

Burning Tree PTA Minutes – August 29, 2007 at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by President Olivia Lai and Lisa Sanfuentes. New executive members were introduced. The minutes from the June 5, 2007 meeting were approved. Olivia encouraged parents to join the PTA. Why join the PTA? One obvious reason, you get a copy of the directory. Dues support many other events and needs; books for the library, staff appreciation events, teacher training, to list a few. Fundraisers did really well last year. We can use the extra money for wish list items such as a digital TV studio, gym equipment, and last but not least, renovating the Kindergarten playground. County will also provide additional funds. There are enough funds for a rock climbing wall for the back playground. Monthly PTA meetings take place the first Tuesday of the month. Babysitting is available. There is always new information provided. Decisions can be made regarding the wish list. In the future, the business portion will be kept shorter. We would also like to bring in speakers regarding different child oriented issues. BT net is the school email list serve, which provides a lot of information. Karen Von Loon is putting together a PTA web site. Handbook is available for new families. New parent coffee will be hosted by Vicki Herson.

Principal's Report: 522 students are enrolled this year, as of today. This is more than the projected amount. The school therefore received an additional allocation of staff. Eva Wolny is a new teacher this year in first grade, learning center. We are waiting for references on another special educator, who should come on board soon. School improvement plan: goals: put together by parents and staff: 1. writing 2. reading 3. character. 75% of students will achieve a score of 3 or higher on the fourth quarter writing assessment, using an MCPS 4 point rubric for personal narrative writing. Goals for reading: K-2: 80% of K students, 85% of 1st and 90% of 2nd graders will make the reading benchmark level. 3-5: 96% of our third –fifth graders will meet proficient or advanced on the MSA program. The goal is to reduce by half the number of students in basic between March of 2007 and March 2008.

Character: goal is to increase student satisfaction from 67% to 75% during unstructured time. When asked, children in grades 3-5 responded that important behaviors for character development were; to include someone new in your games, don't believe the bad things someone says, celebrate the differences. 2nd graders responded: – share equipment, and care about each other. We will continue to gather data from playground, teachers, Mrs. Whalen and parents re; social issues, bullying, unkind behavior. If you detect a pattern, please call. Dr. Chaset or Mr. Tark.

Lunch will be later in the day. This change in schedule was planned around our instructional needs. We tried to create large, uninterrupted stretches of time. After creating those blocks, then we created the specialists' schedule, i.e. art, music and p.e. Then we saw where lunch had to fall. Starting lunch 20 minutes later. 4th and 5th, K and 1st, then 2nd and 3rd graders. Question came up: perhaps younger children can have the earlier lunch times. Nutritionist assured that as long as snacks are given, children will be OK. Right now, there is plenty of supervision during recess, but we need more volunteers for the future. There are 6 para educators and 2 parents out during recess time, and about 300 youngsters. Concern noted that there are many, many children during lunch and recess. Parents and teachers are aware. Need to encourage more parents to volunteer their time. Lunchroom volunteers stay for 3 shifts, which is one hour and a half. Playground is two half hour shifts. Wet ones will be distributed to kids who have recess first, and then lunch. Facilities report: Gym is beautiful. It will be closed for community use during the first semester. We also had a committee to plan the Kindergarten playground. Question came up: perhaps younger children can have the earlier lunch times. Nutritionist assured that as long as snacks are given, children will be OK.

Kiss and Ride is the way you can pick up child in the afternoon. Drive down Beech Tree Road. The safest way to and from school, however, is by using the school bus. Dr. Chaset encouraged parents to let their children take the bus. There are now 2 staff and 2 patrols watching over Kiss and Ride.

Staff Report: Coleen Carone: 1st grade teacher, stated that it was very exciting to be in this environment where children are thrilled to be learning. On behalf of the teachers, she would like to encourage parents to come in and help out.

Treasurer's Report: Lisa Norwalk Davenport reported on the 2007-2008 budget. Portion of this was approved last June. The PTA is bringing in over \$51,000. We are looking to spend about same amount of money. A deposit was put for Maggiano's, which is the location of this years' Adult Fundraiser. The line budget for Student Activities was increased by \$100 for intercultural activities. Teacher and Staff Support has been a big expense. The Budget was approved. Cash balances right now are big because we haven't started spending for the school ear yet.

Vice Presidents Report: School based programs: Karen Von Loon reported that there will be 13 school based programs and events. The Back to School picnic will be in the back field, set up by grade. More volunteers are needed for this event next Friday. The FLES program will be available for Spanish French and Chinese. There is a chess club before school. Packet will be sent home next week for the after school activities. An evening get together will be organized for new international families. International night will be held in mid October. The Creative writing club will start soon. We will have science fair, math day, art festival. Volunteers: Brenda Conroy stressed that BT really needs volunteers. She thanked the parents who came the week prior to beginning of school for helping out. Many extra things only happen because of these volunteers. Yet, there are more working parents, and the number of volunteers is declining. So, please get involved. 72 out of 300 families have returned the volunteer forms. Please read Burning Issues, read BT net. Special appeals to the fathers: please give some time. Sign up for Room Parents. Monday Sept 10 will be room parent training at 9:30 and 7:30 pm. Fitness Frogs also needs a coordinator – it's a wonderful program that encourages children to run at lunch time. Sharon Tompkins spoke about volunteering opportunities in the playground: two half hour sessions. She urged the importance of helping out during this time. Time slots for 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders is 12:50 to 1:20. For K and 1st the time is 1:20 to 1:50. Community based programs: Vicki Herson reported that we are trying to collect supplies for our sister school, Broad Acres. Once a month children can bring in sandwiches for the Martha's Table program. Parents need to re-register at Giant, Safeway or Target, in order to receive a percentage of the sales. Send in the Box tops for education. Notices will be sent. Everything has been ordered for the playground. The County, the vendor and the school all need to work together. The playground takes into account the needs of all different kinds of children. Development of small motor skills, large motor skills, upper and lower body skills are addressed. A Rock climbing wall will be in the back playground. Fundraising: Cindy Campbell thanked all the committee chairs. All the fundraisers will be listed in The Burning Issues. Oct. 12 is Bingo Night and Nov. 29 is the kick off for the Barnes and Noble book fair. This year there will be four Dine out nights. There will also be a Fix and Feast – Dream Dinners in Rockville on Nov. 15. On March 1st there will be the Adult Fundraiser at Maggiano's. Try and think of one thing you can donate for the fundraiser. Spring fair will be May 17. Sally Foster kits will be coming home next week.

Directory: Lize Fues urged new families to fill out special forms in order to receive the school directory. Other families need to verify information online. All input is needed by Sept. 7. Sheryl Isaacs: school supplies needed for Broadacres. Lisa Baker: the landscaping committee is responsible for mulching, weeding,, pruning. The group needs lots of help. Oct 6 will be Beautify Burning Tree Day. Jay Busch reported on the Burning Tree Foundation: the foundation raises money for specific items. Ie: electronic wall in gym, raising funds for larger projects. Group of volunteers, looking for more. Looking for corporate sponsors, embassies, and money other than PTA. There will be a meeting in September. Grant writers, proposal writers are needed. One current project is the raising of funds by selling engraved bricks. Each brick is \$75. Jay Busch.

No new business. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Michele Zweig Greenberg