

Jefferson Elementary PTA Meeting
Jan 11, 2007
School Library, 6:30-8:00 pm

Of special note!

This PTA meeting was the first one with simultaneous translation into Spanish. Translation provided by Veronica Urdaneta. Veronica is translating for us using equipment from BUSD. She will also be translating the newsletter and has already translated some flyers for us.

Thank you's

- Dinner tonight: 5th-grade families
- Posada/Fiesta Latina event: Suzanne Teran, Outreach Coordinator
- Kwanzaa event: Marissa Saunders
- Megan gives thanks to all who contributed in the Gift Giving event. Carloads of stuff were taken over to Rosa Parks

Outreach efforts to Spanish-speaking families

- The Fiesta Latina event was very successful. Many Spanish-speaking families attended and had a chance to provide feedback to the PTA.
- In attendance at the PTA meeting there were several Spanish speakers. They presented some thoughts to the PTA meeting:
 - Gloria comments that in 6 years she never knew these meetings existed. She and others are eager to participate. Many Latino families are eager to participate, but don't know how. She points out that many don't even know how to talk to their children's teachers due to the language barrier.
 - There was a lot of enthusiasm at the event and interest in bringing more of the Latino culture to the school.
 - These families have a lot of interest in learning how their kids are doing at school.
 - They would like more information on the selection criteria for the English Learner Advisory Committee, the school governance committee that is responsible for spending funds allocated for English Learners.
 - There were about 25 adults at the event and everyone was in agreement that if the newsletter was in Spanish then they would want to read it.
 - It is noted that even though they may all be Latino, there are many sub-cultures represented.
 - There are many people who might come to the meetings but they often get home late from work. Advance notice of the meetings might help.
 - A request is made to the principal that more information from the school comes in Spanish.
- Robin notes that Suzanne and Gloria are doing a tremendous job pulling together the Spanish families and that we have a nice start! Work is still underway trying to figure out how to translate the newsletters etc.

Kwaanza celebration

- This event was also a success. About 20 families attended. Being just before the holidays it was a nice ending to the fall session. Marissa provided handouts and discussed the seven principles underlying the holiday.

After School Learning Program (ALP)

- This is a program that the teachers have put together to help decrease the achievement gap between the low- and high-performing students.
- It is a pre-teaching program twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday) where the students are given a preview of the materials being used in the regular classroom so they have additional exposure to material that might be new to them but more familiar to other students.

- Since this program keeps the students after school, it is necessary to provide food and to bus transportation home afterwards. The teachers' pay is funded by the School Site funds, but the bus and food are funded by the PTA. Volunteers are needed to assist in food distribution.
- The teachers already feel like it is making a difference in student performance.

Family Art Night

- Jan 19th
- The idea is for people to come and create art together as families.
- There are tables for gift wrap, collage, paper flower, and origami so far. Megan would like to see 6 more tables and is looking for volunteers for that.
- Sign up for assisting with creating a project or for helping on the night of the event by contacting Megan McKeon.
- The existing allocation of \$100 looks like it may not be enough.
- ***Tim motions to add \$100 to the existing \$200 budget for the event.***
- ***Motion carried.***

Making our classrooms safer by cleaning the basement

- Materials are stacked too high in the classrooms. This is unsafe in the event of an earthquake. The goal is to clean up the basement, organize it, and create places for teachers to store stuff.
- The PTA is being asked to discard unneeded PTA materials that are downstairs, organize those materials that need to be kept, and go through the emergency supplies in the basement to determine what needs to go into the earthquake bin near the Cafetorium and what can be discarded.
- Tim Arai volunteered to help in the next couple of weeks.

Kindergarten night and fair

- Volunteers needed to help Maureen Sullivan and Patricia Mok from 10-1 at 1/20 Kindergarten Fair. Volunteers needed to attend Kindergarten Night 1/23 7-8:30. The intent of these events is to provide information to parents that are considering the local schools for the upcoming school year.
- One of the Spanish-speaking parents, Leticia, volunteers.
- Call 644-6298 to volunteer for either event.

Natomas Tutoring

- The School District has decided to pay for two workshops, on reading (phonics and fluency) and homework. Glory, the school's reading specialist, says that our students need help with reading comprehension more than phonics/fluency, so shall we pay for a third workshop on comprehension? The cost would be about \$500 (including translation, childcare), but could probably be offset by inviting another school to cosponsor with us.
- Since we didn't use the \$1000 that was originally approved, Robin will authorize this third event.

Principal's update

- Leonard Curtis is our new day custodian. He starts at the end of December and comes to us from King Middle School
- The principal is working with a committee of parents and teachers to prepare a document that clarifies how children are assigned to bicultural classrooms.
- The principal notes that the ALP program has been extended to kindergarten this year. The teachers are looking to extend it into 4 days (from 2 now). The Monday and Friday sessions to be added would be center-focused and staffed by volunteers from the UCB Graduate School of Education and Berkeley School Volunteers.
- Middle school info nights take place, too, for King, Willard, and Longfellow, beginning at 7:00 each evening: January 17, King, 644-6280; January 24, Willard, 644-6330; January 31, Longfellow, 644-6360

- An announcement will be coming out in late January inviting 4th and 5th graders to participate in the food survey (see December PTA meeting notes for more details on this program).
- On Jan 23rd the universal breakfast program starts. The food is distributed at 8:15. Four wagons distribute food to the K and 1st-grade classrooms, and all the other grades receive bagged food. The children will eat in the classroom. Children are allowed to decline. A menu was distributed at the beginning of the year—see the last page of the lunch calendar/menu. Parents don't have to do anything in order to benefit. Teachers are allocating approx 30 minutes for eating and teachers are supposed to be educating students regarding food, nutrition, health, etc. during that time.
- The testing for identification as gifted and talented is on Jan 26 and 31. Children are tested in 3rd grade. If they were not tested in 3rd, then 4th and 5th graders will also be tested. If you want your child re-tested, then let Betty know. The children identified as gifted and talented will have an extra effort by the school to try to enrich their school experience. The "Ravens Progressive Matrices" test, a nonverbal test that is not an achievement test, is being used. The school gets around \$1,700 (depending on the exact number of children identified) to provide enrichment to GATE students, and this money is largely spent on professional development for teachers. Roughly 20% of the Jefferson students are typically identified. Children are told that the test is for the gifted and talented program. The test is administered in the classroom by a third party with the teacher present. It is a written test.
- Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) day – contact Berkeley School Volunteers office to volunteer either for Jefferson or at a school near your work.
- Jan 17th is Education is Everybody's Business event from 8:30-1 at Cal State East Bay in Hayward. It is an opportunity to encourage and increase the number of Latinos in higher education.
- On Monday, Feb 5th, Cody's will host a book reading by Rafe Esquith, who has won numerous awards for his work educating low-income, immigrant students in Los Angeles. This book reading is a benefit for the Berkeley Public Education Foundation. The reading will take place at First Congregational Church in Berkeley at 7:30 pm.

Treasurer's Report

- Highlights:
 - We started the school year with \$66,000.
 - We expected to be over budget by \$12,000 this year.
 - We are currently running behind that forecast but still expect that we will overspend by nearly \$18,000 in actuality this year.
 - We have been looking for valuable places to spend our money. This year we have already spent on non-budgeted items such as Fiesta Latina event, translation, Kwaanza celebration, pogo sticks and bike racks, and ALP. Paul mentions again that we should look for a longer-term and larger item investment in the school such as funding PE or Art.
 - Gift wrap fundraiser netted \$6,000 right on schedule.
 - Dollar Drive exceeded its target of \$7,500 (currently at \$8,100).
 - T-shirts for the year already paid for themselves. All the rest of the t-shirt sales for the year is profit.
 - Escrip has already generated \$823 this year.

Robin notes that the School Site is having a meeting on Jan 16th to talk about PE and Art programs at the school. 6:00 in Library.

Mayfair Service Project

- Idea is to peel off a percent of the Mayfair proceeds and tag them for donation to different organizations. Each class would nominate the charity or service oriented 501c and articulate why the selected that one. The teachers would assist the children and educate through it. The suggestions would then go to the PTA for approval (which we would of course approve).
- The purpose of this proposal is to provide a philanthropic aspect of the children's education.

- The idea is raised of keeping the funds within Berkeley. That raises the possibility of visiting the beneficiaries in person.
- Mayfair net revenue was about \$18,000 last year.
- A parent suggests designating a portion of the Mayfair money for teacher stipends as well.
- Parent raises the question that she would like to see that the PTA money is moving back into the classrooms. The example is given of the 3rd-grade class running out of money for their yoga class. The teachers went to the parents directly to ask for more money. The principal points out that the recommended approach would have been to ask the school administration for funding.
- The lack of PE in general is frustrating to several parents.
- Robin notes that each teacher is provided with a \$750 stipend for classroom materials, field trips, and professional development. And we entertain special requests from teachers like the educational videos.
- Most of the teachers do use up close to their whole \$725 stipend.
- It is noted that it seems like more discussion is needed. Perhaps devote an entire PTA meeting to the topic of the extra spending.

Winterfest update

- Insufficient progress was made in December to organize this event for January. Eric will try for February. Anyone interested in assisting with the planning, please email ericwells@gmail.com. See December PTA meeting notes for an overview of the event idea.

Newsletter deadline

- Friday Jan 19th.
- Next month it is moved up to the day after the PTA meeting

Garden update

- There will be about 3 more construction work parties.
- The next is Jan 20th
- An announcement will be coming out about a bi-weekly series of garden meetings.
- The intent of the garden is to be an outside classroom where the teachers can teach about the food cycle and also integrate math, science, etcetera.
- The plan is to figure out how to get a garden teacher eventually.

Announcements, upcoming events, and other business

- Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, No school, Monday, 1/15
- Family Art Night, Friday, 1/19
- Newsletter deadline, Friday, 1/19
- Kindergarten Fair at LeConte, Saturday, 1/20
- PLAN (Parent Leadership Action Network) workshops, Saturdays, 1/20 and 1/27
- Kindergarten Night at Jefferson, Tuesday, 1/23
- Staff Development Day, No school for students, Monday, 1/29
- PTA Meeting, 2/8