

**Burroughs PTA Meeting Minutes**  
**September 25, 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 April 24, 2018 meeting were approved.

### **Co-Treasurer Election**

The Treasurer role on the PTA is very large, so we also have a co-Treasurer who shadows and assists the job for a year before taking over. Eric V. Larson is running for the position. He has worked in finance his whole life, so has the skill set to handle the treasurer's responsibilities. He has three kids at Burroughs in 4<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 1<sup>st</sup> grades. He was elected unanimously.

### **PTA Dues**

Under the state and national PTA bylaws, we need to charge dues for people to become voting members of the PTA. The dues are \$10, which pay for the Burroughs PTA's dues to the state and national organizations.

### **Results of the PTA Survey – Madeline Lohman**

The PTA parent survey was distributed in the fall and spring as widely as possible. These are preliminary results – a parent has offered to have his undergraduate students fully analyze the data, which will be ready in November. The survey results will be posted on the PTA website with tonight's powerpoint.

- We received 150 responses from parents with kids in all grades, fairly evenly distributed.
- People felt most connected to the school by all-school events like the spring picnic, followed by volunteering, communications like the Bulletin, school staff, and Great Gatherings. The PTA should prioritize all-school events given these findings.
- In academics, roughly 75% felt positively about Burroughs. Concerns were changes to AL instruction, access to math and reading interventionists, large classes, and a lack of movement and play-based learning. Most of these are not something that can be directly addressed by the PTA. Strengths did include several things supported by the PTA including Singapore math, literacy programs, class projects, art and music, and field trips.

- In social-emotional programming, 75% again felt positively about Burroughs. Concerns were around large class sizes, a need for more play, and a desire for more specific SEL programming, again things that are hard for the PTA to address. Strengths included the overall school culture and staff, along with mindfulness, a PTA-supported program.
- For both of those areas, the PTA can probably best act by providing resources for professional development or purchasing curricular resources for teachers, as directed by Ana Bartl.
- People were fairly familiar with the importance of the PTA budget in supporting Burroughs programming, though some comments indicate that parents are more aware of discretionary purchases like skis and less of the ongoing, much larger commitment to things like the math curriculum and school operating costs.
- People were already highly involved in Burroughs events and fundraising, though many more people were interested in participating than in running things, especially when it comes to fundraising. Very few new people indicated an interest in fundraising, which is a problem because it limits inclusiveness and means that as families graduate, the PTA may struggle to maintain its current budget.
- Most people get their information from the Burroughs Bulletin – how can we make sure all families are receiving this information? The school cannot share emails with the PTA – parents must opt-in. Flyers are also an important form of communication, but cost money.
- A little more than half of the respondents had attended a PTA meeting, indicating the survey reached people who had maybe not been included before.
- When asked what would make it easier to attend meetings, better publicity was the leading option, so the PTA tried to have flyers in student folders and purchased signs to put up around the school. Shorter meetings are also a goal and we will try to keep things on time tonight. People also wanted opportunities for socializing and having discussions on school issues, which conflicts with the goal of shorter meetings and may mean we should arrange alternate times for those, or have socializing in the half hour before the meeting. Going with someone they know and receiving a personal invitation were also top choices, so please bring your friends to the PTA!
- The question also allowed write in answers and pointed to some challenges with PTA discussions, with people finding a few voices dominating and a feeling of cliquishness. We will try to address some of that through moderation but some will need to be done by participants being aware of leaving space for others to speak.
- If anyone knows how to put PTA meetings online, please let us know!
- Finally, we asked what people felt should be the role of the PTA. Some answers are exactly what we want to do: be a liaison between parents and the school, fundraise to support Burroughs programs, encourage family involvement, and be inclusive. Being inclusive is the biggest challenge there. People also suggested roles that are not part of the PTA's mission, particularly holding the school administration accountable and setting school policies. We can certainly gather input and pass it on to the administration but we are here to support the school's priorities and be a hub for communication.

### **PTA Mission and Vision – Catherine Lipinsky**

The PTA mission is to promote family involvement, support school goals through projects and fundraising, and build a strong Burroughs community. There are school goals that we have around a great education for our kids that are not funded by the district and the PTA has to provide a lot of support around fundraising, so we do talk a lot about fundraising, but we also want to have many other ways of engaging as a school community.

Some of the PTA supported programs include:

- Math Curriculum: Singapore Math, M2 and M3
- Art Curriculum: Fine Arts Poetry, Art Adventures
- Music Curriculum: Bravo!, MN Sinfonia, Ordway and Choir trip
- Environmental Centre Overnight Field Trips: Voyager and Deep Portage
- After School: Chess, Destination Imagination, Bird Watching and Lego League
- Active & Healthy Programs: Mindfulness, Track & Field Day and Ski trips
- Celebrations: 5th Grade Graduation, Annual School Picnic, Teacher Appreciations

### **Mindfulness Night – Jen Feriancek**

Burroughs will be hosting a Family Mindfulness Night on October 2 from 6-7:30. This is one opportunity the PTA is sponsoring to build community and be inclusive without fundraising. It will be an open house style event for students and families. Jen will lead a short mindfulness lesson in the auditorium and then families can go out to the atrium and complete 5 stations together as family. The event will celebrate learning that kids have already done and the mindfulness strategies they already know, as well as introduce kindergarten and other new parents to mindfulness at Burroughs. We need volunteers to help run the event. To volunteer, visit the Burroughs sign up genius page. Either pick a station you think is interesting or indicate you are ok doing anything. Your kids can help volunteer. The idea is that you can either do the lesson and activities first, and then volunteer, or volunteer first and then do the lesson.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

#### *Site Council – Tiffany Reis*

Site Council is 17 members: 7 teachers, 7 parents, the principal and vice principal, and one community member (currently the head of Park and Rec at Lynnhurst). We meet monthly for an hour and half in the media center – teachers volunteer to be on the Council while parent members are elected to two-year commitments. Site Council talks about school policies – anything that needs to be changed or new policies that need to be created. They have been working on the homework policy to be consistent throughout the school. Members are taking feedback from the community throughout the year and bringing it to the Council. In spring, the Council talks about the budget for the school and any discretionary decisions. The Council is mostly an advisory council but we can adjust some of the policies over which the school has autonomy (dress code, homework). They are right now figuring out the best

way for the Council to create and post minutes online so non-members can learn what is happening. They take input from discussions at PTA and suggestions from parents who reach out to specific members. They have also done surveys. They are open to other ideas on how to connect with people. One parent suggested a formal process as well as these informal avenues.

#### *Fall for Burroughs Auction – Emily Peach*

The auction is one of Burroughs' biggest fundraisers and this year is Friday, November 9 at the Minneapolis Events Center. It is a grown-up night in downtown Minneapolis, with food, drinks, a DJ, and a silent auction. Parents can donate money to the classroom funds, which will purchase silent auction items or donate items directly to the auction; buy a ticket; become a sponsor; or host a Great Gathering. Great Gatherings are activities hosted by parents that are sometimes for adults only or for the whole family and the price of the ticket goes to the Burroughs Fund. The Burroughs Fund provides direct support to the school budget including all office costs and, this year, the salaries of two teacher emiriti to provide reading intervention.

#### *Destination Imagination – Thea Reilkoff*

DI is a science, technology, engineering, arts, and math competition where kids compete in teams. We are hoping to get 6 teams, but it depends on being able to find parent volunteers who can meet after school to help oversee the DI teams. The program runs October through March for one hour a week and then there is a regional tournament in March. All grades can participate.

#### *Landscape Committee – Abby Hougan and Cassie Neu*

The fall clean-up is coming up on October 27 on Saturday. It is family friendly so bring all kids to help get the school grounds ready for winter. There will be donuts and coffee for volunteers. If anyone has a connection, they are looking for donations of mulch, lawn bags and other yard supplies. Things come up throughout the year in maintaining the grounds so if you are interested, we can use extra help. In the summer, they need help watering the courtyard, so look for sign up in the Bulletin.

#### *EZ Bucks and Dining for Dollars – Lara Tickle*

EZ Bucks is fundraising through our everyday purchases. Last year, it raised over \$6000. Box Tops can be clipped from a lot of products. Classrooms will get rewards based on when they reach certain levels of Box Tops, so she will need volunteers to help run parties for classes. This way all classes can hopefully get a chance to celebrate. Coke Cola Gives, Holy Land Hummus, Country Hearth Bread, Kowalski's, and Amazon Smile are all great ways to raise money. Shop with Scrip is a new program that can raise money for Burroughs. You purchase full value gift cards from the PTA and then the retailers give a percentage back to the PTA. You can do it online or through a form in the main office, though you can't use your credit card. Many big retailers participate. New this year is Dining for Dollars. We are hoping to have two

events a month. Our first event is next Monday at My Burger near Lake Calhoun, and then on October 9 at Café Zupas near Southdale. We are also working on Conquer Ninja Gym.

### *Families for Equity and Justice – Jen Aspengren*

FEJ is a group of parents looking for ways for Burroughs to be more equitable. Last spring, they came up with six areas of work.

- Communications – making sure families are all getting the same messages home
- Literature – looking at ensuring books across the school, in the library and classrooms, feature children of color, kids with disabilities, and others
- Pipeline Schools – working with the other schools that feed into Justice Page and Washburn
- Community Service – organizing a monthly community service activity for families
- Classroom Champions – looking to launch at book fair, trying to hold free and low-cost events for families to get to know each other over the course of the year, organizing events by classroom in lower grades (K, 1, and 2) and by grade for the upper grades. They are looking for volunteers to play that champion role for a class or grade. The person would help connect and communicate with other parents.
- Events – looking to host an equity training with Macarre Traynham. They will bring a proposal to the November meeting and have a sample event before then to see if this is what we want as a community. The goal would be a six event series on addressing racial equity in our community.

FEJ advertises their meetings in the Bulletin and will be recruiting people for classroom champions and book club.

### *BRAVO – Alyssa Northrup*

BRAVO is a music enrichment appreciation program where parent or community volunteers teach a music curriculum in the regular class of six lessons throughout the year. This year the focus is on the Voices of Instruments. In order to have it, we need volunteers for all 6 grades. If you have kids in those classes and time to volunteer, please sign up.

### **Volunteer Update – Jennie Hartman**

These are additional volunteer needs beyond what were mentioned in the committee reports.

Read-a-Thon is our school's biggest fundraiser and it lost its chair to an out-of-state move. We desperately need a Read-A-Thon Chair. There is also a Steering Committee meeting on Tuesday Oct. 9 to discuss the future of the Read-a-Thon because we need to match the scope of the Read-a-Thon to the enthusiasm of volunteers. If we can't re-energize volunteers, we will need to dramatically scale it back.

## Other volunteer needs

- Book Fair and Book Fair Café volunteers running cash registers - these are easy 30 min to 1 hour slots
- Bike and Walk to School Day on Wed. Oct. 10 – volunteers can lead groups of walkers and bikers. There is a Google doc through the Bulletin to coordinate this
- Media Center needs volunteers during kindergarten specialist time 1:30-2:45 and also has opportunities to scan and organize books

## **Burroughs Dress Code discussion**

There has been discussion on the dress code and how it is enforced, where it was clear that the policy needs revision. We are gathering input on action steps that can be passed on to the Site Council for creating a policy. We have a draft policy that can be used as a starting point. One suggestion is that enforcement should run through the parents, since they are buying the clothes at this age and it would avoid shaming the student, especially since students probably do not have extra clothes to change into. Another parent supported the draft policy because it made it clear that nonsexual body parts like shoulders were not a problem and would not be sexualized under the code.

## **Future of the PTA**

We are committed to creating a PTA that is inclusive and representative of all parents. Please let us know if you have any topics you would want addressed by PTA. Fill out your notecards if you have a suggestion you prefer to make anonymously or email us.

## **Special Budget Requests**

As mentioned, flyers are a key communication tool but expensive to make, especially when using commercial print shops. The PTA executive board is requesting \$500 for subcommittees to use the office copier so that we don't have to keep paying expensive rates. The request was approved unanimously.

## **State of the School – Ana Bartl**

The current mission may change as a result of the school visioning process that started last spring and will be continuing this fall. Once we have the results from the visioning sessions, we will form a strategic planning committee to formulate next steps.

Burroughs has high proficiency rates in math, reading, and science. There was a 7% increase in students exceeding their growth targets between 2017 and 2018.

There have been slight declines in proficiency and growth in math, decline in reading proficiency, inconsistent growth in reading, and flat growth in science. Our goal is that every child achieves a year of growth every year, and that we address the gaps in achievement between white students and targeted students such as students of color, English language learners, etc.

We write a school improvement plan every year that must be linked to district priorities. We are really focusing on multi-tiered system of supports this year. Reading and math goals are to increase students achieving average or better growth in reading from 63% to 73% using a) guided reading instruction in small group instruction and b) differentiated core instruction. In science, we want to increase proficiency from 73% to 83% through differentiated instruction in the core classroom and the STEM specialist.

Burroughs uses different kinds of assessments: classroom assessments, plus the FAST test is required in fall and winter for K-5, and optional in spring for 3-5 – last year they did not take it; MCA in the spring for grades 3-5. FAST is a screener, so it will flag if we need to dig deeper if a student is not where they should be. Results and student performance will be shared by teachers through conferences, report cards, and by reaching out directly to parents.