Ilchester Elementary PTA

Meeting Minutes – August 21, 2017

**In attendance:** Marissa Carothers, Dr. Mariah Carr, Karen Frankovic, Kelly Green, Amy LoPresti, Momina Malik, Christina Rosendorf, Carol Scott, Dr. Joy Smith, Danna Stanyard, Heather Tom, Sunny Zhao, and Ginny Zimmerman.

**Call to Order:** PTA President Marissa Carothers called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. Marissa is excited to be serving as president this year, sees us all as partners, and wants to work with all of us to fulfill the mission of the PTA. Each person in attendance introduced herself.

**Principal’s Report:** Dr. Smith thanked everyone for coming together this evening, and said she hoped everyone had time to relax during the summer. She and Dr. Carr had time to reflect this summer on the new experiences of last year. Always focusing on the children, they wanted to find out what works at IES. They saw on the first day of school last year that the children are happy and enjoy coming to school, and teachers also enjoy being there. They are keeping in mind an “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” approach, but also want teachers to grow.

Dr. Smith made a Power Point presentation with information for the beginning of the school year. Some excerpts from the presentation:

IES Vision—It is our vision to create life-long learners who possess the skills, confidence, and knowledge to meet the challenges that they face today and beyond.

IES Mission—The mission of Ilchester Elementary is to create a safe and nurturing learning environment that meets the academic needs of all of our learners, as we strive to inspire and guide students to become caring, responsible, independent, and productive members of our diverse community.

Demographics info. includes a total enrollment of 690; we finished last year with 701, including RECC. We have a truly diverse population. Last year, we had 500 PTA members, and it could be a goal for PTA this year to make a very strong number even better.

Dr. Smith also shared testing data from MAP results in ELA, Reading, and Math, which are all trending in the right direction. In PARCC testing, scores went up in Language Arts, and scores suggest that we need to consider equity issues. There was growth also in Math, but also room to work on. In Math overall, we are seeing gains at each grade level.

When teachers return on Monday, they will have a data talk-and-walk with charts displayed around the cafeteria so that they can develop ideas and help determine where we go next.

Dr. Smith also shared School Improvement Plan strategies in Reading and Math. Strategies in Reading will include professional development in Guided Reading, and will incorporate a book by Jennifer Serravallo. In vocabulary instruction, IES will not implement workbooks this year, and will instead use resources provided by HCPSS, so teachers will receive some professional development about that.

Engagement will be a focus for the school system; and, during the first week of school, all teachers will build community to create a positive learning environment that ensures equity in the classroom. Children may come home talking about activities to build community in which they have participated.

Dr. Smith’s presentation included staffing updates with movement of staff members out of IES as a result of lower enrollment, and with movement of staff members within IES. IES is looking for two additional temporary employees. She also shared the names of the staff members on each grade level team, in special education, and in G/T. She noted that Mrs. Miles had her baby boy about a week ago and is doing well. Mrs. Miles won’t be able to start the school year at IES.

Howard County Rec. and Parks has requested use of one of the IES portables for their preschool program. That program will have different start and end times during the day than the school schedule.

Dr. Smith also shared take-aways from an administrators’ meeting with Interim Superintendent Dr. Michael Martirano, including a focus on equity, compassion for empathy, the importance of knowing a child well, and commitments to Value, Achieve, Connect, and Empower. Dr. Smith left the meeting excited about what Dr. Martirano said and about the work that continues in HCPSS and with parents.

**Assistant Principal’s Report:** Dr. Carr shared that her big tasks this summer have been looking at the testing schedule and working on plans for buses.

One new item from the transportation office is that every kindergartner will have a bus tag with his/her name, address, bus stop, and bus number on it. This is being piloted this year, and she is really excited about it because it gives the drivers and others on the bus a visual that will be especially helpful during the first week of school. Her big encouragement is, if you have --or know of someone who has—a kindergartner, please have the student ride the bus on the first day of school. Karen Frankovic, as the PTA kindergarten liaison, offered to draft that message to go to those families who attended the kindergarten play-date.

Dr. Carr also reported that the school is getting ready for the beginning of the year. All of the substitute positions needed are filled as of today.

**President’s Report:** Marissa Carothers reported that she has been busy this summer preparing for the school year. She attended the MD PTA Convention, went to the kindergarten meet-and-greet, recently drafted the sign-up genius message for kindergarten lunch and bus helpers, and is generally trying to follow things that Beth Benoit did last year. Also-

* The PTA mission is to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.
* Some of our goals include to provide support for school events and special events, provide organized volunteer support, provide purposeful fundraising, and to continue to review and evaluate PTA programs. We want to continue to put our best foot forward and remember that we are representing the PTA.
* We all need to complete the required online training course for volunteers that is available at the school system’s website.
* Vacancies within PTA include 1st Vice President. This is an important role to fill with one of the responsibilities being to conduct a meeting if Marissa is not available. Box Tops and Crayola recycling are also roles that are available.
* Marissa is also thinking ahead to advertising for a PTA president for next school year beginning in January, since Marissa’s child at IES is a 5th grader this year. Marissa asks everyone to talk with friends and encourage others to consider the PTA president role. Discussion occurred about ways and opportunities, including Open House and Back-to-School Bingo, to seek volunteers to fill vacancies.
* For Restaurant Nights, Cathleen Lopez and Regina Brown will share the role.
* PTA Meeting Schedule/Format—Monthly meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of the month beginning at 7:00 (not at 6:30 as had been previously discussed). For committee reports, we’ll try to limit them to a focus on upcoming events. A committee report format handout is available for chairpersons to use. Marissa would like to receive that about a week prior to each meeting.
* PTA Newsletter—Ashlei Pinkham has offered to coordinate the newsletter. Ideas about new ways to do the newsletter are to shorten it, have it embedded in an email rather than as a pdf attached to an email, and send it out every two weeks on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Discussion included positive feedback for those plans.
* PTA Website—We will continue to update that.
* Facebook—Members of the Executive Board have discussed possibly only posting restaurant fliers to Facebook. If anyone has suggestions about using Facebook, please feel free to share them. Discussion included suggestions to create events, so people can see what’s going on and think about attending. If someone is willing/able to volunteer for posting on Facebook, please let Marissa know.
* Upcoming Volunteer Events/Opportunities—Dates are included on the agenda:
* Back-to-School Staff Luncheon 8/28@11:30am
* Open House-Meet the Teacher 8/31@10am – 11:30am
* September PTA Meeting 9/12@7:00pm
* Back to School Night Pre-K – 2nd Grade 9/18@ 6:30pm
* Back to School Night GT Orientation 9/19@5:45pm
* Back to School Night 3rd Grade – 5th Grade 9/19@ 6:30pm
* School Closed 9/21 & 9/22
* PTA Bingo Night 9/29 7:00pm
* Publication Procedures—If you have an item you’d like to publicize, please let Marissa look at it first. If you would like to send something via school email blast or in the Friday folder, please also send it to Dr. Smith for approval.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Amy LoPresti shared handouts with the proposed budget for July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 and the Profit & Loss Budget Performance for July, 2016 through June 2017. Amy presented the budget proposal and discussed many details. Some notes:

* At the end of the last school year, we had a net income left of almost $18,000. We spent approximately $9,000 of that on Ipads for the school, as had been discussed during the general meeting in May, 2017.
* For Cultural Arts, a significant difference reflected between this year and last year is that the school budget will cover expenses. Money has been left in just in case an activity is desired which is not able to be supported by the school budget.
* For those who are spending money between now and 9/29, please note that reimbursements cannot begin until after the budget is approved by the general membership. Please do save receipts and feel free to submit requests, and Amy will begin reimbursements as soon as possible.
* Workbooks will be deleted as a budget item, since the school will not be using them this year.
* With uncertainties about what the income will be from new fundraisers this year, the budget has been done with conservative estimates of fundraising income. Read-a-thon will be our major Fall fundraiser.
* The total budget amount of $47,107.15 is lower than last year’s number of approximately $59,000, which is a positive note.

**Committee Reports**

**Coke Rewards**—Christina Rosendorf reported that the program has changed. Codes from caps on Coke products are still entered online, but now there is no limit on the number of codes entered. Christina would like someone to help as a volunteer this year and/or next. If someone would like to volunteer, this is a good role for helping out at home. Caps can be left in the mailbox in the school office. Checks from Coke Rewards are sent directly to the school. Amy LoPresti noted that it can be good to distinguish between which funds come to PTA and which go directly to the school.

**Cultural Arts**—Kelly Green indicated that it would be best for her to meet with the administrators soon. She has begun plans for assemblies and an artist-in-residence. The artist-in-residence will be for 4th grade this year, will be a poet, and she has already submitted a grant application. Dr. Smith indicated that she will work with Kelly with input from grade levels, and the school will be able to cover expenses.

**Talent Show—**Momina Malik reported that she will work with Mrs. Maglocci on scheduling for the Talent Show this year. Prior to last year, it had been held in November, and she was asked to move it to another month this past year due to the school’s major fund-raiser.

**Family Cultural Fun Night**—Momina has worked with Mrs. Perraud on this in the past. It can be lots of work, and it was decided to try and hold it every other year—this would be a year to hold it. She would like to discuss with the BBMS PTA, administration, and staff the idea of partnering with them. She will be the chair for this event for BBMS PTA, also. There is lots of communication to do, and she is open to suggestions about the event.

**Coupon Book Fundraiser**—Heather Tom passed around a coupon book as a fundraiser that would be new to our school—Our Community Coupon Book has over 125 coupons from 65 local businesses, and has been approved by HCPSS as a fundraiser. Heather will work with Neil Sevarino, the owner of the company, to have a presence at Open House, Back-to-School Nights, and Back-to-School Bingo and send an envelope and flier home in Friday folders at least once. The coupon book will cost $20.00, and IES PTA will receive at least half that.

**Hospitality**—Carol Scott reported on extensive plans for the back-to-school lunch for staff. To set the stage for PTA being in partnership with school staff and to incorporate Dr. Smith’s theme of Refine, Refocus, Relationships, Carol has planned a red carpet/Hollywood theme with a VIP entrance and decorations that will include black, gold, and red foil. A sub theme will be “Here’s Looking at You, Kid”. Food and drinks will be standard luncheon fare, along with water bottles that will be wrapped and packages of cookies that will be wrapped. Volunteers who have signed up to help are much appreciated. Each staff member will also receive a personal note saying thank you and that we are ready to work with you.

**Kindergarten Liaison**—Karen Frankovic estimated that 40 families attended the kindergarten play-date. They appreciated that the school administrators and Marissa were also in attendance.

**Parents on Campus--** Discussion is tabled to September 12.

**Additional Info. from Administrators and Input from PTA Members**—

* Dr. Carr noted that Dr. Martirano uses Twitter frequently, so we can follow him on Twitter, and we can follow IES on Twitter.
* Dr. Smith noted that Dr. Martirano is doing a three-day pep rally during the opening week for all staff, and IES staff will be attending an event at Howard High on August 24.
* Momina Malik suggested posting the school’s mission statement on the walls of the school. It was also suggested that the 3 R’s—Refine, Refocus, Relationships, be displayed.
* Dr. Smith said that we will be notified of our student/s teachers via Canvas email from their teacher on August 29. Also, teachers will have a growth plan this year that they will share, and it will incorporate their use of Canvas. Christina Rosendorf suggested a focus on training parents how to receive Canvas notifications. Dr. Smith sees having a technology lab set-up during Back-to-School Nights to help with that.

**Adjournment**—The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM with a thank-you to everyone for attending and for volunteering.

**Next Meeting—**The next meeting of the IES PTA will be Tuesday, September 12, 2017 beginning at 7:00 PM in the school’s media center. All are welcome to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Tom, secretary