

Burroughs PTA Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2018 6:30-8:30

Officers Present:

Catherine Lipinsky, President

Britt Waterman, Vice President

Eric Larson, Co-Treasurer

Jennie Hartman, Volunteer Coordinator

Madeline Lohman, Secretary

The minutes from the September 25, 2018 meeting were approved.

Special Funding Requests

Mr. Pederson and Mr. Frober representing the 4th grade team requested additional funding to cover the cost of buses to Deep Portage. Every year, the 4th grade takes an overnight trip to Deep Portage Environmental Center for several days of science classes. In order to keep costs down and make sure everyone can attend regardless of ability to pay, the PTA subsidizes the trip. The cost of buses has been increasing, so the line item in the budget no longer covers enough of the costs. The total cost of the trip is \$5400, the current budget provides for \$3547, so the teachers request an additional \$2000. The request was approved.

Mr. Hensley requested funding for the Bobcat (5th grade) choir to attend the Zach Sobiech Clouds concert at the Mall of America that would require money for a bus and a fee for each student for a total of \$625. The choir is practicing the song "Clouds" that everyone sings. It is a group concert in honor of Zach Sobiech who wrote the song called Clouds as he was dying of cancer and now everyone gathers every year to sing the song. Every kid gets a t-shirt. Part of the \$5 cost goes to cancer research. There is already a line item for \$350 for choir trip buses from previous years, so the total discretionary cost would be \$275. The request was approved.

Ana presented a special funding request for mindfulness. Jen had surveyed teachers and then Ana and the admin team met to decide if anything needed to be added based on the survey. Mindfulness is a core part of the Burroughs culture. The request has some classroom materials – bells for new teachers and breathing balls for all classes – as well as mindfulness professional development on classroom practice, and then having Jen continuing as a consultant, doing a parent and child class, designing classroom visual aids (a request from teachers), coaching, a building-wide project, and mindfulness lessons in 7 classrooms with teachers who wanted more co-teaching. The total cost comes to \$5945. Parents had questions over the costs of the program – were there other programs that might achieve similar ends for less money? Was it a priority for teachers? In the survey the PTA conducted, parents were strongly supportive of mindfulness and mentioned it as the top social emotional program at Burroughs. 14 teachers wanted classroom materials, 7-8 wanted Jen Feriancek to provide classroom lessons, and 7 wanted to take further professional development. Based on strong parent interest and the endorsement of Ana Bartl, the PTA voted to approve the funds for this year.

Ms. Weber, the media specialist, presented a funding request for reserve teachers to fill in when she attends the meetings of her professional association. She requested \$250 to attend three meetings during the school year. The request was approved.

Bylaw Changes

Madeline Lohman, the PTA secretary, presented the new Universal Bylaws that the MN PTA is asking member PTAs to adopt. The Universal Bylaws are the same as the base bylaws Burroughs used before, except they now contain a procedure for removing officers that do not fulfill the duties of their office and they also explicitly ban email voting. To capture all the unique changes that Burroughs had made to our bylaws, we now have Standing Rules that cover our additional officers, dues, quorum, meeting dates, and financial processes. The PTA voted to approve the new Universal Bylaws and standing rules.

Silent Auction Results

Emily Peach provided an update on the silent auction. Thank you to everyone who came out and made the silent auction a success! The auction raises money for the Burroughs Fund, which the school uses to cover non-staff costs of the budget, so that all the money it receives from the district can go to staff costs, like a full time-school nurse and social worker. This year, the Burroughs Fund is also paying the salary of two teacher emeriti that are doing reading intervention for students who need assistance in reading. The auction has currently raised \$65,000, including \$12,650 to fund professional development for teachers. The PTA will work with the administration and teachers to decide how to distribute those funds. There is \$24,000 of Great Gatherings tickets left to sell this year, so Emily estimates that by the end, the auction will raise \$85-90,000.

Facebook Policy

The Burroughs parent Facebook page was started by a parent volunteer several years ago after discussion and approval by the PTA. This year, we've received a number of complaints about some of the posts on the page not creating a welcoming and supportive environment. The parent volunteer would also like to have assistance moderating or perhaps even step down. As a result, the PTA has drafted a code of conduct for the Facebook page and will be seeking volunteer moderators. Making it an official PTA page should not cause any problems with the district as long as we clearly indicate that it is not a district-controlled page.

The draft code emphasizes that the page is to build a supportive community and so some posts may not be appropriate. Primarily, criticism of individuals is not allowed and comments on Burroughs policies should focus on positive recommendations for change. Madeline will post the draft policy on the main PTA page and on the Facebook page. Anyone with comments or thoughts on improving our Facebook page, please contact her!

Madeline is also going to work with FEJ to create other inclusive policies, including communications checklists, a way to evaluate funding requests equitably, and policies on filling limited spots in PTA-funded activities.

Read-a-Thon Update

Jen Thorp is the new Chair of the Read-a-thon and presented some of the changes this year. Many of the long-time volunteers from past years have aged out of Burroughs, so there are no longer volunteers for all the positions. One big change is that the PTA will be hiring Matchbox Theater to write, direct, and design the 5th grade skit, taking over the biggest and most intensive volunteer position. The Read-a-thon will still need a parent to be the liaison with Matchbox and help handle the paperwork for the students,

including permission slips and making sure everyone is dropped off and picked up when they need to be. Another change will be adding some events throughout the month for all grades to get everyone excited, not just the 5th grade. Some of the other missing positions include someone to design the art displays in the atrium, one or more people to schedule guest readers in classrooms, someone to put together the take-home packets, and more. Importantly, Jen needs a co-Chair to work with her and start learning the position for future years. Contact Jen or Jennie for more information.

Subcommittee Reports

Site Council

Tonight, Site Council adopted a new dress code for Burroughs which will go out in an e-blast this week. The homework policy is still being discussed.

EZ Bucks

Lara Tickle reported on the successes of EZ Bucks so far this year. EZ Bucks has earned \$760 and the first three Dining for Dollars have raised \$1056. The next Dining for Dollars is a non-food event: Parents Night Out with Conquer Ninja Gym on Dec. 1! Drop your kids off for two hours of activities and enjoy dinner or a movie. The next food event is Café Zupas in Edina on Dec. 4.

Families for Equity and Justice

FEJ has several projects in progress. The Classroom Champs have launched – everyone should receive an email from their class or grade champ soon. The first community service event of the year was raking leaves for local seniors who need help with yardwork. There are more to come – Meals on Wheels, Simpson Housing Dinner, Special Olympics and more. Check the community service page for more. FEJ will also be working with Ms. Weber to launch a book wish list that covers diverse books for the school library. Finally, FEJ is sponsoring an event series this year. The first event is called “How to Talk with Your Kids about Race” and it will be on Dec. 11 from 6-8 pm. One parent wondered if she could invite some interested parents that she knows at Lyndale, and FEJ thinks this could be a great opportunity to open up the event to the other pipeline schools that go to Justice Page (Lyndale and Green Central). FEJ is seeking parents to help lead the committee that focuses on bringing together Burroughs families with families from the pipeline schools and the committee that works on communications, which could work with Madeline on the draft policy.

PTA Successes

Jennie reported on PTA successes since the September meeting. Burroughs used a new school supply program this year called Yubbler that donated a portion of each purchase back to the school. Burroughs earned \$2000 and parents donated an additional \$600. The PTA used those funds to buy \$1600 worth of supplies for the autism program and Ms. A. The remaining funds we took in cash. Mindfulness Night was very successful and we had over 40 families attend. Many families also participated in Bike and Walk to School Week. Jennie gave away more than 100 Nickelodeon Universe mystery tickets to participants. Thank you to all the families who helped with Fall Clean Up – they bagged 90 bags of leaves from the school grounds! The Book Fair and the Book Fair Café was also a success. This year, the PTA earned \$5712 in cash and also used some of our existing Scholastic dollars to buy books for each classroom and

to provide a coupon for a free book through Ms. A to any student that might not be able to buy their own.