

PTA General Meeting, 7pm, 4/8/2019

Members in attendance (19): Kathryn Farmer, Carrie Lewis, Staci Rijal, Bridget Baker-White, Sandy Faulkner, BJ Frank, Emily Michel, Katie Medema, Heather Lady, Olga Kindi, Abena Durity, Lindsey Paulsen, Trey Billips, Jenn Topping, John Marino, Roxana Guerra, Candi Sparrow, Margaret Lorber, Alison Wines.

Trey Billips opened the meeting at 7:07pm

Exec Committee Reports

- **President**

- Spring to Action is April 10!! We are really excited about our project, water bottle refilling stations. You can donate via this link:
https://www.spring2action.org/organizations/charles-barrett-elementary-school-parent-teacher-association?fbclid=IwAR0VA06dYOQ6VatrDkEyK2NdpFAO5LsYJ_kzewJ7KmvurhOtH6lwKcw8NII
- Being on the hiring committee was enlightening. CBES has a reputation as a great school and prospective candidates know it. It was rewarding to hear as a parent.

- **Treasurer**

- Please take a look at the Budget Income and Expense Report that was handed out as you entered the meeting. If you did not attend the meeting, contact Carrie Lewis at cbptatreasurer@gmail.com for a copy.
- Carrie is always available at cbptatreasurer@gmail.com if you have questions.

- **Secretary**

- Motion to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2019 meeting (there was no March meeting). Motion approved.

Principal's Report

- Summer work on the building is scheduled.
 - Library is getting new air conditioning and heat
 - ***Replacing HVAC in the **whole building!** (Thank you parents for applying pressure)
 - No update on playground replacement on the Rec side. Not happening this summer as originally planned. This is a city controlled project, not ACPS.
 - School playground work is on track. They will do it in pieces, one piece a year over a few years. This keeps the playground open while they are doing the work.
 - Repairing the leaking wall in auditorium
 - Adding a classroom in the K-pod
- Staffing update:

- Added a K position, 1st grade position (moving 3rd grade teacher to 1st), added a 4th grade
- After break will hire a third admin for the office, a paraprofessional for Kindergarten.
- Hiring for the Assistant Principal is in the final stages.
- Seth went over the ACPS numbers that trigger hiring new teachers and the reason that 3rd grade is going down to 3 teachers.
 - We are trying to get that teaching position back in 3rd grade right now so we can take advantage of the best hiring pool. Hoping for resolution this week.

Margaret Lorber - ACPS Board Rep

- Grade enrollment issues and hiring teachers: The School Board understands and cares. CBES is not the only school in this situation. It's a tough decision and a balancing act with the budget. It is NOT a board decision, it lies with ACPS.
- Concerned with where we are going with our caps on enrollment. Some of the grandfathering due to redistricting caused temporary over-enrollment, we should be seeing the end of that contributing factor soon. Certain exceptions let us go over the caps: a sibling transfer, a military family, etc
- It can't hurt to send email/letters to the board with concerns about these issues, ensures the board is aware of problems at specific schools.
- Questions:
 - Does it help to go to city council to get funding for another 3rd grade teacher?
 - Answer: not really, it is better to go to the board. ACPS has already asked the city for this year's \$\$, is unlikely that the city would give more at this point.
 - If the formula ACPS is following for enrollment and teacher hiring isn't being followed, then what is the point of the formula?
 - Answer: It's on the very margins that the caps are being exceeded and this year we are allowing one or two over. Policy right now is to allow a little flexibility.
 - How does this compare to other school districts? Do they use a similar formula and breakdown?
 - Answer: Margaret can't answer that question, but assumes it is very similar to the formula Arlington and Fairfax use.
 - Are teachers hired only on a one year basis?
 - Answer: Teachers are initially hired on a three year probationary period and after that their contract is more permanent.
 - Will this mean that some students in Barrett's district (families that move over the summer, etc) can't come to Barrett?
 - Answer: Yes, and we are already facing that with Kindergarten this year. They will get placed at the closest school that is under capacity.
 - How would a hiring pool work for these positions?

- Answer: it gives you a screened group of folks that have been hired and vetted, but not assigned a school. This is good, but doesn't necessarily guarantee the best match of teacher with school (all the schools are all pretty different).
- Last item: All the ACPS schools do quarterly meetings to look at goals and how they are achieving them. Barrett/ACPS invited some school board members to attend this quarter's meeting. Margaret was really impressed with the meeting and teachers who presented.

Charles Stone, ACPS Director of Transportation, Presentation

- Please see accompanying powerpoint presentation:
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/482d3e_5a5d758fcd249c2b4b091302f65600b.pdf This presentation has been altered to remove maps that show all of the bus stops for CBES students due to security concerns.
- Lessons learned:
 - Communications with parents had not been done to the level needed during Redistricting. When Mr. Stone came in thinking the walk zones had been communicated and established. Various problems stalled communications with families and nothing went out until July/August.
 - Mail-out of bus eligibility information was ineffective when delayed beyond the end of the school year.
 - Walk to school paths had obstacles viewed by parents and our team differently. Transportation team evaluated the obstacles in our neighborhoods differently. Conversations started due to this.
 - Route changes effective only on Thursdays (so communications go out on Monday or Tuesday and the change takes effect on Thursdays).
- Transportation status for CBES:
 - No changes planned to walk areas or paths.
 - Continue bus service from existing stops
 - Remove some city-wide bus stops that were serving pre Kindergarten and Grand-fathered families who no longer attend CBES
 - Air conditioning on all buses equipped for specialized transportation (special needs buses).
 - Continue to review walk path obstacles. But we want to get as many kids walking as can do it. Not a lot of good criteria as to what makes a route walkable.
 - First we do a desk audit. Then to google maps, picks a residential address and sees the walk/bike options that it give to the school from the given residential address. Then discuss with experts in the area to get insight on traffic in the area. Will come out and drive the routes. Look at elevation gain (hills), etc.) Example: Came out to Chalfonte and Cameron Mills and counted the traffic - determined it was definitely too busy with cars to safely walk.
- Questions from the audience:

- This year we lost our after-school activities buses for kids doing PTA sponsored Baroody activities. What is going on with that? Will we get them back?
 - Answer: Mr. Stone seemed confused by this question and said he has not been involved in any discussions about this. He wasn't completely clear on what we were talking about. He would like to have further discussion on this.
- How much will it cost to roll out new RFID system?
 - Answer: Most of the vendors are no cost for the equipment and then charge \$30/month for each bus. About \$6000/month.
- Walking obstacles: is there a clear definition of what is an "obstacle"?
 - Answer: No, there is not. Not a clear one. A walking path is needed to navigate a street. Generally sidewalks are considered the "walking path."
- To clarify: For this year, no bus changes. Is this something that we'll have to keep revisiting each year?
 - Yes, this year all the same stops will remain. Yes, we will have to keep revisiting it, because the walk-paths along Cameron Mills need to be fixed. There is some responsibility for parents to get their children to a safe walk path. Even if the side streets leading to the walk-path doesn't have an actual sidewalk.
- If you are taking a bus up Cameron Mills, some kids can use the bus and some can't. Why can't all the kids in the neighborhood use the bus, if they can get to Cameron Mills?
 - Answer: It was difficult to follow Mr. Stone's answer.

Next meeting: May 6, 2019 @ 8am - This is a MORNING MEETING

Please email Trey Billips regarding any PTA issues (not Seth Kennard) or things you'd like to see in meetings, things we should be talking about: cbptapresident@gmail.com Or contact any member of the board: <https://www.cbpta.org/meet-the-team>