



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

February 11, 2025, 7-8:45pm (virtual)

Participants: Allison Fitzsimmons (Vice President), Rebeca Fiet (VP Development), Hayley Love (VP Family Support), Abigail Shawn (VP Communications), Sasha Taskier (Staff Appreciation), Mr. C (Principal), Radhika Mohan (VP Community Engagement), Tianni (Secretary), Abby Bluestone (VP Communications), Hilary Zwerdling (Treasurer), Kimi Wetterauer (past prez), Victoria Lynch (Parent), Emily Blake (LSAT), Lee Fenner (Auction Committee), Deneb Vasquez

Principal updates:

First budget meeting today - did not get allocation fulfilled yet, looking closely at waste, money spent that shouldn't be, for ex. A substitute teacher who is hired for a day; accountability for spending; changing levels for flexibility in spending but probably won't affect, affects more title I schools, special programs, etc. Mr. C expects it to be a quick turnaround on budget this year, maybe a week; meeting with LSAT next week; circulating a survey on community feelings toward budget. (Good news, the survey has now been translated into two languages.) Also circulating a report card from the parent engagement group. We truly want to understand how we as a school are doing for including families. What is driving success in our school, how it fits in our budget. Perception is everyone will take a hit, we'll see.

Ali heard there is so much more opportunity at Lafayette. Mr. C responded they have about 300 more students than we do, they are afforded something different due to that. Ali asked what the number of students is where DCPS budget tips to afford the next level.

Victoria Lynch asked for more info on whether substitute teachers will actually be affected. Is it possible to bill a sub as something else, a floating aide for example. Mr. C said if we did that, they want them to put it in the budget for \$42k.

Co-President Update

Non-profit partnership - HSA gives about 1% of budget to a non-profit. Last year we gave it to To Be Well Feed. Suggestions for where to send it this year? Might send out a survey. People don't know about this; we want to get it out to the community.

Matt & Ali talked about holding a HSA townhall to get more people involved, open up ideas.

Maybe make the meeting hybrid, in person and virtual. Maybe March after the budget is out.

Offer childcare! Hilary said we do still have budget for child care.

Afterschool program update - Amore, karate & chess up & running. Chess & karate going well, Amore a few bumps but ok. Hailey asked if the programs offer scholarships. Ali said they do, and they're being used and HSA are covering any other students who request assistance. Mr. C was asked if other schools are using vouchers for after school programs - he said he does not know of them being used in his cluster. Would it be helpful to put together/show the money we spend each year funding after school programming for children in need. Mr. C will need to look into what the tipping point would be to get more funding for kids in need; he noted it is a very small pot of money, especially for 114 schools. Murch has applied for extra funding 4 times out of the last ten years and never been awarded it. Mr. C said it is more of a policy discussion to decide who or what qualifies as being in need and where / how we (HSA) should allot our dollars. Wonders wants parents to pay directly to them, will not accept funds from HSA - Hailey asked why this is, Ali said she doesn't know but that is what Mrs. Miller said. Kaizen Karate was very generous with karate scholarships and expressed interest in offering afterschool care at Murch. Rebeca suggested that we pose it as a disservice to the kids versus a burden to us - the kids don't have the resources they need versus we don't want to pay for them. Hilary said the budget she circulated breaks down funding available, how it's being spent, etc. Kimi said January 15th, check your email (for that budget), or it can be circulated again.

Ali asked Mrs. Hagan & Mr. C if teachers want to offer Murch Plus again. They think so and agreed to talk further about it. Space and building usage is an issue. Mr. C told Ali to send a calendar invite when Matt is back. Kimi asked how tutoring is being paid for; Mr. C said it's part of the budget.

Abbi had a room parent check in end of January; seemed generally happy with comms from HSA and comms from Amy Turner (lead room parent). Laura Vendetta is the new social media assistant. We still need help with the website - get in touch with Abbi.

SOS - We came in just under goal; some matching and monthly gifts are still trickling in. Hilary's numbers are what is reconciled in the system, not what was committed. Thank you cards have historically been mailed, and we'd like to do a writing party to get us all.

Auction update - Auction fix go on sale this week. Sponsorships & donations are trickling in. Committee still needs help - please help. They could use help soliciting for donation items. Lee or Rebeca could send a list of businesses they would like to solicit. Using GiftSmart now, very easy to have businesses sign up. The previous system we were losing people sometimes

because the system was a little janky. We should get SOS, Fall Fair, all the things on GiftSmart. There is an option to have the donor cover fees.

Murch Miler - Janney permits theirs; Mann does not. Janney spent \$27k last year for permitting. Do we go without permits?

Sasha is organizing a Valentine's bagel brunch Thursday and is starting a teacher appreciation group.

Murch Musical is underway with rehearsing; everything set with UDC. There has historically been a presentation of the play at the school after the big show, but since it will be off site this year we are looking for someone who has videography capability, let Mrs. Chisum and Alice Berkfield Jones.

Radhika connected the musical with Anne for food with Italian Pizza Kitchen.

International Night - date identified, Ariana is leading it.

Radhika update on tree mulching went well. Avalon Movie was packed.

Hailey, Family Support -

Janitorial supplies - kids are saying there is no soap in bathrooms; germs are rampant. What can we/should we do about this. Mr. C said he is texting Mary now to work with the custodians to keep them filled.

Community Helper Awards - Mr. Joe, crossing guard for example; Mr. Issac - the new crossing guard at Nebraska & Reno is great; Radhika saw a big truck trying to turn onto Davenport during drop-off, the truck driver was very nasty and got heated with some parents. One of our ANC members had pushed DDOT to get a crossing guard at Reno & Davenport and Connecticut & Davenport; suggested having police presence in the interim until a guard could be placed. ANC member is Claudette David.

Do other people get weekly emails from Sprout school supplies? Is this something we want to get involved in? Mrs. Hagan will ask the teachers if this is something they would be interested in. Mr. C and Mrs. Hagan said they've used it at other school with great success. Mrs. Hagan said one of the schools used it as a fundraiser.

Victoria asked how class ratios will be identified for next year, when that info goes out, do parents have a say. Ali said that is more of an LSAT item and invited Emily to comment. Budget and class sizes are expected to stay where they are now. It will of course be based on budget which will be out soon. A survey will be going out in the next HSA newsblast and in student

report cards to solicit where parents see a need in support staff. Tell all your Murch parent friends to fill it out; join future LSAT meetings