



## **Bishop PTO meeting , January 19, 2011**

### **Attending:**

**Laura Fairbanks, Mary Ellen Aronow, Catherine Hoffman, Sarah Sontag, Alixe Bonardi**

**Teacher Rep: Maria Amato, Steve Silvestri, principal**

**Plus aprox. 7 members of PTO community.**

### **Introduction and Welcome**

#### **President's Report and Fundraising Update**

##### *Annual Fund Drive.*

- Another letter going out late January to continue to encourage participation in the drive.
- PTO members discussed whether there was a way to have the annual drive (' the PTO's most efficient fundraiser') be a more prominent part of fundraising so the PTO can focus more on community building / less on all the other fundraising efforts. Experience through this and other town PTO's demonstrates there a group of families who donate through the Annual Fund and others who contribute throughout the year to other fundraisers.

##### *Craft Fair* held in December, came in slightly under budget.

- The number of shoppers were the same but fewer crafters.
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##### *Patriots Playoff Raffle.*

- Bishop family who are season ticket holders offered tickets for raffle – the PTO raised \$500 in raffle.

##### *Holiday Script* (gift cards)

- Sales not as successful as had hoped, will continue to publicize.

*Community Cards* – Community Cards offer discount to many local businesses- discounts are good for the whole year.. Sales have not yet not yet broken even. Need to sell 24 more cards (purchased from Thompson PTO) to break even.

##### *Spirit Wear*

- Amy Speare reported on the Spirit Wear. So far this year, about 100 t-shirts have been sold. Amy will send an e-mail to the PTO board to request funds for an additional order to replenish supplies
- Next spirit day this Friday, January 21
- Amy will bring t-shirts to set up a table at the Feb 8<sup>th</sup> concert.

### Upcoming Events:

**Pajama Night** will be Thursday 1/20. 6:00 – 7:30. Rooms are set up for kids to do reading/literacy activities. Contact Sarah Sontag to offer to volunteer. At 7:00 Amy McDonald will be doing presentation for everyone in the gym. There will be a raffle for books.

*Shop Wilson's Farm.* Feb 10<sup>th</sup>, Wilson farm will donate a percentage of any purchase made that day with the flyer. Flyers and information to be sent out soon.

*Gertrude Hawk* – chocolates. Spring fundraiser – notice will be sent out the beginning of March

### *February Friendship Month Events*

- Students doing a spring concert with the theme of friendship (Feb 8<sup>th</sup>).
- Cafeteria monitors will be providing opportunity to make valentines for senior center.

Brainstorming of other ways to celebrate friendship:

- 'Love letters to the teachers': each parent sends in a sentence for teachers - could be coordinated by room parents?
- Dress like a friend or wear red on Valentine's day

Suggestion for March - St. Patrick's Day: build a leprechaun trap "how to catch a leprechaun". Students could come up with designs, write about, draw, or build a trap.

*Winter Skating Party* – details coming soon

*April's Bishop Go Green Week* planned for week before 'Earth Week', (which falls during April vacation week).

Brainstorming ideas:

- plant Mr. Carme's tree
- walk to school
- zero impact lunch days - - no waste : weigh the trash at the end of the lunch over the week (and aim for less trash each day) - possibly make it a competition between grades?
- Playground cleanup
- Electronics recycling
- 'bag 2 school' program: bring a bag of clothing to school for distribution to people in need in other countries
- beginning used goods collection for the Bear Fair

### **Volunteers Needed for Upcoming events**

Priority needs for The Bear Fair (May 14<sup>th</sup>)... the biggest fundraiser of the year:

1. **Coordination/Bear Fair Chair for 2012..** Laura Fairbanks will be doing the organizing this year, but needs somebody to share / shadow this year to be able to take on overall organizing for

next year. Food and rides vendors are being lined up and are committing for the next year, so the Bear Fair planning should be well established for 2012.

2. Used goods coordinators are looking for more volunteers.

Coordinators are currently lined up for Plant sale, food, rides, silent auction, All parents will hopefully take a shift or two on rides/concessions/ ticket sales

Each grade makes a donation to the basket for the silent option, so classes are asked to contribute.

### **Budget Report** (Catherine Hoffman)

Highlighted issues:

- Updated budget reviewed
- annual fund likely not to make the \$7500 budgeted amount (current just over \$5000)
- about to write the next round of teacher checks

### **Principal's Update** (Steve Silvestri) and **Teacher Representative** (Ms. Amato)

Curriculum Initiatives:

#### **Response to Intervention - Math (Grade K - 1)**

- Training for teachers to help identify individual needs and allow teachers to develop strategies.
- Held a parent volunteer training session for classroom math support. Over 20 volunteer received training earlier this month. K and 1 support to start within a few weeks. Looking to expand the training and classroom support to grade 2-5. This applies not only to children to struggling but also to children who need a challenge.
- Parents who attended thought it was a very valuable session, even for parents who may not be able to volunteer.
- Suggestion that parent volunteers might be offered to stay with grade level in next years

**Writing Program** : writing consultant (progress and additional support in implementing Lucy Calkins writing program)

Working on adding more non-fiction, additional efforts specific to grade level.

Writer's workshop writing process has been reviewed with writing consultant.

- students better understanding the steps involved in writing and the 'six traits +1' that are part of effective writing.
- Writing coach has been working with all staff collaborative learning teams. Each grade level focusing on different elements of writing.
- Developed a 'kid writing rubric' for students to use when reviewing material. Now being finalized and planning for implementation with the children. Teachers would like the writing consultant to participate in the implementation.

- teacher feedback: teachers find the support and facilitation of the writing consultant very valuable

Mr. Silvestri presented request for \$2000 additional funds from PTO, that will be used in combination with an additional \$1000 of school funds (from Mr. Silvestri) to be used to continue work with consultant to expand work started in the fall with the writing consultant:

- Implementation of 'kid writing rubric'
- Creative and Critical Thinking Skills: Plan for next phase with consultant is to infuse Creative and Critical Thinking Skills, using 'Bloom's Taxonomy', to encourage development toward higher order thinking skills across the curriculum.

PTO reviewed "Request for Funds to Extend and Expand Writing Project"

PTO vote on funding for an additional 8 sessions with consultant (\$2000) . Vote in favor. No members in attendance opposed.

Mr. Silvestri presented the school budget update (from School Committee meeting January 11<sup>th</sup>) \$43M Revenue, expenses \$46.3 – for a shortfall of \$3.3M anticipated

- if the shortfall stands, this would result in ~60 layoffs districtwide (including 30 layoffs at the elementary level)
- average class size at the elementary level of 28 students, presently class sizes are 22 at Bishop
- no other concrete details on reductions have been released yet.

Amy Speare introduced FYArlington, a new group, launched 2 weeks ago as follow up to FY11. (During the budget crunch last year, there was a group of parents who formed 'FY11' to get informed and disseminate information about school budget. "Bridge the Gap" grew out of that group. )

The new group: FYArlington, aims to inform community about school and community issues. Components include:

1. Web site. [www.fyarlington.org](http://www.fyarlington.org)
2. Discussion group
3. Working groups (School Budget, Town Budget, State Issues, Community Outreach)

Next PTO meeting: Feb 9<sup>th</sup>, (may be shifted if school committee forum gets set for that day).