

BIRCH LANE MONTESSORI PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MPAC)
MEETING MINUTES
September 19, 2017 at 7pm

- 1) Welcome/ Introductions- Cindy Pickett
 - a) 23 people present
- 2) Review of Minutes- Shawna Stevens
 - a) Soji Howe moved to approve May 16, 2017 minutes; Amanda McNicholas seconded the motion; passed
- 3) Treasurer's Report- Cindy Pickett (filling in for Liz Truong)
 - a) DMEF Budget Summary: Your input on how to spend the money is important on the proposed budget for the 2017-18 school (see budget).
 - i) Proposing a materials grant for each classroom- \$250 each. This should be spent by the end of the school year so there is no carryover. Classrooms can combine funds too for bigger items. We've budgeted \$400 for parent education nights which can help cover travel costs for outside speakers.
 - ii) Propose budgeting funds for professional development for training para-educators and district subs. This would provide some Montessori training to provide subs and paras basic understanding of teaching methods. Once trained, teachers could then request those subs. Partnering with a hired workshop leader from Shingle Springs (location of Montessori training center) to lead the group at a satellite spot locally would make the training more attractive/feasible for attendees. A parent asked if we could pay our teachers to host these trainings. The reply was that using our teachers not recommended as they are already overworked. Sally Palow loves this idea, but cautions us to be realistic. The sub situation is dismal and our district pays much less than nearby areas. There is a huge sub shortage. It was suggested to make a motion to budget \$1000 to pay our Montessori subs \$10 more per hour to encourage subs to work here and take the training. We would have to work with the PTA on this. Parent asked the number of sub hours last year- answer was at least 15 teacher days.
 - iii) Parent asked about professional development funds for teachers. Jim Knight explained that district-wide trainings are paid with LCAP money. Cindy Pickett stated that MPAC could allocate some amount to our teachers for professional development. She also clarified that we can entertain motions to readjust the budget; a vote on the amended budget would be needed after adjustments.
 - iv) Need to maintain a reserve for new classrooms in order to stock them quickly. Also need reserve for teacher supplies for classroom. Parent asked: Classroom material grants- would new teachers get more? Cindy Pickett- in the past, teachers have not spent their whole allocation. We could work more flexibly with the funds and teacher requests. Sally Palow remarked that teachers are cognizant that new classrooms will need extra funds, and teachers would forgo their own materials grants if needed. Parent asked to make sure we clarify the difference between parent-purchased or teacher-purchased supplies vs. MPAC supplies. This helps with

understanding who owns the items and lets parents know we're investing in the next 10-15 years if they stay with the program.

- v) Motion to amend the budget:
 - (1) Roberto Sequeira moved to transfer money from the reserve to increase the professional development budget item from \$750 to \$1000 for increased sub/teacher pay; Tina Zicari seconded the motion; motion passed. There was one abstention.
 - (2) Sheryl Soucy-Lubell moved to increase the classroom budget to \$3,000, earmarking \$500 to fund classrooms with extra material needs while still maintaining a \$250 materials grant per classroom; Soji Howe seconded the motion; motion passed. There was one abstention.
- 4) Principal's Report- Jim Knight
 - a) Back to School Night (BTSN): working on a survey to parents to see how BTSN scheduling worked out this year.
 - b) Classroom 25 (4th): Hired a teacher who is slated to start on October 9. School board should approve the candidate this Thursday. The candidate is a veteran teacher and will push in to other Montessori classrooms to observe. This is a one year temporary contracts as we still have a teacher on leave. Contracts protect the teacher and the school.
 - c) American Montessori Society (AMS)-District has agreed to pay this year's membership fee.
 - d) District meeting: MPAC Board members recently met with district representatives to discuss the needs of the Birch Lane Montessori program and what an ideal configuration would look like (see President's Report below). Matt Duffy recently visited all Birch Lane classrooms for a tour.
- 5) Teacher Reports:
 - a) Sally Palow (5/6): 5th graders going to Grow and Give field trip at local farm. Students will plant the food, harvest it, and prepare the food for residents at a local senior center. Upcoming Shakespeare field trip has started a mini-Shakespeare unit. Also working on early hominids and early humans studies- cave in classroom with cave drawings. 5th graders- the US constitution, Bill of Rights and a Constitution play. All 5th graders will enter an essay contest. School year off to good start, materials are still arriving. The librarians have been great at distributing new language arts materials.
 - b) Remy Glovin (2/3): Performing assessments in both 2nd and 3rd grade. Kids are doing a great job with it. Started 1st great lesson; how universe came into existence, states of matter studies, and volcanic studies. Start 2nd great lesson soon- how life came to earth. Will incorporate 2nd great lesson with Cal Academy of Sciences field trip. This Thursday the students will have a practice bike riding field trip to a nearby park to prepare for Davis Musical Theater Company (DMTC) field trip to see Aladdin. Two of our classmates are in the play. Have been practicing bike riding skills at PE.
- 6) President's Report- Cindy Pickett
 - a) I'm no longer going to be President! Have ballots that will be passed around at the end of tonight's meeting and there will be a new slate of members at the next meeting. Candidates introduced themselves.

- b) Donation drive: approximately \$4,000 so far. PTA drive is going on, so please support the school as well.
 - c) Board meeting with district staff: Discussed meeting with MPAC Board members and Rody Boonchouy (Associate Superintendent) and Matt Duffy (Director of Elementary Education). Board members and parent letters/statements helped translate current issues from an admin issue to a child's experience. Discussed many issues, but two important ones worth noting: 1st) One of our proposals was to find a point person between the teachers to help form a more cohesive, synergistic program. District staff were receptive to the idea of a director for the Montessori program. 2nd) Stressed the issues of solving teacher shortage: need to pay them more! We're a below-average funded district, state funding gets us to an average funded district.
- 7) Other Business:
Parent asked if we had a differentiation specialist at Birch Lane. The Montessori program is receptive to differentiation. Jim Knight answered that we do not have a differentiation specialist, but there are currently 4 teachers going through training for it right now. Our math coach is one of the teachers going through the training. Cindy Picket stated that North Davis and Willet are piloting programs where 6th graders are having a slightly different program, such as one math teacher for all students.
- 8) Election- Ballots passed out. Results were tallied by Principal Jim Knight after the meeting. Soji Howe moved to edit the minutes and include the election results; seconded by Tina Zicari; passed.
- a) Sheryl Soucy-Lubell- President
 - b) Cindy Picket – Vice President
 - c) Amanda McNicholas- Treasurer
 - d) Shawna Stevens- Secretary
 - e) Soji Howe- Historian
 - f) Heather White- Outreach Coordinator
- 9) Adjourned at 8:20pm