – they’re working on a writing project that researches technology and how it has changed over time; on Thursday and Friday of this week, they’ll go to Imagination Stage for Cinderella to wrap up their unit on plays; in science, they’re building houses and testing with extreme weather events.
* 4th
* 5th – they’re doing inquiry project about civil rights; they’re learning about climate change and engaging in debates about climate change; Westland will be visiting about course selection and will answer questions; Auditions for Seussical will be on Tuesday
* Media center is beautiful. Everyone loves it; we started the maker space today.
* Miss Pickle: MLK Jr. week of community service is coming up. Each grade has a project. Today an email was sent out to each to grade level to coordinate the projects, and then we will send dates/times to parents. The projects by grade are as follows:
  + K – bookmarks
  + 1 & 2 – sandwiches
  + 3 – notes for Bethesda Cares
  + 5 – dog pull toys for Bethesda Humane Society and mural for SOME
  + SOME will come and speak to grades 3-5 at end of month.
  + We’ll do a Kindness Challenge between MLK Day and Valentine’s Day – they children will write one kind act they did each day on their calendars and turn it in on Valentine’s Day and celebrate.
* Makers space may need supplies; stay tuned for email.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

* We already covered Carnival
* Building & Grounds Qs:
  + 1st q: after school parents have asked if we can do a “ball call.” Amass a bunch of balls and stow them somewhere that kids can use after school?
    - Kerry: when her oldest was in K, there was a sign-up sheet where parents just volunteered. But many balls disappeared quickly.
    - How to keep them there? Could we get a plastic mesh bin?
    - Refill them seasonally, assuming they’d walk away?
  + 2nd Q: Can we do stencils of “math facts” on stairs. This is done at Garrett Park Elementary. Can we put them on the inside (or outside) stairs?
    - Mrs. Cox – let’s talk about it.
  + 3rd: How to get electronic sign for outside? Seven Locks; Bradley Hills have fancier signs.
    - Mrs. Cox – that’s a funding issue and facilities project. If it’s funded, this shouldn’t be a problem. But they’re very expensive – more like a FOWS project – may be like $40K if a large one. Smaller one may be more like $10K. We can start exploring it.
* Science Committee –Science Fair movie was a moderate success. We had 15 students and parents/caregivers, so for a last-minute event, it was good turnout. The movie is now available On Demand if anyone wants to see it. It’s a good movie.

6. Upcoming Events

* Sunday, Jan. 13-Friday, Jan. 18 – Galleyfoods.com giveback nights
* Tuesday, Jan 15 – trash free lunch
* Friday, Jan. 18 – STEM Day, Classroom Speakers
* Monday, Jan. 21 – MLK Jr. Day, No School
* Friday, Jan. 25 – Early Release Day
* Monday, Jan. 28 – Professional Day for Teachers, No School
* Tuesday, Jan. 29 – Science Assembly
* Sunday, Feb. 10 – Bingo Night
* Friday, Feb. 22 – Talent Show

7. Additional Issues from PTA Members

* Maybe this belongs in the Building & Grounds committee: has anyone floated the idea to update or repaint the blue structure on the Kindergarten playground that’s rusted?
  + It’s not just paint; it’s a plastic coating
  + Mrs. Cox – we can have the county come out because this falls under a safety concern. They may replace or give a budget to replace it. She’ll look into it.
  + Could be under warranty. Kerry Lawrence may have warranty information in a FOWS file.
* Mural outside Media Center was painted by Jim Hicks (5th grade parent), who donated his time. He also did the gym mural and last year’s 5th grade class gift, soon to be hung. He’s been generous. Big thank you to him.

Next PTA Meeting: Tuesday, February 5th

Adjourned: 8:27pm