

Willard Middle School PTA Meeting Minutes December 5, 2007

Upcoming Events:

Thurs, Jan. 10: 8th Grade Parent Info Night at BHS – about Small Schools
Mon, Jan. 21: MLK Jr. Birthday holiday – **No School**
Tues, Jan. 22: School Governance Council, 4 to 6 pm in the Library
Thurs, Jan. 24: Coffee Chat – Transitioning to BHS, 8 to 9:15 am
Fri, Jan. 25: End of 2nd Quarter/1st Semester
Mon, Jan. 28: Semester Break – **No School**
Tues, Jan. 29: 8th Grade Parent Night at Willard about BHS

Next PTA meeting: Wednesday, Jan. 9, at 6:00 pm in the Library (note earlier start time)

Welcome and Introductions: Approximately 14 parents and staff attended the meeting, with a mix of sixth, seventh and eighth grade families represented. Eduardo Oruzco kindly served as our Spanish language translator for the meeting.

Previous Minutes: Minutes of the November 7, 2007 meeting were approved with corrections:

PTA action on a second request by Teacher Allison Krasnow was omitted from the minutes, which should have reported that a motion was made and seconded that if last year's School Site Council was not able to award Ms. Krasnow money for her grant request for Zome geometric building materials for math classes for all 140 7th graders, the PTA would cover the amount up to \$500. This motion passed.

Guest Presentation: Cathy Campbell, President of the Berkeley Federation of Teachers (BFT) and a past English teacher and parent at Willard, presented information about collective bargaining so parents can be informed during the negotiation process coming up between the District and Teachers union. Key points included:

- Five unions operate in the BUSD, including the BFT (teachers, librarians, psychologists and others), classified employees (secretaries, instructional specialists/assistants), blue-collar employees (custodians, bus drivers), middle management and the Principals Union.
- All 5 unions will begin negotiations as current contracts expire on June 30, 2008.
- It took 2-1/2 years to agree on the last contract, with 10 months in mediation.
- Both the District and the unions want an agreement before the contracts expire.
- Ways to stay informed include the BUSD website (www.berkeley.k12.ca.us), the BFT website (www.berkeleyfederationofteachers.org) or Cathy's email (bft4tchr@lmi.net).

Cathy noted the BFT wants to urge parents to be proactive and stay informed about negotiations.

Reports: Latino Parent Night took place on Nov. 30. Principal Ithurburn thanked the PTA officers who attended, Nancy Lake and Thania Marin for organizing the event, the food and the set up. The event was positive but only a small number of families attended. Outreach for the meeting included flyers, recorded phone messages and personal calls.

The intention was to present Latino families with information about programs and resources at Willard that could benefit their children. Isabelle Rodriguez spoke about the District English Language Learner Committee (DELLC) and what to expect at Berkeley High. Thania as well as Eduardo Orozco would like to establish a chapter of DELLC at Willard. Ideas about other events to reach out to the Latino community included a Latino Honor Roll night, a Cinco de Mayo event, or a Salsa Dance Night.

Teacher George Rose noted that Willard used to have a strong Latino Student organization/club, which helped build identity for these students and helped interest them and their parents in coming to events. We need a parent advisor or mentor to lead meetings with students, or a Cal Berkeley student if the club is associated with the after school program. Having both a man and a woman to organize activities would be ideal.

The Black Excellence Program is planned for African-American students, tentatively on February 27, with events during the day and in the evening. The teachers run the event, with support from the PTA.

Principal's Report: Mr. Ithurburn noted some events coming up including: School Governance Council on Dec. 12; Winter Concert on Dec. 12; with school out on Dec. 20.

Mini-grants: Chair Tish Brewster reported that there are requests from 21 teacher and staff for 27 projects for a total of \$13,500 this year. However, there is a budget of \$6,000 for mini-grants this year, with approximately \$4,000 additional funds if carryover money from last year's mini-grants is not claimed. A deadline of December 21st for all receipts from 2006-07 mini-grant awards will be communicated to teachers. This will clarify how much money is available for 2007-08 grants. The Mini-Grant committee meets on Dec. 11 to come up with recommendations, with a vote by the PTA to approve or disapprove funding after that.

Fall Fundraising Appeal: Kelly Cash reported that the letter is ready to go out to parents, with a goal of raising \$6,000 or more. Almost \$2,000 was raised from the Back to School Night appeal and membership fees.

Treasurer Report: Treasurer Jay Kelekian reported that we have \$14,200 in the bank that is uncommitted. Information about last year's Silent Auction included:

\$2,500 net earned from the Auction

\$1,800 net earned from the Raffle

\$4,300 total earned = what we need to earn this year to meet our Budget

\$1,000 was spent on the Auction in expenses.

Silent Auction/Raffle promotion: It was suggested that the PTA hold a Coffee Chat before the Silent Auction (which will be held Friday, March 21st) to show the Raffle prizes, give out booklets of Auction items, and sell Raffle tickets.

Directory: Fred Huxley reported the Directory will be sent to the District print shop soon. There was discussion about the current opt-in system of participation, which means that only people who agree to list their names in the Directory receive a copy of the Directory. It was generally agreed that it is preferable to distribute Directories to everyone in the school: to raise awareness of the Directory, to increase interest in being listed in it, and to distribute copies in class, saving postage. This approach is acceptable to the District because all students receive a Directory at Berkeley High whether or not their information is listed.

However, for the 3 years the Directory has been produced, parents have been told that the system is opt-in only and that if they did not want their student's name, phone number or email address listed, it would not appear in the Directory. Because this was the understanding this year as well, it was decided that the PTA needs to honor this arrangement.

Therefore, it was decided:

- **To print 180 copies (146 students, 30 staff and extras) and distribute them in person and by first class mail**
- **To pursue a yearlong effort to sign students/parents up for next year's Directory, with the goal of increasing participation as much as possible.**
- **And to promote the Directory as distributed to everyone next year, regardless of whether they are listed or not.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm. Minutes by Secretary Cindy Phillips-Romick