

Westbrook PTA Meeting  
Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015

1. Meeting called to order at 7:31 p.m.

2. Approval of minutes from September 1, 2015 meeting: Erika Newell

Minutes were approved and entered into the record.

3. Treasurer's Report: Susan Higgins

Fundraising efforts were very successful this year with a total of 86% of Westbrook families participating. Thank you to all who joined and contributed to the PTA. Membership cards and the family directory will be distributed in October. Money has been allocated to classes. Room parents will soon know how much they have to spend on classroom parties.

4. Co-President's Report: Leyla Kenny and Orly Isaacson

- A. PTA Fundraising Update: THANK YOU Rachel Hirschberg and Caroline Swann and ENTIRE Westbrook community for your generosity.
- B. The classes with the highest percentage participation are: 1. Quinn  
2. Kim 3.Chang
- C. Open Chair Slots: We are still seeking a Co-VP, Co-Building and Grounds, NAACP representative. Please get in touch if you are interested!
- D. Halloween is coming, which entails a parade and classroom parties on the afternoon of Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. The parade begins at 1:50 (more info to come on the route of parade and where parents can gather). Classroom parties begin at 2:20.
- E. 5th grade potluck teacher luncheon will be on October 14<sup>th</sup>. (The Staff Appreciation Committee hosts a monthly luncheon for teachers). All slots are filled for the potluck BBQ this month.
- F. Finally, illegal parking. A plea from the PTA: Please be mindful of the parking laws on Allan Terrace. Led to a discussion of how we can better communicate the importance of a safe drop off and pick

up? Members suggest bringing in a police officer to ticket illegally parked cars, which is in the works. Other suggestions include more signage, cones, balloons on the signs.

## 5. Principal Update – Jennifer Lane

- A. Parking – Continues to be an ongoing frustration. Ms. Lane has reached out to Officer Janney who has assured her he will come at dismissal to perform a safety study with her. He may also come to Allan Terrace to write tickets to illegally parked cars. Ms. Lane explained that technically she has no jurisdiction on the streets, but if it's unsafe and if the busses have difficulty passing up the street, this remains a concern. A member of the audience cited that cars also block residents driveways during pick up.
- B. Great start for school year. Despite the previous presentation on bullying, Ms. Lane says that she has never worked among so many kind children and adults. Our school improvement plan continues, including Responsive Classroom, as well as small group instruction in math and the math workshop in Kindergarten, which helps strong students advance to the next level and struggling students to make the progress they need to make.
- C. Regarding class sizes, our grade level classes are still smaller than county guidelines. We would all like for the classes to be at 20. However Ms. Lane cited that the reality is that Montgomery County Schools budget issues will persist. This directly affects our staffing and our class sizes. What can we do about it? Advocate to the Board of Ed, the County Counsel, our elected officials, as we get ready to move into budget cycle. Lane says, “Now is the time. Being frank: Montgomery County has a quickly changing demographic. They do not look at us as a needy community when they look to allocate resources. The focus schools have more students in poverty, and to be honest, probably need more support. Make yourself heard however you wish.” Ms. Lane’s main concern is that we have the teachers that we need.
- E. On that note, teachers are having babies! We had 4 pregnant teachers, of which Mrs. Child's already delivered. Mrs. Child’s long-term substitute was lined up for end of October. But with the unexpected arrival, she should be in place by beginning of next week. (Therefore, there will be no open house for Mrs. Child's class,

as it could potentially be the 1st or 2nd day on her job. We don't want to do that to her.) But she will be happy to set up another time for an open house so parents may visit. Trust we are doing the best we can to get info out.

- F. We are having a volunteer training on Friday. Reading or math training has been put together for this by our specialists. If you can give one day a week or one day a month, we will assign you to a place where we need your support, not necessarily your child's room. There will be a math drop-in training during open house, as well.

A question from the audience: How do we get our long-term subs? We posted on MCPS job site.

A question from the audience regarding volunteering. Will there no longer be sign ups from teachers? There will still be an opportunity to be in your child's classroom. But know that if we need you somewhere more, we would like to put you there, and we may ask you if you are willing to do this.

Question from the audience: What's the window of time for reaching out to the Board of Ed on the budget issue? Mid-nov to early March. You can use email, the more an elected official hears from people, the more they will do. PTA will send out info soon with talking points to use. The Board of Ed makes the budget decisions, and we are the ones who elect them. They listen to their constituents. It can really make a difference to reach out to them.

Question from the audience: Can we do what they do in DCPS and raise money for staff allocations? In MCPS, no money may be fundraised for staff allocation. The rule is not likely to change. Equity issue from school systems view. Another member advised that the County Counsel recently accused the Board of Ed of misusing funds. The Board of Ed has just issued a big defense.

6. Teacher Liaison Report: Colleen Dahlem

- A. Reminder that Manna food drive sign up is going on. Please send in non-perishables from now until the 30th.
- B. Grade Updates

7. Committee Reports

- A. BCC Cluster Update -- Maureen Kramer.

Capital funds for the new middle school have been secured for its opening fall 2017 in Kensington. We are paying close attention to see which elementary schools will feed into the new school. The capital for the high school addition was secured, but has been pushed back. This addition will include 24 new classrooms. BCC is currently 350 over capacity. We are also paying attention to how the Westbard development and the new residential developments by Rock Creek Forest will affect our cluster in the future.

- B. Box tops – 1<sup>st</sup> deadline is October 28<sup>th</sup>
- C. Science Committee – National Chemistry Week presentations – October 21<sup>st</sup>

This week we have two AU scientists coming to do activities with students during recess. Science Committee Chair Laura Kolton will need volunteers at recess to help out with that. Stay tuned if you'd like to help out.

- D. Fall Clean-up Day – November 7<sup>th</sup>
- E. Restaurant promotions – Ledo Pizza last week was a success; 11/22 is Chipotle night
- F. Reminder tomorrow is walk to school day.
- G. Reminder that you don't have to wait for the hard copy of the directory. You can access the digital version. There's an App for that.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33.

#### Upcoming Westbrook Activities/Dates

October 7<sup>th</sup> – National Walk to School Day  
October 9<sup>th</sup> – Volunteer Training, 9:30am in Fireplace Room  
October 14<sup>th</sup> – 5th Grade Parent Potluck  
October 16<sup>th</sup> – NO SCHOOL  
October 21<sup>st</sup> – National Chemistry Week Activity (All Grades – Recess)  
October 23<sup>rd</sup> – Principal Parent Coffee, 9:20am  
October 30<sup>th</sup> – Halloween Class Parties

## **November 2015**

November 2<sup>nd</sup> – NO SCHOOL

November 5<sup>th</sup> – Principal Parent Coffee, 9:20am

November 7<sup>th</sup> – Westbrook Fall Clean-up day, 9am – 12pm

November 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> – Book Fair (including Book Drive for Viers Mill ES)

November 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> – Teacher Conferences – EARLY RELEASE DAYS

November 18<sup>th</sup> – Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffee

November 22<sup>nd</sup> – Chipotle Dinner Night

November 25<sup>th</sup> – Thanksgiving Pie Day for teachers/staff – EARLY RELEASE DAY

## **December 2015**

December 1<sup>st</sup> – PTA meeting, 7:30pm (Media Center)

December 9<sup>th</sup> – Staff Appreciation Luncheon hosted by 4th Grade Parents

December 21<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Winter Chorus Concert (APR)

December 22<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Winter Chorus Concert (APR)

December 24<sup>th</sup> – January 1<sup>st</sup> – Winter Break

All Month – Coat Drive for Viers Mill ES