



# BRENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**PTA General Meeting**  
**Wednesday, September 14th**  
**6:30 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.**

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## 1. Welcome

**Brent PTA President Jason Townsend**

- Thank you for coming. We appreciate your participation.
- Brent is about putting our kids FIRST.
- Words that describe the PTA: wind in the sails of the teachers/staff, gap fillers, cheerleaders and political advocates.
- Introduction of 2011-2012 PTA Board members and roles.
- We as the PTA are only as strong as its volunteers. We need YOUR help!
- PTA Board meetings are monthly and open to all. We will continue to have monthly PTA General meeting one week after the monthly PTA Board meetings.
- Communications are our #1 priority this year. Our avenues for this include our revamped website, weekly Tuesday News, monthly e-newsletter, and PTA board/hand-outs as available. We encourage you to communicate early and often with us and the front office.

## 2. Museum Studies

**Paul Sherman**

- History of the museum studies program provided.
- Our committee met six months ago with the goal of creating a robust new program.
- Brent is the closest elementary school by proximity to all local museums. While our children have been fortunate to have visited many of these museums before, we are hopeful that this new approach will ensure enduring, varied experiences that will tie together those lessons learned at Brent.
- The museum studies program is expensive due to the cost of transportation. It requires parent involvement to work. We need your assistance as chaperones.
- This year we have added a museum coordinator to each grade to assist with field trip logistics. We still need a coordinator for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Specials.
- Our committee is working on standardizing field trips permission slips, improving communications on field trips, having a museum board, applying for grants to offset the museum studies program, bringing museum components to Brent directly, improving the Chinese program, establishing ways that Capitol Hill venues can be better utilized, creating more opportunities for the younger grades at Brent and establishing a more comprehensive bus contract.
- We will be hosting a fundraiser concert featuring Rocknoceros on 05 Nov 11. This musical group is appealing to children of all ages. We need to have 125 participants to break even, but are hopeful to have 400 attendees. Cost will be \$10 a ticket for all attendees that can walk. We are in need of volunteers that can help on event day. Point of contact is Jen Kaleda @ [jenkaleda@msn.com](mailto:jenkaleda@msn.com).

## 3. "Specials" at Brent

**Daniel Holt & Fred Kass**

- Last year Brent was in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for it's per pupil funding –well above the system-wide average. This year Brent is in the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for it's per pupil funding - below the school-wide average. Our



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current enrollment is 349 which is a significant increase of the 299 students we were budgeted for last year. Thus, even though our per pupil funding went down, our school's overall budget went up considerably.

- The LSAT Board reviewed parent and teach responses. Parents wanted a robust special program and a quality educational program. Brent teaching staff wanted more "boots on the ground". They wanted more DCPS teachers. Currently, DCPS funds 5/6 specials (art, science, library, Chinese, physical education) at Brent. The sixth special is the music program. Last year the Brent LSAT appealed to the Chancellor to ask for permission to allow the Brent PTA to help pay for Brent's music program in order to allow the school to provide additional staff and specials. The Chancellor approved Brent's appeal and thus the PTA is providing about \$50K this year for the Brent music program. Peter Young indicated that next year the music program, and other staffing positions, would be provided by DCPS and the Brent PTA would not need to use its resources for these staffing positions.
- Introduction of the new music teacher, Heather Schmidt. Heather is an instrumentalist (trumpet) and vocalist (mezzo soprano). She will be working with each class one day a week. Planned events for the year include assisting with the music/choreography for the fall play, a winter concert and a spring talent show.

#### 4. Green Team

**Heidi Johnson & Jacqueline Emmanuel**

- Green Team accomplishment video viewed.
- Salad bar roll-out will be 03-07 Oct. Chef Bonk from Sonoma Restaurant will be on hand to train Chartwell's staff so they can replicate his creations for fresh, delicious dressing options. No more pre-packaged, processed dressings!

#### 5. Spring Gala Summary

**Chris Floyd & Lisa Perry**

- History of how Spring Gala came to be provided.
- Time, care and money are needed to keep Brent where it is and to make it even better.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Gala event planning has begun. We need a chairperson. We have thanks to Lisa Perry a template for what needs to be done.
- Last year's event raised \$78,000. This year's goal is \$100,000.
- This Committee is a great way to getting to know other parents at Brent. We need your experience, your connections to help spread the word.
- If interested in serving as the Spring Gala Chairperson, please contact Lisa Perry.

#### 6. Capital Campaign

**Greg Herrick**

- History of Capital Campaign provided. Five years ago twelve parents contributed \$5,000. Last year ninety-five people raised \$93,000.
- Our goal for this year is \$75,000. How can you help? By donating whatever you can, assisting with the neighborhood letter campaign, and by stepping up as future leadership for this crucial fundraiser program at Brent.

#### 7. Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

**Allison Lewis**

- Drop-off and Pick-up program started after a summer of work between DDOT, Brent PTA, Councilmen Wells and Capitol Hill Police, Ward 6.



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- Morning volunteers needed to assist from 8:00-8:45 am. Please contact Denise Diggs or sign-up on the Brent website.
- A comprehensive look at traffic around Brent is currently being addressed. We have seen a decrease in double parking and positive feedback from parents regarding the new program.

### 8. Questions/Comments from the Group

**Jason Townsend**

- Fall Festival will be October 22<sup>nd</sup> on Brent playground. This is a community event with a nominal cost.
- Become a PTA member by registering on-line.
- Download this year's school calendar from the Brent website.
- Purchase school uniforms tonight after the meeting or on the Brent website.
- Any middle school update? Daniel Holt: Brent continues to raise this issue. Jefferson Academy now includes 6<sup>th</sup> grade. We will be having an informal meeting about this issue after our meeting. We will continue to provide updates as they evolve.
- Will childcare be offered on half-days? Jason Townsend-No at this point the Brent PTA cannot support.

### 9. PTA Budget

**Brian Williams**

- How a budget is put together was reviewed.
- Work clusters reviewed.
- Funding documents reviewed and discussed: funding proposal form and payment reimbursement form.
- Budget's purpose is to drive priorities, establish fundraising goals, provide general guidance and set expectations for the coming year.
  - Budget is a plan, bound to fluctuate based on DCPS changes.
  - Need to be able to react to realities.
- Budget revenues breakdown provided: Gala/Capital Campaign provide 52% of funding, Fees/Dues provide 39% of funding, Grants/Gifts provide 6% of funding, and Miscellaneous provide 3% of funding.
- Though there are activities that are pitched as break even, that is never really the case as there are always residual costs and money that needs to be provided up front to allow the event to occur.
- Budget costs breakdown provided: 72% goes toward education costs, 8% goes toward Green Team or healthy school alternatives, 7% is for the contingency fund, 5% is for fundraising efforts, 4% is for communications and 4% is for administrative costs.
- PTA Board discussion last Wednesday reviewed. I assure you that no one is being casual about spending.
- Currently we have a shortfall. What needs to be cut?
  - Program Cuts \$54,600: DCAS incentives, teacher professional development, teacher holiday party, teacher appreciation week activities, textbook holdback, end of the year balance and special needs fund.
  - Program Reductions \$8895: PTA meeting expenses and enrollment equipment.
  - Explanation provided on largest PTA expenses: enrichment activities for Ms. Berg's salary and overhead and academic/curriculum funding for music program/Ms. Schmidt's salary
- Explanation provided on largest PTA fundraisers.
- Goal for this year: Spring Gala is \$100,000 and Capital Campaign is \$75,000.
- Current budget: ~\$340,000 in, ~\$337,000 out with a balance of ~\$3,000



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- General Comments from the Group:
  - Ben Feldman: DCPS is not adequately funded. Moral obligation to our kids and each other to provide for funding shortfalls. We need to invest time and money.
  - Greg Herrick: Over the last five years we have made huge strides in part by “guilting” DCPS into doing what they already should be doing. This is why we currently have 5/6 specials funded by DCPS.
  - Audience Question: What amount should people give to the Capital Campaign? Greg Herrick: I do not feel comfortable stating an amount because every little bit helps. Please give what you can. Last year every child received the benefit of \$1150 from the PTA fundraising efforts.
  - Daniel Holt: Please remember that the younger classes require more teachers due to teacher/student ratios. Currently DCPS provides \$10,000 per student. We are the only school in the District that provides free pre-school. The current cost of local pre-school is \$14,000. If you have a child here at Brent that benefits from our pre-school curriculum, please remember that as you consider giving. General guidance would be to give 10% of what we receive from DCPS or \$1,000 per family would be WONDERFUL!

**Next PTA Board Meeting: Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30pm, Brent Library.**

**Next PTA General Meeting: Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:15pm, All-Purpose Room.**