

BROOKDALE HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION, INC.

MINUTES OF MEETING

September 9, 2015

The Brookdale Home and School Association was called to order at approximately 7:10 p.m. Board members in attendance were Rafael Jimenez, Monica Lutz, Jenn Harvey, Jaennine Gonzalez and Jennifer Guidea.

Welcome Back: Rafael Jimenez welcomed everyone back and introduced himself and the Board. He also reviewed the HSA gift to the school for the 2014-2015 school year. This year, rather than one big item, the HSA purchased a number of smaller items for the school, including new all-weather logo mats, a new projector and screen, a new audio system, wall fans and new furniture for the teachers' lounge.

Board of Education Representative: Ellen Rodgers introduced herself to the members of the HSA. She stated that the District is continuing to focus on improvements to the curriculum at all levels. This effort includes continued focus on readers and writers workshops in all grades, new math curriculum in the high school and middle schools, new science standards and enhanced professional development for all teachers. She also reported on the improvements made to the physical facilities at Brookdale School over the summer, including replacement of the ceiling and lighting on the third floor, widening of the driveway, repair of the front steps and painting of the flagpole. Ms. Rodgers stated that there are still three floors to be sanded and refinished later this year. Ms. Rodgers also reported that Maschios is the new food service provider for the District and that so far, the reaction has been very positive.

Principal's Report: Mr. Fleres welcomed everyone back to school and reported on important events that are happening at Brookdale School.

a. First Day of School: Mr. Fleres reported that the first day of school went smoothly with the exception of an incident involving a kindergarten student who went off premises during recess. Mr. Fleres reassured parents that this should not have happened and that corrective actions were taken immediately, including suspension of the lunch aide responsible for that area, erection of a temporary barrier fence, and review of the plans and regulations with the lunch staff. Further, Mr. Fleres confirmed that the student was absent for only four minutes, not for the longer period of time reported by various local media. Long term action will include a permanent fence with a lockable gate. This will be installed once the bidding and permit process has been completed. Other than this incident, the first day was great. The students returned to school excited and prepared to learn and the teachers had great energy. Additionally, the school mascots provided by the HSA were great.

b. Technology: Mr. Fleres reminded everyone that the staff's Twitter accounts are up and running and that this is a nice way to stay in the loop about what is going on. The hash tag #brooksummerfun was a great way for everyone to stay connected over the summer. The kids were excited to see pictures and this really kept the community feel via Twitter. Mr. Fleres

encourages all parents to sign up for Twitter and to follow himself, teachers and the Brookdale HSA to receive current and fun information about what is happening at school. A parent asked whether it is mandatory to sign up for Twitter. Mr. Fleres responded that while it is not a requirement, it is often the quickest way to get information. Rafael added that parents can always go to www.brookdalebuzz.com, which is a host site for all the Twitter feeds associated with Brookdale School. A parent asked who gets to place pictures on brookdalebuzz.com. Rafael explained that it is auto-generated by any posts to school-related Twitter feeds.

A discussion was held in response to a parent suggestion that the social media guidelines be posted somewhere so that incoming parents understand how to obtain information about the school. Another parent suggested that Brookdale should more fully explain the importance of a Twitter account and how to get started with Twitter. Additionally, parents had questions about the photo release form that was sent home at the beginning of the school year, as some parents found the form difficult to understand. Mr. Fleres reminded parents that the release language comes from the District and that Brookdale School does not have input into the language. A parent suggested that teachers go over this form at Back to School Night, along with the procedures for signing up for Twitter.

Mr. Fleres also reported that we are not using EdLine this year. We have moved to Power School to replace EdLine. This will have student grades and other information consolidated in one place. We are all still learning how to use this system, but more information will be provided at Back to School Night.

Additionally, Mr. Fleres reminded parents that the teacher websites are also a good resource for parents. Ms. G explained that the easiest way to get to the teachers' websites is to go to the District home page, then to the "District Resources" tab, then to "Teacher Websites" on the pull-down menu. This will also be addressed by the teachers on Back to School Night.

c. Parking: Mr. Fleres stated that there have not been any parking issues so far and that this may be due to the Bloomfield Police present outside the school. He encouraged parents to continue to abide by the parking rules even with the coming winter weather.

d. New Teachers/Assignments: Ms. Hawrylko is our new permanent first grade teacher. Ms. McGloan has taken over as Ms. Jaffe's maternity leave replacement until Ms. Jaffe returns later this year. Ms. Testa is filling in for Ms. Lehansky until November 9. Ms. Schimmenti moved up to third grade and took over Ms. Matturi's old classroom. Mr. Alban has moved up to fifth grade, where he is doing a science and technology component. Mr. Carmine Fusaro is our new instrumental teacher.

e. Thank You's: Mr. Fleres thanked the HSA and individual donors for the new sound system, which is great for promoting the arts. Mr. Fleres is looking forward to the new logo mats, which will be a nice touch for Back to School Night. Mr. Fleres also thanked the HSA for the much needed renovations to the staff lounge.

Mr. Fleres thanked Mollie Smith for the beautiful landscaping. The district superintendent has complimented us on how nice the school looks. Mr. Fleres also thanked Happy Trees and A Cut Above for their donations.

f. Kindergarten Play Dates: Mr. Fleres reported that the Kindergarten play dates were a success and that he has received good feedback from incoming Kindergarten parents. He thanked the HSA for providing snacks and support for these events.

g. New Food Service: Mr. Fleres stated that the new food service, Maschios, has been a success so far. The food is made in the morning at the high school and transported to Brookdale while it is still fresh. The students love it so far and the company has been a pleasure to work with. There have been some parent questions and Mr. Fleres encourages parents to contact Maschios directly.

A parent raised a concern about how long the lunch lines get given the short (20 minute) lunch period. Mr. Fleres and Ms. G stated that the lines are moving more quickly with the new program. Further, we have the longest continuous lunch period in New Jersey. The children have 20 minutes to eat and 40 minutes of recess them. Mr. Fleres and the staff have looked into the issue and the current structure is the only option that will allow all of the children to eat during the allotted one hour period.

h. Back to School Night: Back to School Night will be held on September 17th. There has been some confusion as to the time, but it will be from 7-9 pm, as usual. The times of parent-teacher evening conferences in November has changed and those will be held from 6-8 pm.

i. Class Size: A parent raised a concern about the second grade class size. Mr. Fleres stated that there are two second grade classes with 26 and 25 students respectively in each class. Mr. Fleres explained that it was difficult to estimate how many sections would be needed, as many families move in and out of the District over the summer. Mr. Fleres has requested an aide for each second grade classroom, but the Board of Education has until October 15th to consider this request, as that is the date when the “official” school year rosters are final. We will likely get an aide for each class or at the very minimum one aide for the classes to share. There are difficult questions about space and resources, especially with the increasing population of our District. Mr. Fleres will continue to work with parents and the Board of Education to address these issues and suggested that parents who have concerns attend Board of Education and other town meetings, which are open to the public.

Secretary’s Report: Minutes were approved from the previous meeting of June 10, 2015. A parent requested that the minutes be distributed prior to the HSA meetings. Rafael Jimenez reminded parents that, typically, minutes are made available on the Brookdale HSA website and Twitter a week ahead of time. The delay in these minutes was due to the intervening summer break.

Treasurer’s Report: Monica Lutz presented the budget for the year. She explained that last year the 4th grade did not use the funds allocated for their class trip because the field trip was

free, so the amount was carried over to this year's fifth grade. A parent questioned why a more detailed breakdown of the budget is not available. Monica and Rafael explained that we have always made that information available in hard copy, but that it is not appropriate for general posting on the internet. Additionally, we will be discussing the budget in more detail at next month's meeting.

Faculty Representative: Ms. G and Mrs. Pico welcomed everyone back. They thanked the HSA for the new faculty lounge and the mascots and are looking forward to a great year.

News and Notes:

Welcomes: The HSA would like to welcome back Ms. Luca as well as Ms. H, Ms. Testa and Ms. McGloan. Additionally, Rafael welcomed Jennifer Guidea as the new HSA Secretary and Jaennine Gonzalez as the new HSA Assistant Treasurer.

Upcoming Events:

- There will be a 6th grade popsicle sale this and next Friday.
- The spirit wear sale will continue until next Friday.
- The playground mulch will be replaced next week by the Board of Education.
- Back to School night is Thursday, September 17th.
- The gift wrap sale will start on September 17th and run through October 1st. There will be an assembly on September 18th for the students to introduce the new company and go through the sale and prizes offered.
- The 6th grade mum sale will start on Friday and run for 2 weeks with pick-up on October 2nd.
- The HSA will be selling a coupon book in early October. It may be the KidStuff book that has been sold in the past, but we are looking for an alternative book.
- The after-school program will be back this year and will start in October and run for six weeks. Jackie Albaum is the chair of the program and has lined up a number of fun activities. Some are more educational and some are more athletic options.

Thank You Roster: The HSA would like to thank the following people:

- Mollie Smith for beautification and landscaping;
- Marvin at Happy Trees and Bill at A Cut Above for landscaping;
- Environmental Renewal for their donation of mulch;
- Joe Carretta from the Board of Education for the playground mulch;

- Mollie, Matt and Jessica for creating the mascots;
- Jeff Wittner for the generous donation to subsidize the audio-visual equipment;
- Parent volunteers for stuffing the welcome folders on the first day of school;
- Scott Moss and his team for getting the school ready for the first day;
- Nicole Bornemann for her service as HSA Secretary over the past two years.

Reminders:

- Beth Japhet is seeking volunteers to put together IKEA furniture for the teachers' lounge.
- HSA membership dues and class party dues are being collected. These can be dropped off in the office for Jenn Harvey or sent through the class parents.
- School is closed on September 23 for Yom Kippur.
- There are still class parent positions available for Ms. Jaffe's class. Additionally, there are reading liaison positions available for Ms. Jaffe, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Verrengia, Ms. Goldsworthy and Ms. Pico's classes.
- There are also chairperson positions available for the Labels for Education and My Coke Rewards committees. The HSA is also seeking co-chairs for teacher appreciation week and the holiday gift shop.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

The next HSA meeting will take place on October 14, 2015.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Guidea, HSA Secretary on September 24, 2015.