



Ben W. Murch Home and School Association
General Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2025, 7-8:30pm

Participants: Matt Evans (co-prez), Allison Fitzsimmons (co-prez), Rebeca Fiet (VP Development), Hayley Love (VP Family Support), Abigail Shawn (VP Communications), Sasha Taskier (VP Staff Appreciation), Mr. C (Principal), Radhika Mohan (VP Community Engagement), Tianni (Secretary), Abby Bluestone (VP Communications), Lee Fenner (Auction Committee), Deneb Vasquez (Assistant Treasurer), Khine Thazin Soe (1st Grade mom), Kristen (3rd grade mom, Fall Fair)

Principal updates:

Budget - budget looks great. Gov supposedly looking for \$1.8b reduction in school budgets mid-year, so we'll keep an eye on that. Next yera's budget - gained additional dollars, added 4-5 staff positions, a few retirements coming, one known leaving for another job; have created a few new positions - added a 5th specials teacher so specials teacher get a slight reduction in resets per day. Dumped most of the budget into personnel; some into custodial and school supplies. Starting swimming unit for 3rd grade. Keeping biking unit for 2nd grade. Could have up to 9-11 new personnel next year.

Staffing Plan for next year - improvement / enhancement on teacher skills, tier I instruction for students, reduce number of kids that get to tier II (intervention). When you send a kid to a specialist you give up the ability to teach that child. Exit tickets given at the end of a lesson to see what the kids understood in the instruction. We'll be sharing the staffing plan after the mayor approved budgets. There will be a sneak-peak for parents to see what's coming up with 3-5y staffing plan.

Hayley asked why big changes now...? If you look at the data over the past 14 years, there is always 15-20% of students who struggle. We have to try to optimize and meet these childrens' needs. We know what's working and what's not. Time to implement it and get higher proficiency in math and ELA for more students.

There is a lot of anxiety in general right now, esp with people losing jobs. Then add a lot of big change at school. Being mindful of high anxiety levels and high levels of need right now.

Ludlow Taylor, Penelope Miler, largest concentration of federal employees, will people stay in private school, move to public schools, move somewhere else to go to public schools. All of this could impact our outlook for coming years. Mr. C has multiple models to forecast for possible changes.

Mrs. Miller is 100% counselor with the addition of a 6th specials teacher. She will still be in classrooms but not as much and will be able to provide more services when needed.

Co-President Update

Non-profit partnership must select who will receive - To Be Well Fed (run by a Murch family) (received it last year) or DC Food Project. Took a vote and decided to split between the two.

Town hall - What are concerns? What do people want to see? What's working and not? Hillary sent out in the budget that there is money still sitting in some places that could/should be re-alloted/better used. Esp with so many layoffs this year, we should be more conscious of donation asks, events, offerings, scholarships, etc. Radhika is happy to help set up a town hall so we can get parents involved and engaged. Would be great to acknowledge to our Murch community how much change has happened in the past few months, where we stand, hear concerns, offer support. Maybe do a fully virtual town hall and a fully in-person. Radhika has connections to set up virtual. We have 60-70 families that are non-English speaking families. Should we have translators?

We have 15 teachers for Murch Plus.

Matt to Mrs. Hagan - apparently there was a request for classroom supplies. Matt said to put it on the portal. Is it working? For some reason pre-K did not have a supply list request at the beginning of the year, and now there is need. Hayley asked why they didn't have a supply list. Mr. C said it was a decision to not have a supply list but he couldn't remember what it was. Pre-k departed at some point from sending out supply lists like the other grades, and they should decide if that works for them. But it seems at the beginning of the year people are more inclined to stock up on school supplies and so might be easier to stock up then. Maybe people are tapped out on giving by mid-year. Mr. C said there used to be an evening orientation that was really popular bc most people are excited to learn what's going on at the school

Eliminated start-up funds this year. Abby said there was actually a pre-K supply list on the newsletter and website; in parent resources; parent handbook. The teacher who expressed a need did not submit their list.

Abby was unable to attend the lip sync - please send photos!!!

Auction update

Sold 209 tix so far. Last year at this time had sold 80-some. Discussion on whether to have brackets - decision is to yes, have them.

GiftSmart is being removed from the auction budget bc it is now applying to so many other things. Must write up something to have it changed in the budget.

Murch Miler - Rebeka checked on route if it needed to be permitted, and it does and is too much.

Sasha - Was the budget for teacher appreciation altered? No. But the budget for staff lunches was. Breakfast is a third the cost of lunch, so Sasha has done more breakfasts than lunches. Breakfast is \$500 for the whole staff whereas lunch is about \$1500. Get with Amy Turner to find out what is being done by room parents to not overlap. Teacher Appreciation Week is first week of May, 5-9th.

Murch Musical

Radhika - coffee on the playground will start up next month. Radhika is out of budget. Musical 15th-16th. Anne reached out to IPK to do a fundraiser. They said they could not support it. So we are just planning on going to IPK.

Arianna is working on international night.

Hailey, Family Support - Mrs. Kumu was asked by Mrs. Stevens to tutor a student. She provided five sessions and then found out she could not be paid for that service. Can we give her funds like we do for Murch Plus? Mr. C said yes. Matt will work on that. Budget for tutoring is running low. Volunteer tutoring is always welcome.

Matt's to-do list: Post new bylaws, Connections