

BROOKDALE HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION, INC.

MINUTES OF MEETING

March 12, 2014

The Brookdale Home and School Association was called to order at approximately 7:05 pm. Board members in attendance were Mike McLaughlin, Marlene Matulac, Monica Lutz, Jenn Harvey, and Nicole Bornemann.

Board of Education Representative: Catzel Bumpus

Mrs. Bumpus stated that the Teachers of the Year were awarded at the last Board of Education meeting, the tentative budget was adopted, and that there were presentations on the new Pre-Kindergarten program. She stated that the Board is working on getting the Child Study Team members back, there will be no teacher jobs lost due to the budget this year, and that the Board is looking into hiring new teachers. The Board will be presenting the budget soon.

Jen Vigna asked if the Child Study Teams will continue to be outsourced, if the Bridges staff will be able to keep their jobs, and if Basic Skills will be brought back. Mrs. Bumpus stated that the Child Study Teams will be brought back, the Bridges staff will continue to keep their jobs, and that new teachers will be hired for the new Pre-Kindergarten program. She also stated that half of the Bridges staff will be working at Voorhees Hall at Bloomfield College and the other half will be working at the high school.

Mr. Fleres stated that Basic Skills will only be available at Title I schools and will be based on funding. All students who are receiving Basic Skills are having it during a flex period. Laura Haraka asked Mr. Fleres and Mrs. Bumpus to let parents know when Basic Skills will be brought back and Gail Dolan asked why the Child Study Team was outsourced to save money. Jen Vigna stated that the district did not really save that much from outsourcing. Mrs. Bumpus stated that the Child Study Team will be brought back and that outsourcing will never be done again. She will keep parents informed about Basic Skills and that hopefully we will get some of the prior staff back. Mr. Anderson stated that outsourcing never works and that it is something to be avoided. Mr. Fleres stated that he disagrees with outsourcing and that there is one Child Study Team member that he would like to keep at Brookdale. Mike McLaughlin asked if there will be a change to the six day schedule. Mr. Anderson stated that the district will be hiring three teachers for physical education, art, and music. He is interested in having teachers staying in the buildings rather than travelling from school to school. Mr. Fleres stated that this issue is being discussed and that administrators would like to see this work. Mr. Anderson stated that the arts are very important and he wants to ensure that specials and teachers receive respect. Mrs. Bumpus stated that the middle school has recently won an award for their curriculum design and that on Friday, March 14th, they will have a ceremony to receive the award.

Testing Town Hall Forum:

Mr. Anderson stated that the Pre-Kindergarten program will be based on the Reggio Emilia Approach which is child-centered, hands-on, and involves no testing. The district is very fortunate to have Nora Krieger from Bloomfield College to be available to help us with this. He stated that Pre-Kindergarten children take in everything and that a constructivist approach to teaching should be used. Eighty-five countries attended a worldwide conference on this method and that it is perfect to use for Pre-Kindergarten children. Laura Haraka stated that she is concerned about the state mandates for physical education, how the district will be able to have funding for this, and how much will it cost to repair the building at Forest Glen. Mr. Anderson stated that the building only needs minor repairs and that free professional development will be provided. Mrs. Bumpus stated that the district will be meeting both goals at the same time. Jen Vigna asked how the district is planning to transition children from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten which is a more structured program. Mr. Anderson stated that the Board is currently looking into this. Mr. Fleres stated that he agrees with Mr. Anderson in working on this issue and that all Kindergarten teachers should become familiar with the program. Mr. Anderson stated that parents should attend the forum on March 27th at Bloomfield High School to discuss about the parental roles and the Common Core. This will be the fourth forum that will be taking place and there will be a question and answer time about what is happening in education regarding the Common Core. Mr. Anderson stated that the Common Core was written by David Coleman and it is a corporate goal to inform parents that our public schools are failing and to bring in charter schools. Parents can play a very important role in changing the direction of where education is going. Mike McLaughlin stated that a flyer regarding the forum will be posted on the HSA website. Mr. Anderson stated that our district has a superintendent that is questioning the validity of testing.

Principal's Report: Mr. Fleres reported on important events that are happening at Brookdale School.

a. Microsoft 365: Mr. Fleres stated that the school has a live program called Microsoft 365 where all of the classrooms tap into the system at the same time. He also provided a wonderful presentation on how the system works and what our children experience. He also stated that the school has had a lesson on the Olympics by using the system and that the school has linked with both Carteret and Demarest.

b. Parking: Mr. Fleres stated that he has stood in the middle of the driveway to prevent parents from dropping off or picking up their children in the faculty parking lot. There are some medical exceptions as to who can park in the parking lot. Parents are not to drop off or pick up their children in the faculty parking lot as it is a safety hazard and only faculty can park there.

c. iPads and iPods: Mr. Fleres stated that the teachers have been actively signing out the iPads and have taken them to the next level in regards to learning. He encouraged parents to ask their children about using the iPads in class. There is also an iPod mobile learning lab that will be available as more wall chargers have been ordered.

d. Jumpathon and Hoops for Hearts: Mr. Fleres thanked Mr. Mayer and the students on doing an excellent job with these events. Mr. Mayer has raised money on a national level for heart awareness.

e. Read Across America: Mr. Fleres thanked Mrs. Luca and all of the volunteers for their hard work. He thanked the parents for sending their children in with the appropriate footwear for Pajama Day.

f. Internet Safety Awareness Assembly: Mr. Fleres thanked the HSA for the Internet Awareness Assembly.

g. Mrs. Luca: Mr. Fleres stated that Mrs. Luca will be leaving for maternity leave on Friday, March 14th, and has done so much for Brookdale. Mrs. Orrei will be taking her place as the media specialist and has sat down with Mrs. Luca to discuss what will be occurring for the rest of the school year. Mrs. Orrei will be working on a typing club because the PARCC requires typing for grades 3-6 at the elementary level.

h. Yogi Berra Museum Trip: Mr. Fleres thanked the museum staff for having Brookdale School come to the museum and that David Kaplan (the president) has reached out to our school every year. He is very thankful to Mr. Kaplan for giving our school this opportunity.

i. Teacher of the Year: Mr. Fleres congratulated Mr. Jaffe on being awarded our Teacher of the Year for 2013-2014 and she will be recognized in May during Teacher Appreciation Day. She is an excellent teacher and is a very wonderful person to work with.

j. Kindergarten Registration: Mr. Fleres stated that forty-two children have registered for Kindergarten at Brookdale for the 2014-2015 school year. The current Kindergarten students will be at the Livingston Mall performing "The Mitten" on March 18th.

k. Important Dates: Mr. Fleres stated that the Talent Show will be taking place on April 4th at 7:00pm. School will be in session on Monday through Wednesday, April 14-16, to make up the snow days. There will be no school on Thursday and Friday, April 17-18. The NJASK will be taking place for grades 3-4 on May 12th through the 16th and grades 5-6 will be tested on May 5th through the 8th.

l. The PARCC: Mr. Fleres stated that Mrs. Lehansky and Mrs. Pico's class will be piloting the PARCC using the ipads. The scores will not be given to the district and the teachers/students will be talking about their experiences with the PARCC.

m. Old Minutes: Mike McLaughlin had Jenn Harvey show an old binder containing the HSA minutes from 1937-1942 that had been found in the basement of the school. The HSA will be asking Mr. Fleres on what he would like to be done with the old minutes. The old minutes could be placed with the old basketball hoop as a display.

Secretary's Report: Minutes were approved from the previous meeting of February 19, 2014.

Treasurer's Report: Monica Lutz presented the budget. Our current budget in the checking account as of February 28th is \$33,441.48 and that the total holdings amounted to \$3,916.84. Monica Lutz stated that the Book Fair was an excellent fundraiser and that the profit for Scholastic dollars totaled to \$4,839.19. Laura Haraka requested a breakdown of the funds so that both she and the class mothers will know. Jen Vigna stated that Scholastic will reward the school for buying books by giving more books. She thanked Mrs. Luca and the HSA for being able to have an author come to the school. Mike McLaughlin stated that the HSA always has had a significant budget for school assemblies. Ms. G stated that the school benefits from the Scholastic magazines and programs. Marlene Matulac stated that new class sections will have books in their classrooms.

The Thank you Roster:

a. Jump-a-thon- The HSA thanked Amanda Pinales and Mr. Mayer for doing a wonderful job running this event and that the children had a wonderful time participating in it.

b. Hoop-a-thon- The HSA thanked both Laura Haraka and Karen Rizzi on doing a wonderful job running this event and that the children had a wonderful time participating in it.

Schedule Updates:

a. St. Patrick's Day Bagels: Mike McLaughlin thanked Marlene Matulac for taking over this event.

b. Beefsteak Dinner: Pamela Malcolm stated that parents still should be selling the 50/50's and that parents must send back any tickets that have not been used so they can be sold on the night of the Beefsteak. She has over one-hundred baskets for the event and that everyone who attends the Beefsteak will receive something on their chair. Jen Vigna stated that the class parents must get their baskets for the Beefsteak in as soon as possible. Jody Polidoro stated that all money for Beefsteak baskets should be collected at the beginning of the school year because some parents do not pay when they are asked to give only a few weeks before the event. Mike McLaughlin stated that he liked this idea very much and that this idea can be discussed during both the April and May HSA meetings. Jenn Harvey stated that this idea has been discussed for some time and it will be considered for future Beefsteaks. Pamela Malcolm stated that if anyone would like to volunteer for helping her wrap the gift baskets to please contact her at

pamela_malcolm@hotmail.com. Beth Japhet stated that sending letters home to parents with the envelopes attached has been helpful in getting parents to send in money to help pay for the class baskets. Pamela Malcolm stated that Bea Spina has done a wonderful job in helping her with the baskets. Jen Vigna stated that she will be sending out an email to every class parent to make sure that each class has a basket. Pamela Malcolm stated that she is going to need runners for the event and that there will be eight to ten people at each table.

c. Talent Show: Mike McLaughlin stated that the Talent Show will be taking place on Friday, April 4th.

News and Notes:

a. Bingo Night: Marlene Matulac stated that we might not be able to have this event due to legal issues.

b. Relay for Life: Mike McLaughlin stated that Jody Polidoro was kind enough to attend the last meeting regarding this event. She stated that the proceeds of the event will raise money for overcoming cancer and that there will be designated camp sites for each team. Brookdale School does not have a team at present and that we need ten people for a team. The faculty has expressed interest in forming a team. She also stated that money needs to be raised for a team and that team captains need to be registered. There will be a meeting on this event on April 7th. The meetings have been rotated between the towns of Bloomfield, Montclair, and Glen Ridge. She also stated that there must be a team member on the track at all times and there will be ceremonies occurring throughout the night. Mrs. Bumpus stated that this event is an excellent way for communities to come together. Jody Polidoro stated that there will be a large amount of food available. Ms. G. stated that the dates of the event are an issue, but that the teachers loved participating in it in the past and are talking about getting a team together. Marlene Matulac stated that if anyone is interested in being a captain to please send either her or Mike McLaughlin an email at either marlene_pez@hotmail.com or mike@naissancepartners.com. Jody Polidoro stated that there could be co-captains as well.

Faculty Representative: Ms. G. thanked the parents for being chaperones for the Yogi Berra Museum field trip and that the staff at the museum like the students at Brookdale School because they show an interest in being there. The museum always allows the school to come free of charge. She also stated that the school has linked in audio for the first grade and that the fourth grade will have this done as well. All classrooms will be able to see what other classes are working on.

Open Discussion:

Laura Haraka asked the HSA Board about the rules for campaigning for the next board elections. Mike McLaughlin stated that the Board will be discussing the bylaws. Laura Haraka asked if Monica Lutz would be the treasurer for both Brookdale School and the Middle School for the 2014-2015 school year. Mike McLaughlin stated that the Board is aware of this and understands the commitment involved. He also noted that the bylaws are unclear on several issues and that there may be an opportunity to expand the Board. Monica Lutz stated that there will not be a problem with her serving as treasurer for both Brookdale and the Middle School because the Middle School workload is very light. Laura Haraka stated that there must be two separate cash boxes for each school. Monica Lutz stated that Jenn Harvey handles the cash for the HSA. She stated that she does the budget, everyone's money is secure, and that she enjoys doing the job. She stated that being the treasurer at the Middle School is not that much work and that they really needed someone to do the job due to a lack of volunteers. Jen Vigna stated that the job should not be made complicated, there should be checks and balances, and that she does not want the treasurers to have complete control over the money. Monica Lutz stated the HSA is held liable for many things and that she gives the books to the accountant for accuracy and keeps the receipts. Jen Vigna stated that in prior years, the former president would hold the HSA position as secretary during the transition period. Mike McLaughlin stated that the HSA needs to have these conversations and that the Board is trying to find the right mix for everything to make it better. Laura Haraka stated that she would like this issue to be placed on the agenda for next time. Mike McLaughlin stated that this issue will be on the agenda and hopes that everyone will share their opinions.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

The next HSA meeting will take place on April 9th.

Respectfully submitted by Nicole Bornemann, HSA Secretary, on March 23, 2014.