



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

February 3, 2026, 7pm Virtual

Participants: Allison Fitzsimmons (Co-Prez), Leigh Fenner (Co-Prez), Sarah Krauss (Asst Treasurer, Auction Chair), Abigail Shawn (VP Communications), Rebeca Fiet (VP Development), Tianni Craig (Secretary), Kristin Gifford (Treasurer), Hayley Love (VP Family Support), Sasha Taskier, Chris Cebzynski, Betsy Hagan, Radhika Mohan (VP Community Engagement), Tierra Patterson (Chancellor's Office, Central Services Family Engagement), Kanval Adnan (Chancellor's Office, Parent Advisory Board), Allen Watke (Pre-k mom)

Tierra Patterson presenting obo Chancellor's office: Trying to update structure and toolkit for parent organizations. Asking if there is anything that Murch would like to see in a tool kit for engagement practices. Hayley asked if we could get more specific examples, things that might be offered, etc. Tierra said previous complaints are that the tools are outdated, don't aid in communication, etc. Hayley asked if Tierra can please send us a hardcopy or something more detailed we can review.

Here is the [2017 Parent Organization Guidance](#)

- *What kind of support does your organization need from DCPS?*
- *What does transition look like year to year for your group?*
- *How and when is your organization's contact information updated?*

Feel free to share any suggestions or any specific parent organization needs, please reach out to oea.info@k12.dc.gov.

https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/Steps%20for%20Creating%20a%20Parent%20Organization_0.pdf

Mr. C update - The snow is still an issue. We're still concerned about liability with the ice and snow, so there is still no outdoor recess or outdoor dismissal. Very busy with traffic control in front of school. Leigh mentioned there was a lot of snow sliding off the roof around the playground. Met with Christina Esche this morning. She and others are planning a curriculum night. The kids are helping prepare bookmarks that will be handed out at curriculum night.

Rebeca -

Sarah Krauss, Auction Update - We're still looking for things to auction off. Wine Cellar is different this year - it is for ticket purchase this year rather than to bring a bottle. Then we will work with a liquor store to get better choices than previous years. Rebeca asked Sarah if we can get the caterer's logo to advertise to draw attention. Abbi asked if the sponsor logos can be provided for the website and newsletter as well. Auction ticket flash sale has been extended to Sunday 2/8. Abi will make sure it's in the newsletter.

Radhika - Tree Mulching was cancelled due to rain.
Movie Day at Avalon had technical issues, and the movie started late.

Abbi - There was another issue with the website, but it is fixed again. Elizabeth Metzler will get back to Abbi soon about the website redesign.

Kristin - Posted the most recent financials to basecamp. The SOS Campaign hit budget and is a little over. Auction has hit around \$8k. Two 1099s are filed. Requirements for W9 - We cannot pay anyone without a W9. Posted a flow chart to basecamp. W9s are required for services, not merchandise. If we are contracting a service we must get a W9 from the vendor and supply it to Kristin. If in doubt, it's always best to get a W9, or ask Kristin!

Leigh, Black History Month - Budget was emailed to Dr. Branch. We requested a proposal from the Black History Committee. We have not heard anything further. Mrs. Hagan will follow up with Dr. Branch and the committee for an update. Abbi asked if there is a date yet, Alli said there is not yet. HSA must sign off.

Hayley - Asked if it's more fitting for us to give a budget first or get a proposal first. Kristin said going forward we should always get a proposal before giving a budget. Alli, Kristin and Leigh have been working on getting clearer about what line items should be for in the budget. Hayley has started drafting guidelines on what types of things we sponsor and give money to, how to request and pay for goods & services, etc. Alli asked if the teachers know how to request help from the HSA, Mrs. Hagan said they do. Just because something doesn't have a line item in the

budget doesn't mean it can't be done; there is always room to request something new and for it to be considered. Rahika asked if we can provide a list of things we will and will not cover, up to a certain amount. Leigh said yes, and also that there is a certain amount that any one person can be reimbursed personally. And HSA should always be signing any contracts. Alli said we have historically asked for proposals up front 2-3 weeks ahead of the need.

Next tour is coming up. And restock of food pantry this Friday. Deal & JR students helping. Amazing community effort to help clear the snow this past Friday. The custodians were particularly helpful, and this is outside of their job duties - can we do something to thank them? Mrs. Hagan said the custodians love Five Guys - Hayley asked if we can give five \$20 gift cards to them. Alli approved.

Delay to 8th update - Hayley presented at Lafayette last night. It was very well attended, great q&a at the end. People were very interested to hear DCPS technology policy, devices, how we can work together as a community. Alli thinks it is appropriate to have an assembly for parents and students about the developmental impacts of technology and devices but not for the HSA to promote a program that people would pledge to.

Rebeca asked Tierra if she's seen a lot of parents in other schools complain about the rampant use of technology in schools. Alli agreed she'd be interested in confronting DCPS about how much technology is being used in academics. Tianni asked Hayley, to be clear, that the propose assembly is merely informative, not to make anyone sign up for anything or feel bad about anything. Abbi asked what the ask is to the HSA. Hayley said all of the other five Deal feeder schools are getting their Wait Until 8th programs started, and their HSAs are part of the programs. It would be nice to use the HSA newsletter to get info out since it already has a wide readership. Abi agrees to using HSA comms to inform about the program. Hayley is working along with the program to have a screening of Screenagers at Avalon Theater.

Musical - Parent info date is Tuesday at 7:30pm. ETC (Educational Theater Company) will join for a virtual parent info session. There is a cap of 40 students in the musical along with 6 on the technical team. Alli asked if we are in support of there being an activity fee, what would be the appropriate amount...? Hayley asked if other programs have an activity fee and if it is appropriate to have one for this. Sports don't have fees bc DCPS pays for coaches. Amore, Kaizen Karate are more comparable programs, and they do charge an activity fee. All agreed \$200+ sounds like way too much a fee. Hayley said historically the musical has been something Last year the musical cost around \$20k and made just under \$10,500. Abbi said she agrees that an activity fee is appropriate but not more than last year. The activity fee last year was \$125. Amore is \$250 for 8 after school sessions just for comparison. All agreed that \$125 is good!

Mrs. Hagan said thank you to the HSA.