

Buena Vista Parent Organization Meeting Minutes – February 8, 2016

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS - Tim Bruegman welcomed everyone and called for introductions. The following people were present: Tim Bruegman, Amy Potter, Deb Havel, Lisa Kovacevic, Angie Marzano, Heidi Gese, Ben Gese, Sydney Koh, Paul Koh, Elaine Replogle, Dereck Brandon, Heidi Grigsby, Ben Temple, Dr. Dene Eller (PE Teacher), Mike Hunt, April Colgrove, Todd Grigsby, Autumn Christopherson, Tiffany Wright, Amy Birney, Trina Pompel, Steve Pompel, Michael Sámano, Laurie Burke, Britni Jessup, Nonie Ganakis

Tim indicated he would attempt to stick to the timetable. Given the full agenda, things that we did not get to will be tabled until the next meeting.

BRING/BV PARTNERSHIP & SCHOOL GARDEN UPDATE - Angie Marzano presented an update on the BRING partnership. This is a plan to make BV sustainable. Wade did a site visit to Cesar Chavez Elementary to see full recycling program. Nonie Ganakis and Britni Jessup talked about sustainable education, getting some programs started in the school, and working on school garden. The overarching goal is to have sustainability at BV. Students perform better with better air quality, with connection to outdoors, and when they are being global citizens. The Big 3 in this program are (1) BRING recycling; (2) EWEB green power grant; and (3) School Garden Project. The EWEB green power grant is to get a solar installation on the school. They are putting together a grant application, but they need community organization and fundraising support. They will also eventually apply for grants related to the school garden project but want to slow down and get ideas about what we want it to do and accomplish. The plan is to form a garden committee to make plans. Questions or interesting in the garden committee - Email Nonie at nonieganakis1@gmail.com.

The key is a sustainability project at BV. This would be a transformation not just in terms of waste reduction but also from educational standpoint.

A question was asked about our current recycling programs: We have recycling teams but we could do a more robust program and currently we do not compost.

There was a question about the fence: The fence would cost between \$5000-\$8000 for fence to close off garden and assist with vandalism

A question was raised about whether the teachers are in support: Specific teachers have been contacted and they have indicated they are interested. They need a meeting to talk to Juan and the teachers.

Hot Mamas Wings donated laminated posters with information on vegetables to be hung in the cafeteria. The BVPO members present were in support and no opposition was noted. No vote was necessary.

GREAT KINDNESS CHALLENGE & BUDDY BENCH UPDATE – There was great feedback from kindness challenge. The Buddy bench was placed in non-ideal location because of pipes, but it is still working. The EAs are being educated about it.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE - Next E-News updates are due Weds. Amy is trying to speed the system up to get paper copies to people without email.

Deb announced that the website is up for renewal and the options are as follows: (1) merge school and BVPO website (2) renew for one year for \$120-30 or (3) renew for 3 or 5 years for much reduced amount (approximately 75-90 a year).

The group discussed whether to combine the websites and the overwhelming consensus was that this was the first year that we have had working website and if we control it, we manage the updates. There was also agreement that the group wants to keep momentum of the great website. All agreed renewing for three years was a sensible option.

Motion to Renew the www.bvpo.org website for three years- A motion was made to renew the bvpo website for three years. There was a second. A vote was taken and no opposition was noted.

Resolved: The BVPO will pay to renew the www.bvpo.org website for three years.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF BVPO POSITIONS OPENINGS FOR 2016-17- Tim announced that there are several openings for the BVPO next year and a disservice to wait until end of school year to transition. So, the positions are being advertised now so that people can indicate interest now. There will be a call for nominations in March and then a vote in April (if necessary – often there is only one person interested in each position). The following positions are open for next year:

President, Site Council (2 positions), Treasurer (Todd Grigsby will remain for 2nd year but needs a co-chair to help with day to day transactions and Todd will do budget), Communications/Enews, Communications (Deb will continue Website), Fundraising (co-chair with April Colgrove), E-Script and Book fair (Escript is changing), Library Volunteer Coordinator (new position), Grant Writing Coordinator, Volunteer Recruitment & Appreciation

Cultural Immersion trip will transition and School Affairs will get new volunteers next year, but these are not typically part of this nomination/election.

SITE COUNCIL UPDATE - This year the BVPO gave the school \$2000 for peer observation. This money allows Juan to hire substitutes so that teachers can go observe other classrooms. Teacher response has been really great. This is really something the district should pay for and hopefully they will. The hope is that next year this money can be used to provide substitutes/EAs for collaboration sessions.

During collaboration sessions, all the teachers from a particular grade meet with Juan to collaborate and coordinate. Right now these meetings are being done when kids are with specialist (i.e. music, PE, Artists in Residence) but that has been very complicated to schedule. This could be improved next year by bringing substitutes into building for rotating sessions – do them for 45minutes every other week. This is better for specialists too because it is better if teacher is there than an EA. Our commitment would \$2,000-\$4,000. No vote was taken at this point. It will be discussed at future meetings.

PRINCIPAL & STAFF UPDATE – Principal Juan Cuadros followed up on the discussion of peer observation and collaboration. This is an effort to really focus on what is good instruction. Right now the focus is on math instruction. This has been a two-year focus. For 2016-17, the focus will be on language arts and planning language arts goals. The question that will be asked is what does it look like to deliver language arts here at Buena Vista. This has been done with math and teachers should be able to share how we deliver math.

We are in the midst of testing. Smarter balance assessment around the corner, going to maximize instructional time and take the test near the end of May for 3-5th grades. The Easy CBM is also coming and this allows benchmarking. It is testing done in the 3rd and 5th grade. This 5th grade will give us longitudinal data because they also took it as 3rd graders. This is not something that is on the report card. The District is working on how to communicate with parents on it. Right now they are keeping it very general. Juan can meet with parents individually if you want specifics

5TH GRADE CULTURAL IMMERSION TRIP FUNDRAISING & GENERAL BVPO FUNDRAISING DISCUSSION - This is a topic that has goes back to Spring of last year, namely the topic of 5th grade trip (historically Costa Rica trip) and the fundraising to make that happen. This fundraising and then general BVPO fundraising have bumped up against each other in the past and efforts were made last year to resolve these issues.

This became an issue because the 5th grade participant trip numbers have decreased and are fairly small when considered in context of the entire 5th grade so the question arose about using BV fundraising to benefit such a small group. An attempt was made to find a compromise to meet both group's needs. Last November a subcommittee was formed to hash this out. A document was prepared and presented in to the BVPO, but, unfortunately, it is unclear what precisely was approved. The document never made it into the official minutes. In theory, there was an agreement and it is now in practice. But, because it is not clear, it needs to be done again.

The key theory was that fundraising needs to be directed to groups that are motivated and needs to benefit large groups. Basically, the subcommittee recommended that certain fundraising opportunities were taken away from the Costa Rica trip (Pizza sales, subasta dessert dash and Fiesta Dinner) in an effort to move those fundraising opportunities to the BVPO/entire class. In exchange, the BVPO agreed to fund the scholarships that were originally the responsibility of the Trip fundraising. The recommendations of the subcommittee did not put a limit on the scholarships. But, the Trip Bylaws indicate there will be up to two scholarships. This is not money that is allocated in the budget and Todd indicated that there should be a maximum dollar amount. The BVPO will also fund the sister school gift. There was significant discussion about these proposals and there was a consensus that Tim Bruegman needs to rework some of this language particularly with respect to the scholarship obligation.

It was explained that the problem is that while the BVPO continues to support the Costa Rica trip it feels like it is removed from the community. A parent indicated that historically the entire class went. Now it is 10 or less students many years. Now, there is so much fundraising pressure that it is difficult to devote significant fundraising opportunities to such a small group.

General policy is one of cooperation – BVPO will work to accommodate new/future 5th Grade Cultural Immersion. The basic decision last year was that fundraisers not in direct competition and not affiliated with the BVPO would remain with the Cultural Immersion Trip. The issue arose this year with Facebook- Tim told them they could post fundraisers on Facebook but then there were some complaints. It is these issues – the nitty gritty – that remains an issue. It was agreed last year that the 5th Grade Cultural Immersion Trip fundraising efforts shall not be advertising through regular BV or BVPO (i.e. flyers in backpack via teachers/classrooms, E-news, main office e-mails, etc.), but Facebook was not addressed.

There was a question about why can't we put it in enews etc: It was explained that we need so much money to fund Amity Interns, music etc – and we inundate parents and teachers with fundraising, so why would add to it. As Juan explained, as the times got harder the pressure on fundraising increased and the fundraising is now for school functions (music, art).

This issue gets into whether the Immersion trip fundraising is school related. It is not about the function of the school. Given the current levels of participation, it cannot be given critical space. Principal Juan Cuadros made clear that the 5th grade trip and it can't be part of the school function – it is not endorsed by 4J, BV or him.

If want this trip to be a part of the school, it is going to take parents fixing it. This will likely take parents starting as early as kindergarten to begin gearing up for this trip. Need to promote the trip, because the cost can be prohibitive. There is a need for a coordinator for the long term approach. Every year 5th cohort focused on their kids (perhaps a board position) to look at it long term.

The reason for the BVPO involvement is that BVPO is the nonprofit that provides the insurance coverage. The BVPO has a \$1 million policy that costs \$1200 a year. The trip is driving the underwriting for BVPO insurance: we are trying to get coverage for taking kids out of the country. The issue of liability is significant: board members could be potentially liable. Treasurer Todd Grigsby indicated that the potential liability was a significant enough concern that he considered not agreeing to be on the board. Insurance has been an issue. Because we are on auto renew, we are still able to maintain coverage. If we get reevaluated, it is unclear if we could get affordable coverage. Principal Juan Cuadros indicated that the school district used to cover it but about seven years ago the district stopped covering.

There were some questions about whether the travel agency could provide insurance and how other schools that have trips deal with these issues. No one had an answer.

A parent stated that the key is we have to balance the desire for this trip with the understanding that it is unrealistic for many kids at BV. We cannot have unlimited scholarships. Before we talking about promoting it more, do we need to consider whether it is cruel when we know many kids will not be able to do it. Instead, we could be promoting music for everyone. Juan noted that demographics of student body have changed. When he first got here 17% of the students were on free and reduced and lunch and today, we are at 36%. Also, back when everyone went, we weren't trying to fundraise for music and PE.

A question was raised about whether the trip could be made cheaper by changing the accommodations or location. This has been brought up multiple times but no other real solutions have been offered. At least one person opined there was no better place than Costa Rica.

AMITY UPDATE- The Amity program is where much of the fundraising money has been shifted and it has had a very positive impact on the school. It is now time to look for host families for next year. They need 10 host families for 5 interns. Before the next BVPO meeting, the Amity coordinators are holding a meeting for prospective families. (March 7th at 6pm)

SCHOOL AFFAIRS – The only issue raised was grocery gift cards for Spring Break – Elaine volunteered to be in charge.

FIESTA – Fiesta is less than 10 weeks away and it is time to start thinking about volunteering. They need lots and lots of volunteers. It will be like last year- there will be short blurbs in Spanish with translations in the programs.

Motion to Approve January Minutes- A motion was made to approve the January minutes. There was a second. A vote was taken and no opposition was noted.

Resolved: The January Minutes were approved.

The meeting was adjourned. Some topics that were skipped because of time constraints will be covered at the next meeting.