

**Manning Elementary  
Parent Council Meeting  
11/13/2018**

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**Meeting Date:** Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 6:30-8:00 pm (meeting #3 of school year)

**In Attendance:**

- Ethan d'Ablemont-Burnes (aka Mr. DB)
- Parent Council Co-chairs: Beth Schwartzapfel, Malikka Williams, Amanda Lapham
- Other executive committee members present: Carin Allen (secretary), Gabe Shapiro (treasurer), Hez Norton (school site council rep), Ian Rea (social media chair), Aimee Rives (citywide parent council rep), Lisa Connor (fundraiser committee chair)
- About 10 other parents – thanks to everyone for coming!

**Agenda:**

- Introductions and icebreaker – Stefan and James from Playworks
  - Principal check-in
    - Homework Policy
    - Recess policy
    - Expansion update
    - Expansion advocacy / Nov 29 Meeting at the Murphy School in Dorchester
  - Bridge Parent / all parent engagement/ schedule “expansion night”
  - Other proposed PC events
    - Inclusion night
    - Screenagers screening
    - Craft Night, Bingo Night
  - Treasurer Update
  - Fundraising Committee Update, including check-in on 501c3
  - Social Media Committee Updated: how to handle web, FB, Twitter (Ian)
  - Bulletin Board
  - Future agenda items
    - Ms. Cahill/automate the library (December)
    - A new community-building / events committee
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## Ice Breaker

- PlayWorks staff Stefan & James led the parents in a fun get-to-you-know activity
- Stefan described how the PlayWorks program that our kids experience in school is like this type of play; games that encourage community-building through team work and communication and learning about yourself and one another.

## Recess Policy (Mr. DB)

- At today's meeting, Mr. DB presented a written statement that will become the basis of the Manning Recess Policy. This statement was shared with School Site Council ahead of this meeting. (Aside: Mr. DB wants to resurrect the school handbook, this would be the kind of information that could be published there.)
- Background: For some time, parents have expressed concerns about recess being withheld – either the whole group recess being withheld, or a whole recess being held for a single child.
- **Draft of Statement:** “At the Manning we value recess as an important form of learning. Critical understandings emerge from students’ play at recess. Our goal is to have all students participate in recess. We Limit students recess cautiously and with thoughtfulness. There are times when we do need to limit an individual student’s recess or a group of students’ recesses. We work to make sure that all consequences fall under the category of a ‘logical consequence’. A student may miss recess to make sure they understand the importance of getting work done during work time or other reasons. We will not take away a whole group’s whole recess. At times we may take away part of a group’s recess, in order to build group cohesion, more likely at the beginning of the year.”
- Mr. DB explains that the practice of withholding recess will remain in the lexicon of punishment tools – it is an important consequence in some cases – and he explains that we won’t stop taking away recess for the whole group, when it is needed. It has worked well over time for group cohesion and accountability.
- Mr. DB reports that Mr. Mitchell is putting together a staff doc on recess, should be logical, reasonable, predictable. Staff is getting guidance on this. Particularly make sure it is logical, students understand what and why.
- Parent feedback/discussion:
  - Include in document to staff about not shaming
  - Beth says: This statement doesn’t sound that different than what’s been happening, which we are still concerned about. The American Academy of Pediatrics says kids should ALWAYS have recess. Doesn’t feel right to take away recess at all.
  - Mr. DB: Our leadership team feels that this is an important tool to maintain, there are times when this tool is “really, really important”.
  - Parent notification if it happens? Maybe that will soften the issue for parents.

- Malikka says we can't have "one policy to fit all", there are some kids that will really need it. It is being used cautiously.
- Amanda says: what about involving ThinkKids strategies on building community and handling difficult issues? She would like to see recess being withheld only in cases of "harm to self or others".
- The teachers are incredibly skilled at building community, but what about the other support staff at transitions.
- Mr. DB encourages parents to email him with any addition thoughts.

### **Homework Policy (Mr. DB)**

- Last year, and into this fall - Lummi (parent) organized a research study / questionnaire to find out family's thoughts on Manning Homework practices
- Lummi was not present at today's meeting, but her findings were shared by Mr. DB and via handout. The handout showed the response to various questions on the survey.
- There were 29 responses to the survey which suggests about 30% of the schools' families responded. That's a pretty good sample.
- Mr. DB: "Overall, there's a pretty close relationship between what students get and what parents feel that students should get."
- Parent feedback / discussion
  - Amanda: SIS homework portal is used in middle school but not at Manning. It would be a good to integrate this into the 5<sup>th</sup> grade homework practices so kids are so disoriented when they get to 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - Ian: What was the initial concern about homework? Parents reply: the stress of homework, how much time it takes. Especially after Manning went to an extended day schedule, parents complained that homework was taking too much of the evening time.
  - Paige: As a high school teacher, we think about what KIND of homework is given. What is meaningful? Not just giving busy work.

### **Expansion Advocacy (Mr. DB / Erin)**

- On November 29, the SPED-PAC (the BPS special educ. parent advisory committee) is having meeting as part of BuildBPS Community Meeting schedule. The Manning community – Mr. DB, along with parents, teachers – will be attending the meeting to advocate for expansion to a 6<sup>th</sup> grade next year 2019/20.
- All are encouraged to attend! We want 20-25 people there, with a handful of people there to 'testify' about the importance of this issue.

- This is an excellent opportunity for us to make a case of why it is so critical to the Manning in particular, and to BPS in general, to have 6<sup>th</sup> grade integrated into elementary programs, especially ones like us that specialized in special ed.
- Details:
  - Location: Richard J. Murphy K-8 School. 1 Worrell Street, Dorchester.
  - Time: 6pm (pizza and sign making), meeting begins at 7pm.
  - Childcare will be provided
- Other questions:
  - It would be good if we had an ongoing representative from the Manning at the city wide SPED-PAC meetings
  - Carin to reach out to Jane about 'talking points' for 6<sup>th</sup> grade advocacy, that class parents can share with their classes.
  - Mr. DB to put together a list of "What Can you Do?" for distribution to families.

### **Events Calendar**

- Craft Night: Friday Jan 11<sup>th</sup>. (Amanda is organizing)
- Bingo Night: February 8, 2019 (Paige is organizing)
- Burger Slam: Saturday May 18, 2019 (Erin is organizing)
- Inclusion Night: Some weeknight in January
- YMCA Community Dialogues: 5 Thursdays in March
- Screenagers Film viewing: TBD (Amanda)

### **Social Media Committee Update**

- What is our policy around "Online communications"? What are we putting out there and to whom? Does it need to specifically say it is from the parent council?
- Mr. DB clarifies that communication from parent council does need to be explicitly identified as such, i.e. needs to be distinguished from school communication.
- Manning Facebook page: Ian to find out who 'owns' it and change name to "Manning Parent Council" page.
- Website: is managed by Ethan, all new items are reviewed by him.
  - Calendar is populated with PC events + all school events
  - Mr. DB suggests that he re-start the monthly meeting with Ian to go over calendar items and make sure they are current on the website.

### **Treasurer's Update** (Gabe)

- Election Day Bake Sale raised \$2200!
  - Dance-a-thon?
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### **Actions for Manning Community**

- **Attend the Expansion Advocacy Meeting**
  - Date: November 29, 2018
  - Time: 6pm (pizza and sign making) / 7pm BuildBPS & SPED PAC meeting
  - Location: Richard J. Murphy K-8 School. 1 Worrell Street, Dorchester
  - This is part of the BuildBPS Community Meetings
  - Childcare will be provided
  
- **Come to the next Parent Council meeting!** Tuesday December 11, 6:30-8:00pm @ Manning cafetorium. Childcare & pizza is provided. The Manning Parent Council is the parent organization that engages in fundraising and support for our school community. It is a fun and meaningful way to be engaged with the school. All are welcome!

### **Upcoming Calendar Events:**

- **Parent Council Meeting:** Tuesday December 11<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:00pm @ Manning cafetorium.
- **Holiday Sing Concert:** Friday December 14, 2:00 pm.
- **Winter Recess:** No school, Monday December 24<sup>th</sup> through January 2<sup>nd</sup>. See you back at school on Thursday January 3, 2019.