



**Ben W. Murch Home and School Association
General Meeting Minutes**

November 12, 2024, 7-pm

Participants: Allison Fitzsimmons (Vice President), Deneb Vasquez (Assistant Treasurer), Rebeca Fiet (VP Development), Hayley Love (VP Family Support), Abigail Shawn (VP Communications), Sasha Taskier (Staff Appreciation), Mrs. Hagen (Teacher Rep), AP Hawkins (Asst. Principal), Radhika Mohan (VP Community Engagement), Tianni (Secretary), Hilary Zwerdling (Treasurer)

Principal updates:

Report cards are coming Nov. 22nd.

Strong Start Program coming up, a monthly event to bring the school together, partnering with classrooms, wishing well, modeling what we want to see in the classroom.

Timely arrival to school is critical - 8:45am promptly!

The breakfast program is going smoothly, 205 meals/day.

We need volunteers for Nov 21st PD day; grades K-2 need help supervising. This year's program is enhancing literacy skills. The Kids will do thank you notes. Parents will help supervise, 2.5hrs: How many parents are needed? Do parent volunteers need to be background checked? This info must be shared asap, also with room parents.

DeAndre Pettus - viewing is at 10:30am Friday, service at 11am. Flowers from Murch will be there. Memorial at the school will be held in the spring. Staff is working with family to figure out the best time. A tree will be planted at Murch in his honor. There is a gofundme, but Murch is not going to advertise it. Mr. C is working with the grandmother on how best we can support the family, especially the two sisters.

Pre-K shade update - estimates are in, approx \$8500. We need a structural engineer to review the installation plans so as not to interfere with waterproofing over the cafeteria.

Musical was announced - James and the Giant Peach, 4th & 5th graders will be involved. It will be held at UDC.

Book Fair - 10-12 December, Jessica Thorn is POC, Rachel Ginzberg

International Night - Have been trying to get in touch with Arrianne who offered to plan; haven't reached her, so it's on hold for now.

Teacher lunches - preference has been stated to not have the remaining ones on PD days, would prefer a day after a long weekend or something of that sort.

We need new ideas for a holiday event for staff & teachers - possibly happy hour after school; breakfast or lunch is probably preferred and better bang for the buck; breakfast seems to be preferred.

Coordination with room parents for holiday gifts - Teachers are getting very different amounts; is it possible to do one fund to collect and distribute evenly among teachers/special staff versus by class? Is it possible to distribute equitably among each group, teacher, subs, assistants, staff, etc? As our demographic is shifting in the school, this might be a good time to review this effort.

Affinity groups - Specifically after DeAndre's passing, looking at possibly having minority groups that kids can meet together (black students, neurodiverse, LGBTQ, etc.). LSAT is already exploring equity in the school; Mr. C is working on the Parent Engagement Team (PET). Not sure how much we (HSA) want to take on the effort; maybe let these other avenues develop first. What are we solving for? What's the goal? Do we fund these groups? Cassie is on LSAT and the PET. Principal Hawkins says there is a meeting tomorrow with the PET. There was a needs assessment done a while ago: Per AP Hawkins, some things that came up were that parents were happy with the education but didn't want to be involved for whatever reason. How do we change that and make a more inclusive environment? Mr. Hawkins wants to have these PET meetings and see what is wanted or needed before HSA puts more effort behind it. It can be as simple as having coffee on the playground for certain groups of parents/kids to meet with their community within Murch.

Parent Engagement Team - Will be comprised of 10-12 parents. What's the goal? AP Hawkins is meeting w/them 11/13.

SPED Classes - Hayley met with Mrs. Hairston about the many various needs of the Special Education students/classes. DCPS is grouping them together, which isn't great. Mrs. Hairston is working with city level officials. Students are being overidentified on the early assessment forms, so more kids are getting placed in these classes w/o staff/resources. SPED classes don't have room parents - could a classroom adopt one of these classes? She said they need snacks! Can

a portion of the budget go to snacks or gift cards or a portion of the school food pantry for them? Specific asks going into budget season are helpful. Abigail will check if SPED classes want outside parents being a room parent; it seemed they didn't want an outside parent doing it, one more person/thing to manage.

Budgets have been broken down out the of overall budget. Let Hilary know if anything looks off.

4th-5th grade enrichment - invite only, who is the parent poc???

Newspaper project meetings every Friday, Alyssa Rosenberg conducting interviews.

Afterschool program update:

Chess is going great. Amore had some initial start-up issues but seems to have smoothed out. Some parents have said the quality of Amore teachers is not what was expected, so please keep Matt and Allison updated with feedback. HSA offered \$1000 in scholarships toward Amore.

Get all HSA passwords in a google drive. We want a free business account so we don't lose accounts in turnover.

SOS update - Let's push to the end of December. Contest is ending soon, winner will be drawn, prize is a dance party. Lets get QR codes out for people to donate to SOS campaign on flyers that go home, flyers posted to doors/playground, IG post, QR code everywhere.

Festival of Lights - what is replacing it?

Let's get a grandparents enrollment list going for contact info! The grandparents want to help, let's get them involved!

Fall Fair - spent less money, raised less money. Saved a little bit on inflatables, spent more on games. Concessions got sold for the wrong amounts. Ran out of hot dog buns so ended sales early - all hot dog supplies were donated so didn't lose anything there but lost opportunity to make more money. Get rid of coffee, it's always a pain. Hot cocoa was still popular though. Overall everyone had a great time!!!

Auction - Scheduled for March 29, 2025. GiftSmart, the auction platform we've been using, ended the previous program we used for \$2400, so we have to upgrade. We want to start a Murch Fun Run to raise money. Matthew Harkins expressed interest in running it.

Hayley has volunteers lined up for monthly tours and study materials out to prepare. Mrs. Hagen said SPED teachers asked monthly tours to not come by their classrooms as it's too disruptive for their students.