

Sparks Elementary PTA



September 13th Meeting Notes

Date: September 13, 2023

Time: 7:00pm ET

Present at the meeting:

Sapna Prasad (President), Matt Barr (Treasurer), Erin MacDougall (1st VP), Lindsey Rowe (2nd VP), Valerie Zeender (Corresponding Secretary), Maggie Klaes (Recording Secretary), Meredith Alvarez (Assistant Principal), Bryan Price (Teacher), Todd, Brandi Cunnington, Chooper iPhone, Corrine Roth, Christie Roberts (Teacher), Jessica Wertz (Teacher), Jill Crowley (Teacher), Kerri Brozene, Nabila Syed, Natalie's iPad, Rebecca Hughes (Teacher), Sarah Norman, Emily, Megan, Melissa, Brittany Yeager (Teacher), Katie Harmon (Teacher)

Agenda:

1. **President's Welcome/Introduction of Board Members** (Sapna Prasad)
2. **School Updates** (Ms. Alvarez)
 - i. **Fall MAP testing** will take place starting September 18 th , grades 1-5 will have testing on reading/math. Teachers will provide information on exact dates. Please make sure devices are charged each night.
 - ii. September 20th is the first **Coffee and Conversation w/** Principal. Mrs. Chyko-Leigh and Mrs. Alvarez will be in attendance. The topic for this quarter will be school data.
 - iii. **Thank you to everyone that has volunteered in the cafeteria!** It is a tremendous help to have the extra hands.
 - iv. **Calendar Updates:**
 1. There will be no school on September 15th and 25th – Professional Development Days for teachers.
 - v. As the bus routes are still being adjusted at the start of the school year, **please be sure to be at your child's bus stop (both before and after school) around 10-15 minutes early.** The bus can not wait with your child if you are not there.
 - vi. **Upcoming assemblies:**
 1. i. BMX Stuntmasters – Monday, September 18 th – always a really fun one for the kids.

2. ii. Reptile World – October
3. iii. Lazer Light Show – February
4. iv. Still working to hopefully schedule Family Science Night w/ the Maryland Science Center. TBD.

3. Board & Committee Updates

a. **President (Sapna Prasad)**

- i. **Faculty and Staff Welcome Back Breakfast** – apologized for misunderstanding around in-service week. Will work to collaborate and communicate better in the future.
- ii. **Financial Secretary Position** – this position is currently vacant due to a resignation. Since Sapna has previously served in the position, she will be absorbing the duties and a new Financial Secretary will not be appointed this year.
- iii. **Annual Financial Review** – The Sparks ES PTA audit is due to the Freestate PTA by October 31, 2023. Sapna will be working with Treasurer, Matt Barr, on the audit report. They would appreciate a volunteer or two to help if possible. *Please contact Sapna if interested in helping.*
- iv. **Bank Account Authorized Signer** – Due to the resignation of the former Financial Secretary, the second authorized signer on the PTA bank account has to be changed to Erin MacDougall. Sapna and Erin will schedule a time to go to the bank to get it taken care of.
- v. **Website Updates** – Updates to the website are slowly happening. There is a lot of back end work that needs to be done and a large learning curve. If anyone is proficient with Squarespace or even website design in general and willing to volunteer their talents, *please contact Sapna or Matt to help!*
- vi. **Direct Donation** – Annual Direct Donation paperwork will be going home in blue folders on Monday, September 18th. Being a direct donation school keeps students from having to sell gift wrap, frozen pizzas, wrapping paper, etc. *The suggested donation is \$50 per students or up to \$125 per family, but any amount is appreciated and always put to good use for student and family programming and support.* Direct donation funds everything that the PTA does for the year.

b. **1st VP & Hospitality** (Erin MacDougall)

- i. **Ice Cream Social Wrap Up** – What a crazy night of weather! It seemed like the children were having a great time! Thanks for everyone for their patience and understanding as we had to pivot a few times during the event due to the weather and ticket confusion. We have a few notes for next year to improve the

event even more and appreciate any other feedback. Special thank you to the staff that attended, and Mrs. Roberts for volunteering her time at check-in!

- ii. **Mini Golf** – Mini Golf night is coming up on Friday, October 6th at the Hereford Golf Center. It will be similar to past years. Each golfer will get up to 18 holes of mini golf, a slice of pizza, a bag of chips and a drink for \$10 each. **Look for info coming home in the blue folders and posted on social media in the coming weeks.** It is a popular event so be sure to sign up right away so you don't miss your chance to participate!
- c. **2nd VP & Volunteer Coordinator** (Lindsay Rowe)
 - i. **Volunteer Training** – **BCPS Volunteer Training is required every year for everyone. You must resubmit your training certification to the front office at the start of every school year.** You must print your certificate yourself and send it to the school – they are unable to print them for you. Please allow 10 – 14 days for approval. Mrs. Stembler is assisting Mrs. Alvarez with approving applications this year so they hope to get through them sooner. You will receive an email once you are approved.
 - ii. **Room Parent Updates** – Most teachers have selected their room parents at this point. Lindsay will be reaching out to all selected room parents soon and will be holding an orientation meeting via Zoom in early October. Typically, the first event for room parents is Halloween class parties. **If you have any questions, please contact Lindsay.**
 - iii. **Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities** –
 1. **Mini Golf Night** – check-in volunteers, food table, tables and chairs, coolers and ice
 2. **Trunk or Treat** – donate/decorate a trunk, donate candy, volunteer for day of the event (set-up, clean-up, stations).
- d. **Treasurer** (Matt Barr)
 - i. **Review of the 2023-2024 Budget** – Adjustments have been made to update the budget from last year to better align with the goals of the PTA for the coming year.
 1. Matt provided a detailed, line by line review of each budget item and explained the reasoning for increasing, decreasing, eliminating or maintaining levels of funding.
 - o Mrs. Alvarez will be following up on these line items:
 - i. Earth Day/Green Schools
 - ii. Star Party
 - iii. One Book, One School

- o Two additional items to note for the year which will require budgetary adjustments and a vote in the coming months:
 - i. School gift – we will be doing this again this year after a few years off
 - ii. 25 th Anniversary of Sparks Elementary – will participate in the celebration, contribute with both volunteers and financially as need is determined.
 - ii. **Motion by Sapna to approve the budget** as presented, reviewed, adjusted during the meeting. Seconded by Matt Barr. All attendees voted in favor. *Budget adopted for the 2023-2024 school year.*
- e. **Corresponding Secretary** (Valerie Zeender)
 - i. **Kindergarten Summer Playdates Wrap Up** – We tried something new this year to encourage and build the sense of community among students and families before school even starts. We held 4 different play dates in August after teacher assignments were sent out – 2 evenings, 1 afternoon and 1 weekend morning – to try to meet everyone’s busy schedules and give them every opportunity to attend. They were a big success. PTA members in attendance received a lot of positive feedback. They helped students get over some of their nervousness about the new school and meeting new friends. *We will definitely do this again next year.*
 - ii. **Membership Toolkit Updates** - The PTA and Sparks use Membership Toolkit to communicate about upcoming events and the monthly newsletter, but most important to parents is the School Directory, which allows parents to find contact information for other parents to arrange playdates, class parties, etc. Teachers are not allowed to share class lists with parents. *Please take time at the start of every year to check that your students are registered and update their teacher.* Make changes to any of your information as needed as well. Share as much or as little information as you want, but we strongly encourage at least providing one email address.
 - iii. **Welcome Wagon** – We will be working on implementing a welcome wagon/welcome committee this year to engage new families that come to Sparks during the school year and help them feel connected to the school community. This is a new endeavor and we are still developing it, which will include working with the front office staff to have the families sign a

consent form to be contacted by the PTA and also, having the room parents help alert us to new families. *If you have any ideas or would like to help, please contact Valerie.*

- iv. **Yearbooks** – As you may have seen, for those that ordered yearbooks last year, they were sent home this week. If you ordered for your graduating 5 th grader last year, and they have a younger sibling still at Sparks, their yearbook was sent home with that sibling. If you or someone you know had a graduating 5 th grader with no younger siblings at Sparks, you will need to stop by the front office between 9:00 – 2:30 to pick it up. *If you need to make other arrangements or have questions, please contact Tammy Kincaid (tkincaid@bcps.org).*

f. **Special Events** (Corinne Roth)

- i. **Trunk or Treat** – Excited for our first annual Trunk or Treat. Excited to start planning. We will need trunk volunteers, candy donations and volunteers to help the day of the event. More information is coming soon.
- ii. **Event Committee Meeting** (Wednesday, September 20 th at 7 PM on Zoom) – Please join for the first Event Committee Meeting and learn what we are going to work on this year. *Contact Corinne to participate.*

g. **Reflections** (Sarah Norman and Cassie Jackson)

- i. The 2023-24 theme is: I am hopeful because...
- ii. PTA Website: <https://www.pta.org/home/programs/reflections>

h. **Spirit Wear** (Kerri Brozene)

- i. Spirit Wear continues to be a successful opportunity for the PTA. We have sold at Sneak a Peek, Back to School, and the Ice Cream Social events.
- ii. Our online store sales will be delivered at the end of September to school and sent home with students.
- iii. An additional online store will be posted in early October once new students have received their Shiver colors.

i. **Announcements** (Sapna Prasad)

- i. Reminder about upcoming days off.
- ii. Reminder about Coffee and Conversation with Ms. Chyko Leigh and Ms. Avarez
- iii. Reminder to complete BCPS Volunteer training.
- iv. Reminder to sign up for Membership Toolkit, update your student's teacher, and don't forget about direct donation.
- v. Meeting notes will be posted online for everyone to review.

4. **Adjournment**