

BROOKDALE HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION, INC.
MINUTES OF MEETING

June 12, 2017

The Brookdale Home and School Association was called to order at approximately 7:06 p.m. Board members in attendance were Jennifer Guidea, Samantha Wallace and Tina Gallina. The meeting began with a salute to the flag. Members absent were Jaennine Gonzalez and Jennifer Harvey.

Jen Guidea thanked those members in attendance and noted that this is the last meeting of the school year.

Board of Education Representative:

There was no Board of Education representative in attendance due to the switch in dates.

Faulty Representatives:

Mrs. Pico thanked everyone for the small tokens that were received during teacher appreciation week. The 6th graders participated in D.A.R.E. day which is a drug education program. All 6th graders in Bloomfield school district come together at Vassar field. The program is sponsored by the Bloomfield PBA. It is a great opportunity for the students to get to know each other. The kids had a great time! Mrs. Pico also extended her thanks from all teachers for a great school year!

Jen Guidea thanked Mrs. Pico and all the staff for their help and support during the school year.

Principal's Report:

Mr. Fleres discussed enrollment for the upcoming school year. As of this evening, enrollment has gone down. There will be a couple of grades that will need to wait till September for final section information. As of now, it looks like the current 2nd grade, going into 3rd, will have two sections based on the numbers. If anything changes, we will use any forms of communication to get information out during the summer. Class lists are being finalized with numbers in place. Lists are being made with 2 or 3 sections in mind. Most will be notified via reports. Some will be TBA. Gifted and talented for grades 4 through 6 will be notified in September.

- Brookdale Track & Field was a success! Thank you to Mr. Mayer, students and staff.
- Performing arts classes were very successful! Thank you to Noel Gatts
- Walk to School Day – Thank you to the mayor who met students at the Brookdale Church. Asst. Superintendent met students at Hot Bagels Abroad.

- Plant Sale – Was a great success. Thank you to Tina and Olga
- Kindergarten Orientation and Visitation – Thank you to those who participated
- Bengal Pride – Congratulations to award winners and thank you to 3rd grade parents for providing refreshments.
- Wax Museum (4th grade) – Thank you to Mrs. Gallagher. Once again, it was a great success and the students did a great job!
- First Annual STEAM night was held last week. It was a great success. We can only build on the program moving forward.
- Fun Fair – Thank you to Jody who did a great job this year!
- Fifth Grade Car Wash – Great job
- Sixth Grade Yearbook – Jenn Harvey did a great job with the yearbook!
- First Annual Brookdale School Field Day – Teachers formed a committee to make this day happen. It was a fun day for the students. They had a blast and the tie dye shirts came out great!
- Town wide Track & Field Day – Brookdale once again came in first place! It has been nice to be able to bask in the glory for 2 years in a row! We have the best-behaved children. As he was walking around, he was observing other students from other schools and feels very good about our student's behavior. It was a great night!

President's Message:

Jen Guidea thanked everyone for their participation this school year. She's received a great response from the Sign-Up Genius that was distributed for class parents and chairpersons and volunteers. We still have some positions open. Right away as school opens, we need a Birthday Chair. We will let you know by the end of the school year if you are chosen as a chairperson. Class parents may have to wait for notification due to the uncertainty regarding sections.

Gift Presentation:

During the previous HSA meeting, we proposed Hahn kite tables as the HSA gift. All signs are showing three sections in grade 5 and two sections in grade 6. Examples were given using Ms. Gaccione's classroom. It was a pilot program this year. We were able to test it out during the school year and it has been great for collaborative work. It's mobile and fits in well with Reader's/Writer's Workshop. Math Investigations is 90% group work related. New science

program is pointing toward group and collaborative work. Teachers will act as a facilitator rather than a dictator.

Smart link seats (green seats in media) are much more comfortable to sit in. They're easier to move around and transport. They will be sized with grade levels in mind. The table height is adjustable. Ms. G. had students do a project with them drawing what their dream classroom would look like. Not a single desk was in their drawings. The last staff meeting was in Ms. G's room due to seating/arranging availability. The teachers are very excited about them.

The other part of the gift is the Roger DigiMaster. We are getting three additional speakers. We only have one right now and it was very popular with the teachers. It's meant to be mobile due to it being lightweight. The gift brings our total up to four which will be distributed by grade level. We hope to have more in the future. It does come with a wireless microphone. The teachers think they're wonderful in the classroom. The quote actually went down a couple hundred dollars to \$4,389.

Also, we are asking for STEAM kits. The cost would be \$100 per grade level (K-6) for a \$700 allotment. As teachers get more comfortable with them, we expect to add to them with add-ons. The bins can go from class to class. They won't be just used in the Media Center. Teacher's can implement their use at any time. Mr. Fleres showed a Power Point of activities from STEAM night.

At our last meeting, we went over the benefits of choice seating. Initially we were concerned how the teachers would be with students talking. Rules were established. According to Ms. G., students change seats every day and it's been fine. We agreed that we would increase amount requested to all 5th and 6th grade classes.

HSA End of Year Gift Proposal

| ITEM | COST | UNITS | TOTAL w/o Shipping | CLASSES |
|--|-------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Build Kite Table 30x50 w/adjustable post legs | \$293.62 | 36 | \$10,570.32 | 6L, 5A, 5R, 5S |
| Stools/Modular Seating | \$259.74 | 32 (4 per order) | \$8,311.68 | 6L, 6G, 5A, 5R, 5S |
| Roger DigiMaster 500 Speak & Mic Complete System | \$1,522 | 3 | \$4567.17 | Multiple |
| STEAM bins | \$100 | 7 | \$700 | K-6 |

Total Proposal

\$24,149.17

Questions:

Does the middle school/high school high school have this seating? The high school does have some. Science and STEM rooms do. The middle school does not have any. The high school does not have assigned seating. Groups can change when it comes time to get into groups. Dragging desks was becoming a problem. Ms. G.'s classroom created a whole new dynamic. Other school districts are also using it.

Would we do something for the lower grades? Concerned that a lot of funds are going to a 3rd of the school. We aren't sure if the primary grades are able to use them but there is a possibility. Grades 5 and 6 would be best. At some point, everyone will benefit.

Carol Manning asked if there was any way of increasing the number of STEAM bins? She feels that \$100 is low for each class. Mr. Fleres looked at the products, and is comfortable with it to start the school year. Looking to double/triple in October/November.

What is the prospect of having more computers? 30 Chromebooks were already purchased by the HSA this year. 30 more are coming from the district which brings our total to 90. We have more than many other school in the district.

Any other prospect for fundraising for computers? Long term goal in school district is 3 years to have a 1:1 Chromebook initiative. It started this year with 7th graders. Next year, all 7th and 8th graders will have them. They will be dropping it down to lower grades in 3 years. Chromebooks are the most affordable and efficient way to go. BOE will not service Apple products. They are willing to maintain the Chromebooks. Cost of an iPad is \$700 vs. \$199 for a Chromebook.

Moving forward with any school donation – he's open to suggestions of things that benefit the most students above and beyond what the district offers.

Jenn Laino suggested outdoor, wood reading benches. Girl scouts have raised money with cookie sales. Suggesting something simple that they can use all winter and that the Troop can donate? Mr. Fleres said that he would not be able to put on the backfield due to concerns with plowing/snow removal during the winter that could cause damage to them.

A friend bench was mentioned. Has this ever been considered? Mr. Fleres has looked into buddy benches. It has been shown to have good and bad results. A child can sit on the bench and sit there for half an hour until someone comes over to sit down. Still at times, the child that needs it the most, often no one comes over to play with that child.

Tracey Coleman brought up the repaving of the blacktop and wanted to know if the hopscotch would be painted back onto it? The district will paint the generic lines onto the blacktop. Michele Camacho mentioned that Forest Glen pictures have a beautiful blacktop. Mr. Fleres requested that if you can find out who did it, it would be an idea for next year for designs that

could be painted on the blacktop. We can get stencils and the parents can donate their time and do it over a weekend.

Michele Camacho suggested looking into freestanding “little libraries”. Watsessing has one. How can we look into getting something like this? Tracey Coleman said they cost \$500. It would be a good place to recycle books. It is an item that would need to be weatherproof since it’s placed on the outside. Also, would be a concern with snow removal. The idea can be entertained next year.

President’s Report:

Jen Guidea stated that the Board will be proposing new bylaws that we will bring to the membership in September for a vote. The current bylaws are old and they are inconsistent. We would like to start from a new place next year. We have seen the bylaws from some of the other HSAs in Bloomfield. Will propose new bylaws in September and will vote in October.

Also, in terms of chair people and class parents, chair folders that were distributed in previous years had information that included instructions, costs, flyers, etc. We would like to bring them back and have complete information for the chairs to run the event.

Also, with regards to class parties, people were disappointed this year. If anyone has new ideas, please let us know. Also, if anyone has any ideas on events/projects, please reach out to Jen G. She would gladly meet/discuss any ideas. She is new to this and even though there were some bumps along the way, things worked out.

Adam Japhet has been working on the HSA website and its back up. We will be working on it over the summer to include a live calendar. Hopefully for the next school year it will be useful tool for everyone.

Upcoming Events:

- June 14th - Teacher/Staff Luncheon
- June 16th – Fiesta Day
- June 19th – 6th Grade Class Day
- June 20th – Kindergarten Promotion
- June 20th through June 22nd – Half Days
- September 6th – First day of school

Thank you to all the class parents. The end of the year can get crazy and we know it’s a lot of work. Thank you to everyone especially the 6th grade parents for making their last days at Brookdale memorable.

Open Discussion:

Jody Polidoro brought up that she had some issues with the board and is hesitant to bring it up because of possible repercussions of her possible not being made a class parent next year or chairing the Fun Fair. With that, she stated that she ran the Fun Fair and was very busy and had a lot of parent volunteers helping her. She acknowledged and thanked them that day for their volunteering. She stated that the board was sitting on the bench on the blacktop. No one came over to see if they could help or see how things were going. She stated that the Board needs to be more inclusive of others. Parents do things and the Board acts as the manager of the HSA and volunteers need to be recognized. She again stated that no one came over to help.

Jen G. stated that she is 8 months pregnant and was not in a position to physically do much that day and didn't really see Jody. The Board members are all volunteers and we have all done many things during the year. This was not intentional. It would be great if more people would sign up and volunteer. In the future, we can all try to do better.

Samantha Wallace stated that she was reading to her son's class and was unable to help set up. She also stated that she and Lisa chaired the Tricky Tray and there weren't many volunteers and many people that helped out didn't even attend Brookdale.

Tina G stated that she didn't arrive to the Fun Fair till later. Tina also stated that she's been class parent for 2 classes, chaired Holiday Gift Shop, Plant Sale, and helped with Tricky Tray. She's tired and is done for the year.

Jen G. questioned what Jody's point is? Jody said that managers should be acknowledging its volunteers. She acknowledged all of her volunteers that day. She questioned if Michele Camacho received an email acknowledging her help with Bengal Pride?

Jen G. stated that she did approach Jody and told her that she was doing a good job and the event went very well.

Lisa Italiano stated "we busted our ass during the Tricky Tray". No one came up to help us run gifts. Everyone afterwards came up to them and said they did a great job. She didn't need it in writing.

Carrie Miller announced that the 5th grade car wash raised \$1,745! She also noted that "if you don't feed teachers, they will eat your students." Suggested that there be a committee of a group of people that want to get together. This has been a wonderful discussion and hope it's the beginning and not the end.

Michele Camacho stated she is happy for the opportunity to discuss these issues. There has been a disconnect/separation this year and is being felt by everyone. Appreciated Jody bringing it up. At the end of the day, people are feeling unappreciated. We all really value this school and want to be appreciated.

Jen G. stated that when we came on, the person who had the most information (Monica Lutz) left. She was on the board for 8 years. She intended to be more involved this year but was not and the board was left with to figure it out on our own. There was a disconnect from the beginning of the year because we didn't have the information we needed. We won't be starting with a deficit next year. Whomever steps in as co-president, possibly Samantha, we will have the continuity of knowing what needs to be done. It was bumpy in the beginning of the year and we all did the best we could do.

Dani Kennedy stated that there are former members of the HSA in the building. Jen G. stated that we know that and have reached out to those people and have not received help. Dani stated she didn't know what had been done and it was a suggestion.

A parent asked what money needs to be raised for 6th grade? Ms. G says we don't need to raise money. The money is used to go to Philadelphia for the 6th grade class trip, a nicer breakfast, a nicer hard covered yearbook, better food on Fiesta Day and graduation. It was never communicated to parents that it's flexible and not mandatory. Nothing is set in stone. 5th grade parents need someone to guide us. The 6th grade event coordinator folder will have the information and this will be separate from the class parent information.

The folder that was passed on from last year was very detailed and included receipts. If you want to be the 6th grade event coordinator, please let the Board know. Sign up Genius is closed out as of now.

Ms. G doesn't really care who does it and what eventually is decided. It's up to the parents. We've gone with the traditions that we've had in the past. Mr. Fleres stated that nothing is set in stone. It came out of the parent base at Brookdale. Ms. G was brought into it because she's been a 6th grade teacher for 14 years at Brookdale. Mr. Fleres stated that no child is excluded due to financial issues. Whatever is dictated by the parent group is what is done. Every child is to be included. The HSA committed to help pay for the sweatshirts for those who could not pay. If you want to add to it, that's up to the parents. The sweatshirts were \$17 each and the remaining money went to the 6th grade fundraising.

Was there a parent meeting with the 6th grade? That is done in the fall. Everything is in the folder. A lot of activities are done during the day so you will get those parents who are home/work from home. That's just the reality of the situation. Jen Laino stated that a lot of parents work and we are left with 3 or 4 parents who are home and able to help. To constantly ask these same people all the time is difficult. It seems like it's the same antiquated way of doing things. A lot of families have both parents working.

Mr. Fleres stated that the reality is that other schools have taken away those activities due to the lack of volunteers. The teachers have a contract and events cannot be done in the evening.

Michele Camacho stated that things were done at the last minute. She received a last-minute email from the HSA regarding Bengal Pride. Last year in June, 4 events were held and Jenn Harvey made sure they were done. No one was able to step in.

Dani Kennedy mentioned a private school that used something called “job swapping”. If there was someone that needed to fill in for someone that couldn’t make it, it would be a way to open the pool of volunteers. Parents from different grades can help. It’s another way to share the load.

Tracey Coleman stood and said that everyone here is amazing. She said take a note from a man and say no! There are only 3 men in the room at this meeting. Make the men run an event. What we should be doing is asking each other what can we do to help each other and make it better. A get together in the Fall with parents was suggested and is being planned. We need to bring some new parents in. It’s always the same people that volunteer. There’s always plenty to do. She is always amazed by everything that gets done and what everyone does. After STEAM night, she read all of the reviews and you get the thanks and recognition.

Adam Japhet has noticed a bit of father’s coming to the HSA meetings. Mother’s should try to get the father’s more involved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Tina L. Gallina, HSA Secretary