

BROOKDALE HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION, INC.

MINUTES OF MEETING

September 10, 2014

The Brookdale Home and School Association was called to order at approximately 7:08pm. Board members in attendance were Mike McLaughlin, Rafael Jimenez, Monica Lutz, Jenn Harvey, and Nicole Bornemann.

Mike McLaughlin introduced the members of the HSA Board to the parents whose children are new students to Brookdale School. He stated that the HSA is the same as a PTA and that its sole mission is to support the school. The HSA is a non-profit organization that makes huge contributions to Brookdale School.

Mike McLaughlin shared some history about Brookdale School that he obtained from a resident of West Orange. Brookdale School used to be a two room school house that was located on Broad Street where the firehouse is today. The school has been in existence since 1909 when Bloomfield had been known as a farming community. Last year, an old file cabinet had been found in our school that stored HSA minutes from the 1940's. Mike wanted to share that the Brookdale HSA is a part of something that is much bigger than we realize.

Mike McLaughlin updated the parents on what the HSA has worked on over the summer. The HSA has updated Mrs. Sedlecek's SMART board, purchased new iPads, a new refrigerator for the kitchen, and that Jen Bogart has donated a microwave.

Board of Education Representative: Catzel Bumpus welcomed all of the parents to Brookdale School and that she is very excited to be the School's Board of Education Representative. She stated that the Bloomfield School District has accomplished so many positive things over the summer. Superintendent Sal Goncalves had shown many new improvements to the school buildings through a video and that a ribbon cutting ceremony had taken place opening up a new early childhood center at Forest Glen located on Davey Street. The district has done a wonderful job fixing up the building at Forest Glen. There had also been a ribbon cutting for the opening of Liberty Academy which is for high school students who have special needs. The teaching staff had a wonderful professional development day and convocation. She stated that all Child Study Teams are now in place within all school buildings. The Bloomfield Education Foundation gave a grant of \$250,000 to Bloomfield High School and has pledged \$50,000 a year for five years to help students with the SAT, with AP training, professional development of the teachers at the high school, an updated curriculum in literacy, and for new computers. The district is now back to a five day schedule in regards to specials. She stated that the district is on target with state regulations for special education and that we have a higher amount of special education students in the district. The Board has also hired a new Director of Professional Development for the District. Mike McLaughlin asked about what the superintendent's goals and objectives were for

the school year. Catzel Bumpus stated that the district has set goals on staffing and on polishing the curriculum. The district is also keeping an eye on class size. She stated that the Board of Education is always open to new ideas, that parents have emailed about the safety in our schools, and that many improvements have been made.

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

a. New School Year: Mr. Fleres stated that the Brookdale staff had done the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge and that it is posted on Brookdale School's website and Twitter feeds. He thanked all of the parents and the staff for a smooth opening to the new school year. All of the children arrived at school ready to learn.

b. Parking and Student Drop off: Mr. Fleres stated that the parking situation has definitely improved and thanked the parents for following the school parking rules. The front of the school is to be used for drop off and go. Parents should not leave their cars parked in the front of the school or in the faculty parking lot.

c. New Teachers: Mr. Fleres stated that new teachers have been hired at Brookdale School: Ms. Vicki Stamoutsos for the Fourth Grade, Ms. Verrengia for Kindergarten, and Ms. Dawn Miller as a Resource Room Teacher, and Ms. Sara Schimmenti as a tenure-track teacher for Second Grade.

d. Test Scores: Mr. Fleres stated that the raw test score from the NJASK should be sent out soon and that both himself as well as the staff were very pleased with the results.

d. Peanut-Free: Mr. Fleres stated that two peanut-free tables were added in the lunch room and that there is now a peanut-free Kindergarten classroom. A parent who has concerns regarding the peanut-free classroom should contact Mrs. Jaffe.

e. Thank You List: Mr. Fleres thanked the HSA for the purchase of 25 iPads and that they should be up and running on Monday, September 15th. He also thanked the HSA for the updated SMART board and that Mrs. Sedlacek loves it.

f. School Website: Mr. Fleres encouraged the parents to look at the school's website and the teachers' website for any information or for homework. He has been running the website because Mrs. Luca is on maternity leave. The school's Twitter page was started two years ago and that we have 22 staff members who have a Twitter feed. He stated that this is a great way for parents to keep connected with what their children are doing in school and that it is a great way to find out about class news.

g. Student Numbers: Mr. Fleres stated that both he and Mrs. Minneci have ran the number of students who are attending Brookdale School. In 2007, there were 275 students and that presently there are 371 students attending the school. The school is now at maximum capacity

and that options will be considered moving forward if/as the school grows. Nothing has been determined at this point.

e. Parent Questions: A parent raised the issue that their child does not have enough time to eat lunch because they have only ten minutes to eat. Mr. Fleres stated that the children are not allowed to eat in the library and that there is only one hour to feed the children. He has also put into place assigned seating since the first day of school to allow the children enough time to eat. The process has cut down on time and that he has hired a new lunch lady who is very efficient and quick. Children should be reminded to eat during lunch time and have fewer conversations with each other. The staff does promote talking, but they need to know that they have to eat. He stated that if the school expands in size, the children would lose indoor recess if it is raining or during cold winter days. A parent asked about what the supervision is like during recess. Mr. Fleres stated that additional teachers have been assigned and that there will be more supervision. A parent asked about the quality of the lunches. Mr. Fleres stated that there are stations of fruit, vegetables, meats, and milk. Chartwells is the company hired by the school district as a food provider. A parent asked about whether there was an issue with the lunch cards. Mr. Fleres stated that when there was an issue, the children were offered another option that day and that this had been the first real problem with the cards. Ms. G. stated that all of the children were fed on the day that there was a problem with the lunch cards. A parent asked about Domino's Pizza being included in Chartwells. Mr. Fleres stated that Domino's is not done through Chartwells because of funding. A parent asked if the second graders could receive a snack time. Mr. Fleres stated that snack time is given depending on the classroom and that he leaved this option to the teachers. He stated that snack time can cut into class instruction and that there is an issue with time constraints. He stated that they do not have snack time at the upper grades unless there is a child who has a medical condition and they need to eat. A parent stated that her second grader was allowed water and that this was fine. A parent asked if the children have milk in the second grade. Mr. Fleres stated that milk is given to student in Kindergarten through grade three. A parent asked about the growth of students in the school. Mr. Fleres stated that there are three sections for Fourth Grade and that assessments regarding class size are being made. He said there will be conversations about the expansion of students in the spring and that the numbers might decrease in a few years. A parent asked about whether or not a school based supervisor would be on site during the aftercare program. Mr. Fleres stated that the school does not provide this because the YMCA has its own on site supervisor. The aftercare program is run by the YMCA and has no connection to the school. He stated that there was talk of another aftercare program in the past, but he does not know where that stands at present. A parent asked if there was a nurse on site during the aftercare program. Mr. Fleres stated that there is no nurse in the building during this time and that the YMCA does not have a nurse on staff. They will call the parent or 911 if the child is hurt. He recommended that the parents reach out to the aftercare program if there are any concerns.

Faculty Representative: Ms. G. stated that Mrs. Pico has been chosen as Faculty Representative and introduced her to the parents. She stated that the children have been reading over the summer and that the outcome of the summer reading program has been fantastic. She asked the parents to please have their Sixth Grade students receive the required vaccination by September 19th so that they can be able to attend school. Ms. Pico thanked the parents for all of their support.

Treasurer's Report: Monica Lutz presented the budget. Our current budget in the checking account as of August 26, 2014 amounted to \$24,178.15 and that the total holdings amounted to \$3,952.18. Monica Lutz stated that the amount in the holdings is money that is assigned to certain funds. The HSA has \$19,000 to use for this school year and that the holdings are kept apart. A parent asked if the SMART board and the iPads were paid for. Mike McLaughlin stated that they were paid for and that the HSA board wants to be as transparent as possible. An overview of the finances was presented showing that the HSA had almost \$22,000 in net fundraising after the 2013-2014 school year before the annual gift was given. The fundraising also allowed the HSA to invest almost \$17,000. The projections for the 2014-2015 school year were presented showing an amount of \$7,000 prior to the annual gift. Mike McLaughlin stated that the HSA is being very conservative on the financial projections for this school year and on the fundraising. A spreadsheet was presented to the parents regarding what has been spent during the last school year. He presented three key changes for the budget this year: 1.) \$1,000 for the Dance Program that had been voted on during the HSA meeting in June; 2.) One \$500.00 college scholarship to be awarded instead of two \$250.00 scholarships; and 3.) \$55.00 will be spent per Sixth Grade student as opposed to \$75.00 per Sixth Grade Student. This is done to prepare for the expansion of the Sixth Grade class because the school currently has fifty students in the Fifth Grade and sixty students in the Fourth Grade. The scholarship was reduced because there were only nine applicants last year and that had been narrowed down due to the lack of qualified applicants. The Sixth Grade does fundraising throughout the year and that this could change over the school year.

Four Goals for the 2014-2015 School Year: Mike McLaughlin presented the goals for this school year and what the HSA wants to accomplish this year as an organization. The first goal is to improve our technology and communication options. The HSA would like to use Google Drive. The second goal regards processes which involves creating a year-round project plan and helping chair people avoid fire drills, standardizing our flyers and communications, and to continue to improve our record keeping. The third goal involves finances where we can possibly raise \$25,000 in fundraising. The fourth goal regards participation and that the HSA needs the help of the parents to succeed. Presently, we are in need of Class Parents for Mrs. Goldsworthy's First Grade class, Mrs. McCarren's Second Grade Class, and Mrs. Ritacco's Second Grade class. We are in need of Class Liaisons for Miss Kelly's Kindergarten class, Ms. Verrengia's Kindergarten class, and Ms. Schimmenti's Second Grade class. We are in need of a

chairperson for the Afterschool Program, the Fall Plant Sale, the Book Fair, and the Holiday Gift Shop.

Rafeal Jimenez stated that he would like information to come from one area in regards to communication on the website and not from many different places. He found that there can be an HSA calendar on Rebelmouse.com. This is an adaptive program that can be viewed on the computer, iPad, or iPhone. Mike McLaughlin asked for parents to provide any feedback on it. We are on a free platform for now, but we could create a url and decide what type of social feeds that we would like on it. This is a hub for visual information for all of the grades at the school. Mike stated that Kami Lacki has volunteered to be Event Coordinator and the goal is that there will be a better system of communication. A parent asked about having an event management website. Mike stated that the HSA will have a conservative approach towards finances. He stated that there was a great turnout of parents for the first HSA meeting and that he would like this to continue. He stated that the HSA had run two afterschool programs last spring, but we need to coordinate the mechanics of getting the afterschool program into place. He also stated that there are four file cabinets in the basement and if anyone is a historian who would like to go through them, that would be great. He stated that the HSA would like to expand the executive board. A parent asked if the HSA has thought about adding new fundraisers. Mike stated that the HSA is considering that, has a fundraising chair, and that a survey will be made available regarding fundraising. Jody Polidoro stated that if anyone has any ideas to please let her know. A parent asked what the role of class parent entails. Jenn Harvey stated that class parents run the five class parties, serve as a liaison for the teacher, serve as a liaison to the HSA, and is responsible for activities at the parties. Some of the challenges involve time and to be available to attend the class parties. Dani Kennedy stated that class parents also serve as chaperones on class trips as well. Gail Dolan stated the class parents are also responsible for attending Back-to-School Night and for collecting the HSA and party dues. Dani Kennedy stated that she will reach out to all of the class parents with reminders and forms that they will need. There will always be parents who can help if a class parent cannot attend a class party or a class trip. Jenn Harvey stated that paperless sends out a lot of reminders about upcoming events.

Upcoming Activities:

- a. Kids stuff:** Gail Dolan stated that this is a fundraiser where parents can purchase a coupon book for \$25.00. There are wonderful coupons in the book and flyers will be sent home in the children's folders.
- b. Innisbrook:** The forms for the fundraiser will be coming out on Monday where parents can purchase gift wrap, chocolate and cards. All checks must be made out to the HSA.
- c. Back to School Night:** Mr. Fleres stated that there will be a new format for Back-to School Night this year. The event will start at 7:00pm in the gym for the general meeting. The first round for Kindergarten through Third Grade will start at 7:30pm. The second round for the

Fourth through the Sixth Grades will start at 8:05pm. The teachers are proud of the building and would like everyone to look around the school. A parent asked about overlapping. Mr. Fleres stated that the doors will open at 6:50pm. Gail Dolan asked what doors the parents would be able to enter through. Mr. Fleres stated that the parents would be entering through the gym doors. Jenn Harvey stated that all class parents should arrive at 6:30pm.

d. Small World: Monica Lutz stated that there will be a meeting regarding this event on September 24th at 7:00pm. The event will be held on February 27, 2015. Mike McLaughlin stated that five countries will be presented to educate the children. Monica stated that volunteers are needed.

e. Fall Plant Sale: Mike McLaughlin stated that a chairperson is needed for this event.

Mike McLaughlin asked everyone to use Amazon.com, participate in Box-Tops for Education, and to recycle ink cartages.

Secretary's Report: Minutes were approved from the previous meeting of June 11, 2014.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31pm.

The next HSA meeting will be held at 7:00pm on Wednesday, October 8, 2014.

Respectfully submitted by Nicole Bornemann, HSA Secretary, on September 20, 2014.