

## Bishop PTO meeting notes

May 30, 2012

Attending: Mary Ellen Aronow, Brecky Peabody, PTO co-presidents and approximately 12 parent PTO members. Justine Vivieros, teacher representative to the PTO. Mr. McAneny was not able to attend this evening.

Approval of minutes: (A. Bonardi) Minutes were presented as being on the PTO website. No questions or comments and minutes were approved by members.

President's report (Mary Ellen Aronow and Brecky Peabody):

- Seeking nominations for Jr. Co-president, Senior and Jr. Co-treasurers, and Recording Secretary. Some nominations have been received. In the event that there are more than one nominee – an e-mail ballot will be sent out June 7-8.
- A question from the floor: Is there a document that describes each position? A: Not really. The basic tasks are outlined in the call for nominations, but there is generally a tradition of hand-off from the current officer to the person volunteering for the next year. Current officers would be happy to speak to anybody interested in the position. As a volunteer position, there are basic duties and expectations, but these can be discussed and be made flexible to accommodate people's needs.
- Budget planning for next year – a preliminary plan has been drafted and will be completed in advance of the next PTO meeting June 13<sup>th</sup>. The June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting will be the place to vote on budget for the 2012-2012 year.
- Bear Bucks were a successful initiative this year and will be continued next year as an incentive to contributing to the annual fund and as a way to provide some in-school currency for kids to use for PTO-sponsored events.
- Annual Report: Brecky is pulling together a ~ 10 page booklet to describe the activities supported by the PTO this year. It will go home with students on the last day of school.
- Teacher Appreciation Week: June 11<sup>th</sup>. No TA Coordinator. No specific plans have been developed to date.

Art and Culture Night will be May 31<sup>st</sup> at Bishop. Come participate in art projects, view the permanent art created by each grade, see booths from many different countries, a cultural fashion show, and a talent show.

Field day will be held Friday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. Parent volunteers are welcome.

Enrichment update (Alison Vaishnaw):

Since the last meeting, Bay Colony Educators came and presented to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, the Museum of Science brought the States of Matter presentation to 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 1<sup>st</sup> grade had the Habitat Soil program.

Next Tuesday (6/5/12), the storyteller Odds Bodkin will be coming to the school with his “Golden Rule” presentation. The third grade play: ‘Character Matters’ will happen on June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Theater Enrichment and The Bishop Play:

The whole-school theme for next year’s in-school cultural enrichment will be theater. Alison Vaishnav received notice that the Arlington Education Foundation (AEF) will fund the grant she wrote to support in-school theater enrichment for next year. A planning meeting for after-school parent cooperative theater production will be held June 5<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 at Bishop.

Treasurer’s report (Catherine Hoffman):

- Catherine presented the most recent budget report at the meeting. Revenues from Bear Fair were higher than anticipated – still waiting on some silent auction funds and to clear expenses to get final number for net. revenue.
- Due to the incredible fundraising at the Bishop Fair, there will be a budget surplus this year of over \$20K. Plans are underway regarding how best to use these funds at Bishop.
- With Thompson 5<sup>th</sup> graders, the numbers of families attending seemed to be higher. PTO members suggested setting aside some funds to offer to Thompson PTO once the school is rebuilt as a ‘school-warming’ gift.

Bishop Fair Update:

- This was a very successful community event, and we broke all records for fundraising. Special thanks to Barbary Dumery for spearheading this and for her superb organization. Committee chairs as well as grade level, teachers, and parent volunteers helped to make this a great event.
- Teacher contributions of ‘teacher events’ were very popular and raised over \$1,700 in the silent auction
- If any community members have ideas for next year, please contact Barbary Dumery or Amy Speare.

Fundraising update (Ann Gerriets):

The coffee fundraiser has been launched, with orders due on Friday, June 1 for delivery to school before the end of the year. Families can order anytime on the web site and have coffee delivered to their home or workplace.

Planning for next year:

- There are several areas being considered and will be developed into budget for vote. Key areas include Technology (from providing funds to help with the District’s installation of wireless at

Bishop to purchasing hardware to use once wireless is installed), Drama/theater start up funds, grants for teachers, grants for the library.

- Arlington school district currently polling schools to find out how much the PTOs have to put towards wireless in the schools. Mr. McAneny working closely with the technology group towards getting wireless internet access – once that is in place it opens up access to a wide range of useful technologies.
- Mr. McAneny also working towards supporting teachers and school staff (and parents) to do more grant-writing.
- Teacher development funds in the budget (\$400) have not been used. Discussed reasons that teachers don't apply for this – not wanting to limit opportunities for other teachers. These funds could be topic specific (e.g. support a grade-level team to get training) or for a specific teacher who would like to pursue extra training. Discussion of increasing this line in the budget to support teachers who may request PTO funds to offset the cost of graduate credits or other courses. These would need to be approved with input from school principal.

#### PTO Surveys to Parents and Teachers.

A survey was sent to the Bishop Community (Parent Survey) and to teachers (Teacher Survey) to get feedback on fundraising and community events this year, and to help plan for next year.

- Mary Ellen shared highlights of the results during the meeting
  - Parent Survey: 85 responses received (about 1/3 of families at Bishop)., including suggestion to reduce the number of spirit days, and ranking of interest in various types of fundraising. Some favorite events included: Pumpkin Sale, Movies and Games Night, Craft Fair, Walkathon / 5K - Talent Show / Art Night , Chili Cookoff / Bingo Night
    - Catherine Hoffman will find out about the school-supply pre-order arrangement her sister's school has, as this is an area parents are interested in and has proven successful.
    - Spirit Committee planning a pre-order arrangement for spirit items next year including PJ pants, hoodies.
  - Teacher Survey: great response rate (~90%). Teachers expressed desire to have input in choosing room parents

#### Changes to Room parent programs:

Several changes were discussed

Proposal #1: Proposal to expand the PTO budget to include classroom slush funds, approximately \$400 per classroom. Discussion raised concerns re the amount per classroom (should it be amount per student?). Also, there was concern parents may not see the direct connection between the annual fund contribution and the classroom slush fund. This would likely change how teachers get supplies for their individual classrooms and require more coordination at the PTO level. This proposal was tabled and no vote take at the meeting because there is some more input needed from teachers . Justine Vivieros

suggested getting more information from teachers and Mrs. Gonsalves regarding the ordering of supplies.

Proposal #2: Room parents will be asked to 'sponsor' a PTO/School event. Each grade will be given a particular PTO event and that grade will be asked (first) to coordinate and supply volunteers to help run the event. This proposal was passed by **unanimous vote** of those present at the PTO meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50pm!

Notes by Alixe Bonardi and Mary Ellen Aronow.