

Family & Community Engagement Committee
Date: 10.10.2023

Committee Co-chairs: Mariah White and Drew Althoff

Committee Members: Megan Baker-Hunger, Sandy Borkowski, Trisha Bozadjieva (Bluffview Parent), Chris Dubis, Cindy Smith, Jeff Van Fossen (Bluffview Parent)

Committee Vision Statement

To foster strong and sustained connections with families and community partners to best serve Bluffview Montessori School and Students.

Mission

Bluffview Montessori School empowers self-directed learning through a materials-based Montessori curriculum that encourages independence and natural curiosity. Bluffview cultivates learners' deep respect for self, community, and a peaceful environment, while nourishing the intrinsic desire for academic, civic, and personal fulfillment.

Goal Focuses

- Community outreach and public relations
- Volunteer recruitment and retention
- Family/Parent/Guardian events at BMS
- Increasing attendance at student conference nights
- Staff and student wellness
- Wellness policy review and compliance

ATTENDING: Mariah, Megan, Sandy, Trisha, Chris, Cindy, Jeff, Drew, Sherry (full strength!)

MEETING MINUTES: Drew

Topic	Responsible	Notes
WELCOME!		<p><u>Building off of our first meeting</u></p> <p>Where do we go from here? <u>Goal Focus</u> priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family/Parent/Guardian events at BMS ● Increasing attendance at student conference nights <p>** Slow and steady to start **</p>
<p>Talked about not looking too far ahead and making sure we start slow and steady with bolstering events at BMS.</p>		
Circle Chat		<p><u>To empower all voices that are present and create shared ownership and accountability in our committee work.</u></p>

Guidelines + Process

- 1) What does the fall season bring for you?
- 2) How will we know when our work as a committee is successful?

Great responses from committee members in circle. A few takeaways on how we'll know when our work is successful:

- What we do is already successful. Success will be “honing the craft” and making events even better.
- Keep expectations manageable and switch the lens to what we hope to accomplish. It creates a more positive path for our group.
- Word of mouth from parents and families continues to be positive.
- We increase attendance across all events as a metric point
- We have a solid group of parents aka “coalition of the willing” to jump in on volunteering at BMS.

Review upcoming events and what's needed from FCEC

- 1) **FALL FESTIVAL @ Briggs' Farm**
 - a) Sun. 10/15 and details are set!
- 2) **BREADS & SPREADS – Tue. 10/24 from 5:00-6:30pm**
 - a) Small team to run the show
 - i) 2 in Gym and 1 Greeter/Floater
 - b) Spreadsheet created and save the date sent
- 3) **STUDENT CONFERENCES – Thu. 11/9 and Mon. 11/13**
 - a) What can we do to increase attendance?
 - i) Childcare idea – Pair with Erdkinder?
 - b) Open discussion in circle format

Discussed logistics for Breads and Spreads Fall Open House

- Trish, Cindy, Sandy, Sherry and Drew all offered to help run the show (general teachers will need to be in their rooms)
- Tables / setup will be similar to past B&S events - Cindy's got it on lockdown
 - Beverage provided: decaf coffee, lemonade, water
- Signage for event will be masterfully crafted by Sandy and art students
- Group agreed to have a slideshow of student pics and background music at the event.
 - Tech help for setup
- Agreed that a separate / specific email from Admin should go out to increase attendance

Discussed upcoming student conferences on 11/9 and 11/14

- Attendance is already very high at both fall and spring conferences
- Increasing connections to specials teachers is a priority
- Talked about more personal outreach to ensure we do our best to reach all parents/families
 - This could also be an avenue for specials teachers to get more exposure at conferences

- Talked about the benefits of balancing time at conferences between talking about student progress as well as asking parents about their experience with BMS
 - Goes hand-in-hand with surveying folks to seek input from all voices in our school community
 - Determining what may need to improve while also affirming the good that happens here

BRAINSTORMING

How we can engage more parents/families and ideas for events?

- **What could our next Open House event be?**
- **Plan a Family Fun Night?**
 - Cindy's idea: Movie/Food
 - Have a theme that ties into Montessori?
- **Plan a Parent/Family Night?**
 - Jeff's idea: "Screenagers"
 - Have a Q&A with parents/families after movie?

QUESTIONS:

- **We have 8 members currently - does that feel like the right size?**
- **Should we *survey* parents/families when they attend events (Voluntary, of course)?**

Discussed future events / open house ideas

- Movie nights
 - Cindy's idea: "Moana" and student crafted "boats" from boxes
- Parent/family education nights
 - Jeff's idea: "Screenagers" documentary and a Q&A with folks in attendance

Committee size

- Committee agreed that group should be capped at no more than 10 members

What's next?

- Happy Harvest in November!

Explore

- Could listening sessions work to gather more information from our parents and families?

IMPORTANT DOCS:
[BMS Events Calendar](#)

ACTION STEPS below

NOTE: For all intents and purposes, our committee would like to acknowledge that the word “parents” is to include all guardians and caretakers of our students.

Breads & Spreads

- 1) **[DONE] Volunteers** are set! Big thanks to our committee for stepping up!
- 2) **Signage** = Sandy B.
- 3) **Table Setup** = Cindy S.
- 4) **Music/Slideshow** = ??? Need to clarify who’s taking this on
 - a) Also need tech support for setup
- 5) **Email** specifically regarding Breads & Spreads = Admin/Sherry

Fall Conferences

- 1) **Specials Teachers** = more outreach to parents to increase exposure at conferences
- 2) **General Teachers** = consider using a few minutes at each meeting to speak with parents/families about their experience with BMS and how it could be better.
 - a) Surveying needs and ensuring we do our best to empower all voices
 - b) “Pierce the fog”