



Shepherd Elementary School

THE MUSTANG

Home of the Shepherd Mustangs

March 26, 2012

From the PTA President

Happy Spring Shepherd Family,

The weather surely has been kind for the past few weeks, and our tulips are really shining. I would like to take time in this column to acknowledge all of the work that has been done at Shepherd thus far, and some of the great things that are still to come.



Our goal this year was to commit to increased parental engagement at Shepherd—to create a family of teachers, staff, parents and students who are focused on academic and cultural enrichment. I am happy to report that parental engagement is on the upswing. This year we have had increased parental engagement—having record participation at Fall Fest, Movie Night, the Holiday Store, Jazz Night and PTA Meetings. I would like to THANK YOU for attending these events. Your presence is an indicator that our efforts have been successful. For those of you who have not attended an event this year you still have a chance. Our BIGGEST fundraiser of the year, the ANNUAL SPRING GALA – *An Evening in Paris: The Romance of Giving* is scheduled for Friday, May 11. This year's ticket cost includes: food, unlimited beverages, live music and a silent and live auction. What a fun night this is going to be! The Gala is Shepherd's only adults-only event; where parents get to

(see PTA President, page 5)

A Word from Mrs. Miles!

Greetings Shepherd Families,

Wow! Spring break is upon us and it is hard to believe how quickly time is passing us by. However, I guess that is what happens when you are working hard, focused and driven. Shepherd staff and students are focused, they are working hard, and we are pushing and sometimes pulling to get to the finish line. By the end of this year, we want at least 90 percent of our students reading at or above grade level. We want at least 76 percent of our third through fifth-grade students at or above proficiency in reading and 74 percent of our students at or above proficiency in math. We want 95 percent of our students to feel safe, and 95 percent of our students to say they love school. Over the next few months there will be some new initiatives, meetings and activities that will continue to move us toward meeting our goals. Please keep your eyes and ears open for more information.



Intent Forms

On Monday, March 26, your student should have received an Intent to Enroll form for the 2012-2013 school year. **Please complete and return this form to school on or before Friday, March 30**—the last day of school before spring break.

(see PRINCIPAL, page 2)



- ◆ Tuesday, March 27: Family Dinner Night, Franklins, 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday, March 28: School Improvement Team meeting, library, 5:30 p.m.
- ◆ Friday, March 30: Half-day; out at 12:15 p.m.
- ◆ Monday, April 2-Monday, April 9: Spring break
- ◆ Tuesday, April 3: D.C. primary election
- ◆ Tuesday, April 10: School resumes

Consult the school website, www.shepherd-elementary.org, for a full array of events and happenings throughout the school year!

Family Dinner Night Is Tuesday

Two things to remember about our Family Dinner Night:

It's this Tuesday at Franklins, 5121 Baltimore Ave. (Route 1) in Hyattsville. It starts when the restaurant opens at 11 a.m., and it continues until they do the last seating for dinner at 9:30 p.m. You can choose to dine in or carry out (call 301-927-2740); go to <http://www.franklinsbrewery.com/our-specials/> to check out the menu. Also, the PTA gets 20 percent of what you order in the restaurant AND what you buy in the General Store next door!



And here's the second, really important thing: You MUST have the flyer that's on page 5 with you for the PTA to qualify for its 20 percent rebate. We also have copies of the flyer in the rack outside the main office.

So let's review: All-day dining, plus a brewery on site, plus fun merchandise next door, plus a carry-out option, plus money back to the PTA. How can anybody lose?

Let's pack the place!



Remember that this coming Friday, March 30, is just a half-day. School lets out at 12:15 p.m., and there will be NO aftercare.

Please be prompt in picking up your children. Dismissal on March 30 thus begins spring break, which runs all the way through Monday, April 9. If you haven't figured out what to do with your kids for the week, go to www.shepherd-elementary.org, then to the "Resources" tab, then click on either "No-School Days for Kids" or "Summer Camps" for a bevy of ideas on how to keep your student occupied.

PRINCIPAL from p. 1

Enrollment Packets

Enrollment packets are on their way! Please be on the lookout for this package arriving in your mailbox during the week of spring break. It is imperative that you immediately open the envelope, look through the contents, complete the package in its entirety and return it to Mrs. Brooks on or before April 20. Why is this important? Teacher allotments and the number of students assigned to a classroom depend on the number of students who are scheduled to enroll at Shepherd. The sooner we have registration packages, the sooner we can determine how many teachers we need at each grade level. Currently, Shepherd has been allotted 15 classroom teachers next school year. We currently have 17. We will begin the year with 15 teachers unless our enrollment shows a need for additional teachers. Enrollment forms reflect our needs. Last year, we began the year with close to 60 second graders split between two teachers because many parents did not register their student until August. ***PLEASE REGISTER NOW EVEN IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND LATER!!!!***

Mustang Bucks

During the months of April, May and June we are asking the school community to be on the lookout for students who strive to be respectful, responsible and safe at all times. Some examples of being respectful, responsible are: picking up trash, loaning items to a classmate, holding a door without being asked, reminding someone else of the expectations, not going along with others who are displaying inappropriate behavior, using the words "please" and "thank you," etc. When staff members observe these actions, these students will be awarded with Shepherd Bucks. These bucks may be used at the end of each month to buy a special treat or to buy their way into special events. As a parent, if you are in the building and observe a behavior that needs to be highlighted, please let a staff member know so that we can reward the student.

Parent Meeting April 25

On Wednesday, April 25, at 5 p.m., there will be a mandatory meeting for parents whose child is not currently reading on grade level. At this meeting you will have an opportunity to learn more about

(see *MILES*, p. 4)

Hello Everyone!

Not only is the Art room website now back online at

<http://teacherweb.com/DC/Shepherd/Art/>

but there are new active features to the site. The Homepage has new icons for some of the pages. There is the beginning of a Gallery Page with a few photos of student work, but look for more in the coming weeks. I will continue to post artwork so that you can see what each grade level is doing.

The new Links page connects you to family art activities that you can do with your kids. Kids.gov is listed there, and it contains several amazing links to regional places of interest. Look for the link to the Corcoran summer and Saturday classes for kids. Registration began for summer classes on March 21! They now have art classes for children as young as 5! Suggestions are welcome. If you know of an art activity that I should post or have any other ideas, let me know at joele.michaud@dc.gov.

Homework will continue to have its own website page and the current assignment has a bold due date at its end. The Homework Scoring Guide shows how assignments are graded. Vocabulary words are listed under FAQ's (frequently asked questions.)

Thanks so much to Ms. Mehta-Harwitz and the second-grade parents who contributed funds to the art program in the past two weeks. I am truly gratified at your generosity. Those funds will be held in the school's account and will strictly be used for art costs. Many, many thanks again.

Remember, you gotta have art!

Warm regards,
Ms. Michaud



Dear Fellow Mustangs!

Ms. Liggins, our guidance counselor, is going to restart a "Fabulous Me Club" for fourth-grade girls. In this club, Ms. Liggins helps you feel good about yourself while having a lot of fun. I used to be in the "Fabulous Me Club" and Ms. Liggins helped me feel better about how I look and who I am. I now know that I am a pretty brown girl, and I love my personality. The "Fabulous Me Club" helped me a lot. Fourth-grade girls who want to participate can talk to Ms. Liggins. Fellow Mustangs, remember to always look for ways to feel good about you.

I encourage you to share cool news tips and comments with me. Please contact me at snherisse@yahoo.com

--Sophia-Rose Herisse, 4th Grade

SIT Group Won't Sit, But Walk

Shepherd's School Improvement Team will have its next meeting on Wednesday, March 28, starting at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will start in the library, but most of the meeting will consist of a walk-through of the school's basement areas, including the cafeteria, kitchen, boiler room and tunnels. It promises to be a real eye-opener. To learn more about the School Improvement Team's duties, get in touch with Mark Pattison at 829-9289 or pattison_mark@hotmail.com. You can also click on the PowerPoint presentation "Shepherd's Slated for Improvements!" on the homepage of the school website, www.shepherd-elementary.org.



MILES from p. 2

reading levels, why they are important and what you can do to support our efforts to help your student meet their grade level reading expectations. Personal invitations will be sent to select parents; however, all parents are welcomed to attend.

A Day On, Not a Day Off

On Friday, March 23, Shepherd staff was hard at work, analyzing data and/or learning more about how and what they can do to become more effective. One focus area for this advisory is: Cultivating Evidence-Based Responses to Complex text. What does this mean and what does it look like? The sampling on this page is what we are striving to do in each of our classrooms when working with students. The example in the left column is what should not be happening in classrooms and the example in the right column is an example of what we expect to see happening in classrooms. As your child's first teacher, you too can cultivate evidence-based responses when reading with your students. You can do this by probing and encouraging your students to support their answers.

Proctors Needed

On April 17–20, our second through fifth-grade students will be taking their DC-CAS (assessment) test. This test is our high-stakes test and it is used to measure a school's yearly progress. However, in order for this test to be administered according to guidelines, we are in need of extra people to serve as test proctors. Test proctors will be in the classroom with the classroom teacher and will assist with passing out and collecting materials and monitoring students as they test. Proctors are needed because each classroom must have a test administrator and a test proctor. If you are interested and available between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 noon on one, some or all of the days, please send an email to Ms. Liggins (gail.liggins@dc.gov) on or before Friday, March 30.

Budget Season

At this month's budget meeting I shared Shepherd's budget for the 2012-13 school year. Copies of the budget can be found on the DCPS website. I will have more information about the budget for next year in the next edition of the Mustang.

Not Acceptable**Teacher:**

What did the Sumerians use to control the Twin Rivers?

Student1:

Levees?

Teacher:

Right. And why did the Sumerians want to control the Twin Rivers?

Student 2:

Flooding.

Teacher:

Good.

Acceptable**Teacher:**

How effective were the Sumerians at controlling the Twin Rivers? Everyone take a moment and underline the sentences or phrases that will help you answer this question. Then, share your answer and evidence with a partner.

Teacher:

Would someone like to share?

Student 1:

I think they were very effective because on page 6 it says they used levees.

Teacher:

Say more about that.

Student 2:

Well, the levees prevented flooding, so they were very effective.

Teacher:

What do others think of Student 1's statement? Did the levees consistently prevent flooding?

Student 3:

I disagree with Student 1. We know that they were usually effective, but the Twin Rivers did flood sometimes, so I would say that the Sumerians were effective, but not very effective.

Have a great week and enjoy your break!!!!

Sincerely,

Jamie Miles

Principal

Shepherd Elementary School Mission:

At Shepherd, we are committed to the advancement of students' academic, emotional, social and physical well being. We, as a community, will provide students with a safe, supportive, creative, and flexible environment in which children think and learn globally and act compassionately.

PTA President from p. 1_____

dress up, mingle and bid on WONDERFUL items to benefit our children. But, before the event starts we still need your help!!!

How can you help?

- ◆ Donate an Auction Item
- ◆ Purchase an AD
- ◆ Become a Sponsor
- ◆ ATTEND THE EVENT!!!

I look forward to seeing you all there. Let's work together to SELL THE PLACE OUT!

Thanks much,

Bianca Bostic

PTA President 2011/2012



Deadline for Next
Mustang Issue

**Fri, Apr. 6,
at 5 p.m.**

Send all contributions to:
sesmustang@gmail.com



YOU'RE INVITED TO

AN EVENING IN PARIS:
The Romance of Giving

2012 Gala to Benefit Shepherd Elementary

Friday, May 11th

7-11 p.m.

Washington Ethical Society

7750 16th Street, NW • Washington, DC

**COCKTAILS • DINING • LIVE MUSIC
SILENT AND LIVE AUCTIONS**

Read more about the Gala on page 8!

Visit the Gala's website through the Shepherd's website at www.shepherd-elementary.org to

- ◆ RSVP
- ◆ Donate an Item for the Auction
- ◆ View the Online Auction Catalog
- ◆ Purchase an Ad
- ◆ ...and More!

FAMILY DINNER NIGHT

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Shepherd's
**FAMILY
DINNER
NIGHT**



5121 Baltimore Ave., Hyattsville, MD
[Baltimore Ave. (Route 1) at Gallatin St.
in the Heart of Historic Hyattsville]

**Tuesday, Mar. 27
11 a.m.-10 p.m.**

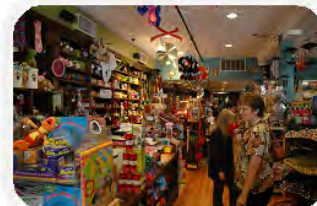
➔ **You MUST Bring This Flyer!** ➔

The PTA gets 20% of your pre-tax tab!

*Good for BOTH — the Restaurant
and the General Store Next Door!*

Check out the menu at

<http://www.franklinbrewery.com/our-specials/>



Good for Dine-In and Carry Out (PH: 301.927.2740)

Testing, Testing!: A Report from the PTA Town Hall Meeting

Shepherd fifth grade teacher Mr. Leonard, and third grade teacher Ms. Thomas, led the Town Hall Meeting with a presentation on testing. Mr. Leonard started off by asking parents what they knew about testing to illustrate common confusion and misconceptions.

Ms. Thomas then presented five types of testing conducted at Shepherd:

- 1) DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) —*Given orally, three times a year.*
- 2) TRC (Text Reading Comprehension)—*Given orally to show students can read and answer questions about what they read.*
- 3) Paced Interim Assessments (PIA)—*Given five times a year in grades 2-5.*
- 4) NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress)—*Often called “the nation’s report card.” Given in fourth grade.*
- 5) DC-CAS (Comprehensive Assessment System)—*Given in grades 2-5.*

DIBELS: DIBELS is used to test language fluency; to show that the student is able to decode what he or she is reading. The emphasis in DIBELS is comprehension, not fluency or speed.

Starting in kindergarten, DIBELS tests Initial Sound Fluency—Does the student know the initial sounds in a word? Kindergarten students also take a one-minute letter-naming test and a Phoneme Segmentation test to see if they know how to separate the phonetic sounds in a word. Testing for Nonsense Word Fluency also starts in kindergarten. Can kids take a letter sound and make a word?

In first grade, oral reading fluency is added; how many words per minute can they read? Higher fluency indicates that they’ll be better able to comprehend the story because they won’t be struggling with the words. In first grade, students are also tested on recall fluency -- their ability to answer questions asked about the story.

A Word Use Fluency is added in the second grade to

see if students can make a statement from the words in a story.

TRC: Text reading comprehension tests for grades 1 and up stress the students’ ability to understand what they have read. Students read and then the teacher asks questions to see what the student has understood. Second grade goal for oral reading fluency: 44 percent of students are proficient at the start of the year, 68 percent at the middle of the year, 90 percent at the end of the year.

PIA: PIA is a new, written, multiple-choice test. PIA tests students in grades 2-5 in reading and math. This is the first year and so currently, we don’t know yet how well PIA is aligned with DC-CAS. Reports follow students from grade to grade so weak areas can be addressed.

DC-CAS: DC-CAS tests second through fifth grade students in reading and math. There are written, multiple-choice components and a brief constructive response element.

DCPS is now a Common Core State Standards school district. Common Core State Standards is a national initiative where now 48 states, including the District of Columbia, have adopted common standards to ensure that our nation’s students are being given the same, and the same quality, curricula.

While DCPS has adopted the Common Core State Standards, we have not yet switched to using them in math for grades 2-5.

The way DC-CAS is designed, you teach to the test. Example: Can you distinguish your point of view from that of the character or the author?

Last year’s DC-CAS was two days each in the morning on reading and math. In fourth grade, there is an added day for writing and in fifth grade, an added day for science. Tests are given over a two-week period that DCPS designates to manage the testing, but the students are actually tested in short bursts.

Teacher Reports

Ms. Johnson - Second Grade: In second grade, we have work stations to make sure students cover all points. Homework reinforces class work. It includes constructive response. Ms. Laughinghouse helps on occasion. There is also reinforcement with the art, physical education, and

(see *REPORTS*, p. 9)

Volunteers Needed

Saturday, April 21st at 9 a.m.

Shepherd Elementary School Beautification Day

Shepherd Elementary PTA, with your help, made the concept of an outdoor classroom a reality last year. Continue the progress by joining us on Saturday, April 21 starting at 9 a.m. to rake, dig, plant, mulch, paint and enjoy great company.

We also have tasks for those of you who would rather not get your hands dirty.

To register, all interested volunteers must call Alicia Anderson at 240-603-0143 or email at aea1210@gmail.com



"Sometimes the simplest ideas are the most profound. "Take those kids outside!"? This simple idea has become a river into which some very robust streams of thought are pouring, streams which draw from the watersheds of environmental education, education reform, human ecology and beyond. While the schoolyard as wildlife habitat is a major current in the schoolyard movement, it does not define it. Nor is science the only subject that benefits. There is also a strong current flowing around gardening, emphasizing the cultivation of plants as a window into literature, nutrition, history and math.

"The schoolyard movement flows from a concern that has echoed through environmental education literature: the belief that the next generation absolutely must possess a fundamental ecological literacy if it is to have a chance of dealing with such daunting challenges as global warming and the loss of biodiversity and other natural resources." - *Stephen R. Coffee, Executive Director of Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment.*

Whether you are a garden enthusiast or novice; whether you love the smell of mulch; whether you are looking for a morning workout outside of the gym; whether you are a community member and just want to lend a helping hand for a great project; or whether you are a parent or student and see value in this project and would like to be a part of history.....You are welcomed!



Mark Your Calendars! 2012 Shepherd Gala

AN EVENING IN PARIS: *The Romance of Giving*

Keep reading below and go online to the Gala website (follow links from www.shepherd-elementary.org) to learn more about this exciting night.

On Friday, May 11, from 7– 11 p.m., join your fellow parents, teachers, and friends for a fun-filled evening of food, drinks, entertainment, and a silent and live auction. The Gala will be at the Washington Ethical Society on 16th Street, located one block from the school.

This is the one evening a year where the adults in the Shepherd Elementary community get together to celebrate and support our wonderful school. The Gala serves as the largest PTA fundraiser of the year, and the event's proceeds go towards the academic and cultural enrichment of the school. With budget cuts coming from DCPS, your support is needed more than ever!

You should have received an invitation to the event in the mail. To register to attend, you can return the RSVP card to the main office; go online to the Gala website (follow the links from www.shepherd-elementary.org) or purchase a ticket from Gala volunteers during drop-off or pick-up on select days. Tickets this year are \$45 per person when purchased in advance (\$50 at the door). Ticket price includes food, drinks and entertainment. We will also have a special prize for the class that is most represented at the event! Be sure to bring your friends and family; anyone you bring to the event will be counted towards the total of your child's class – or children's classes, for parents with multiple children at Shepherd.

In addition to attending, there are countless other ways in which you can help:

- ♦ Bid on Items - *Come to the event prepared to bid on some great auction items. You must be present to bid.*
- ♦ Buy a Raffle Ticket – *Raffle tickets are coming, with a pre-event drawing for a new bike and a night-of-event drawing for an iPad3.*
- ♦ Classroom Project Donations – *Each classroom parent should be coordinating with their fellow parents and the teacher to make a donation to the auction. The more creative, the better!*
- ♦ Make or Solicit an Item Donation – *Do you have something you can donate to the auction? Or perhaps something from a friend or relative? Or the restaurant where you eat at all the time? To make a donation, you can go online or use the item donation form on page 10. The deadline for donations is April 20.*
- ♦ Become a Sponsor – *We have several different levels of sponsorship and benefits. Each level includes tickets, catalog ads, and recognition at the event and online throughout the year – learn more by going to the Gala website.*
- ♦ Purchase an Advertisement in the Catalog – *Businesses can advertise in the catalog. Individuals and families can also advertise – congratulate your student on a great year at Shepherd or thank your favorite teacher.*
- ♦ Make a Monetary Donation – *Money to help underwrite the event and to support the PTA is always welcome!*

Please note that this is an adult-only event. If you would like information on possible child care options, check out the Baby Sitter page on the school website under "Resources" or email info@shepherd-elementary.org. Several Gala committee members are working to gather possible child care options and network parents together for shared babysitting.

Learn more about the event on the special Gala webpage (follow links from www.shepherd-elementary.org) – from there you can see our ever-growing online catalog of items, as well as RSVP to attend, donate an item, become a Sponsor, buy a Catalog Ad, and so much more! For any questions about the Gala, please e-mail shepherdauktion@live.com.

We look forward to seeing **YOU** at An Evening in Paris on May 11!

REPORTS from p. 6_____

music teachers. The mission is to energize parents to be active at home, encouraging the students.

In answer to a question about how students are acclimated to test taking, she said that they practice taking tests so that they're not overwhelmed. They also reassure students that the tests are just a tool to help teachers know how better to help them. The students should know how they performed. It's not supposed to be a secret. There are student-teacher conferences on goals.

Ms. Thomas – Third Grade: Ms Thomas's remarks were included in the original presentation, so she just added that in third grade, kids are more accustomed to testing than parents when they were that age. The tests contain what parents expect their kids to know.

Ms. Christenberry – Fourth Grade: The major theme this year is writing. Students should be able to write multiple paragraphs. Parents should check over their kid's homework each night, including math facts. There are websites students can turn to for honing their skills. Check out the Study Island website ; teachers load up new challenges regularly. Teachers need parents to help with study skills; parents should ask students to explain how they arrived at the answer they got, because sometimes they can "talk themselves into the right answer." But take breaks when needed.

Use the RACE strategy of constructed response exercises: Reword the question, AnsWER the question, Cite the evidence, and Explain.

Ms. Ulba – Fifth Grade: DC-CAS blitz attacks deficits to bring students up to snuff. Study Island will bump a kid down a level until they master the content. In fifth grade there are opportunities for tutoring at school. Students are able to learn other skills from their work in social studies.

Ms. Booth- Special Education: In special education, teachers can take a more individualized approach in the run-up to DC-CAS, and during DC-CAS testing itself. There are several accommodations that can be made for special needs students — but you can't accommodate for reading by reading to the student. We have an IEP (individual education plan). For these students, breaks, an untimed test, and even pencil gripping are permitted.

Ms. Michaud – On Behalf of all the Specials: International Baccalaureate calls for more collaboration between teachers in different disciplines. Parents should think of the home as a workshop of learning. Quiz your kid on the content of the TV show they just watched. Take M&Ms and see which color is represented most, second most, etc., in a bag.

Parents can:

- Have meaningful conversations with their kids: their interests, concerns, ideas, etc. Help them make connections to what they've learned.
- Encourage kids to read a variety of genres. Boys love nonfiction.
- Let kids help to prepare meals—especially in using measurements and recipes—or help with specific projects.
- Make sure their kids finish all the assigned homework.
- Take advantage of opportunities for free tutoring--especially during the blitz.

There are opportunities to do a makeup for DC-CAS tests.

In fourth and fifth grades, 55 percent of a teacher's evaluation is based on test scores; third grade teachers to be added next year.

AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) helps the federal government give NCLB (No Child Left Behind) money to good-performing schools.

DC-CAS performance doesn't show up on a student's report card.

PTA Coffee Series Continues

We've had a few PTA Coffees so far this year to help promote particular PTA initiatives like Jazz Night and Family Dinner Night. Our next coffee, to be held on Friday, March 30, will tout our upcoming Gala, "*An Evening in Paris: The Romance of Giving.*" If the coffee pot cooperates, we'll be set up as early as 7:45 a.m. Just spot the friendly faces standing near the folding tables alongside the 14th Street sidewalk. Enjoy a cup of coffee and maybe a bagel, and learn more about the Gala.



2012 Gala & Auction Item Donation Form

An Evening in Paris - The Romance of Giving - 2012 Gala & Auction

Donor Information		Please fill in with Ball Point Pen	
Donor or Company Name (as to appear in the catalog):		Donor Phone #:	
Donor Contact Person (not listed in the catalog):		Donor FAX #:	
Donor Address (include City and Zip):		Donor Email:	
		Donor Website:	
Donor 2 or Company Name (as to appear in the catalog):		Donor 2 Phone#:	Donor(s) Signature (Required):
Donor 2 Contact Person (not listed in the catalog):		Donor 2 FAX #:	
Donor 2 Address (include City and Zip):		Donor Email:	Donation Date:
		Donor Website:	Please send me an Invitation to the auction. <input type="checkbox"/>
Solicitor:	Solicitor Phone #:	Team Name:	Code/Category:



Donated Item Information		Catalog Deadline: 4/20/2012	
Tracking Number:	Catalog Item Name:		
Detailed Catalog Item Description: (Quantity, Size, Color, Restrictions, & other information to ensure proper understanding of the donated item:)		Item Value: (Fair Mkt Value)	Minimum Bid: Expiration Date:
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>			
		Storage Location:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tangible Item - Display at Auction	<input type="checkbox"/> Delivery by Donor	<input type="checkbox"/> Pick Up by Solicitor	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tangible Item - Do Not Display	<input type="checkbox"/> Donor to Provide Gift Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> Auction Committee Provide Certificate	
<input type="checkbox"/> Intangible Item	<input type="checkbox"/> Donor to Provide Promo Material	<input type="checkbox"/> Matching Funds	

Item Label			
Brief Item Name:		Donor's Name(s) as it should appear in the catalog:	Donor Phone #:
Tracking Number:	Catalog Number:	Code/Category:	Package With:
Please return forms to:		Shepherd Elementary School PTA 7800 14th Street NW Washington, DC 20012 (202) 576-6140 Fax: (202) 723-0011 Email: shepherdauktion@live.com / www.shepherd-elementary.org	
Copy 1: Office 2: Catalog/Database 3: Solicitor 4: Donor Receipt		Fed Tax ID 47-0879109 Your donation may be tax deductible. Check with your tax advisor.	

Your Questions Answered! A Report From the PTA Town Hall

The second part of February's Town Hall meeting was opened by Principal Miles and PTA Treasurer Kim Barnette, who served as the moderator. Questions submitted in advance by parents were distributed on slips of paper to other parents, in attendance, to read. Kim allowed 30 seconds for each question to be read and about one minute for Principal Miles to answer.

Q. Why are uniform rules not enforced?

A. Because there are no repercussions, since Shepherd's uniform policy is voluntary. For example, a student cannot be disciplined or suspended for not wearing a uniform. There are no DCPS requirements; so it is expected of parents to follow the rules and understand their importance.

Q. Why have there been so few field trips?

A. Field trips are up to each teacher. Principal Miles is requiring teachers to do at least two this year; there is no upper limit. Field trips need to be connected to a unit of study and they take a lot of planning and paperwork. Additionally, teachers don't want to create a financial burden for families, who bear the cost of these trips. Not even DCPS school buses are free; in fact, they are sometimes more expensive than private buses.

Q. How do Shepherd students fare at Deal Middle School?

A. There is no formal tracking mechanism, but Principal Miles and other Shepherd staff talk with their counterparts at Deal frequently. Principal Miles also hears from a number of the parents. Anecdotally, Shepherd students fare very well at Deal and the Deal principal loves having Shepherd students come to Deal.

Q. What is being done about the traffic and safety issues at Shepherd?

A. Traffic situation updates appear in the Mustang regularly. If not already there, the school's expectations of parents' driving for drop-off and pickup will be included in the handbook for 2012-13. Principal Miles is not sure what it would take to construct a drop-off lane, but traffic issues are discussed frequently. The Local School Advisory Team has discussed setting out cones to create a drop-off lane and the school is looking at its options. The PTA has petitioned Ward 4 Councilmember Muriel Bowser to ask for another crossing guard at 14th and Jonquil. Principal Miles encouraged parents to flood the email of Councilmember Bowser, the D.C. Department of Transportation, and any other office that might assist us.

Q. Has any thought been given to having a drama program at Shepherd?

A. Programs are often driven by the interests and abilities of the teachers. No teacher at Shepherd has expressed an interest in starting a drama program. The Aftercare program will be working with Barbara Wilson of Sugarfoots -- who was one of the camp representatives in attendance -- on performing arts activities.

Q. Can students be acknowledged for making honor roll and/or perfect attendance at the quarterly awards ceremonies?

A. Yes, we do that now.

Q. How much physical activity do our kids get each day?

A. Students are required to have 30 minutes of recess every day and they get that at Shepherd. Additionally, they get 45 minutes of physical education each week.

Q. What is being done to support teachers, recognize their efforts, and raise morale?

A. We're trying to have more get-togethers and outings for teachers. We're a bit behind, but we established a Celebrating Teachers board in the hallway. The principal also keeps a checklist to be sure she connects with all the staff on a regular basis. The most important action is open and candid conversations.

Q. When will a "white board" be purchased and installed?

A. The white board funded through the SEED fund from last year's auction is up and running in the computer lab. Teachers have received training on and are using it. The school is considering the purchase of a second white board. Parents have been asked to see where they'd like this year's SEED money from the auction to go to.

Q. What is the participation rate in the 180 Fund?

A. There are about 300 families at Shepherd; about 80 have contributed toward the fund and about 50 have completed their \$180 pledge or more. The PTA has reached its participation goal. For those families unable to make a monetary contribution, there are many more ways to give -- especially, volunteering your time.

Q. What is the principal's vision for Shepherd?

A. My vision is large. Anything I write about in the Mustang newsletter is part of my vision for Shepherd. Our biggest strength is the committed staff. We don't always "get it right," but we remain committed to the school. Another strength is that many students and former students think of Shepherd as "home." I want this to be a happy place; a community; a place where

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students thrive. I want it to be about coming to school to learn and doing what we can to make it better.

Q. How can parents have input into improving the aftercare program?

A. Ms. Confer is the aftercare coordinator. E-mail her at june.confer@dc.gov. Her plan is to create an aftercare schedule to give to parents -- there may be changes from time to time, such as when an aftercare teacher is absent -- but it should be pretty reliable. Ms. Confer is also planning an aftercare newsletter and is asking for parents interested in serving on an aftercare committee, along with Jennifer Pauk, who has been committed to aftercare improvements.

Q. How much language education are our children receiving?

A. They should be getting language twice a week and computer lab once a week. Initially, computer lab activities were not linked to language. We have researched some programs and haven't found the right fit. In second grade, the students are no longer split into two groups. They all have language; but first grade is too large a class and they are still in groups.

Q. What are the objectives/criteria of the Terrific Kids program?

A. There are no criteria. It's open to teachers to decide how they want to select recipients. Ms. Miles has just asked that teachers not pick the same kids over and over. The school may or may not develop criteria for this award. This is a partnership award with the Kiwanis club, but we have had trouble coordinating our awards ceremonies with their meeting times.

Q. Is there a prospect of increasing language instruction time?

A. It depends on teachers, resources and also on whether data analysis shows that more language instruction hours are valuable. A few years back, there was a class that got a lot more language, but the data showed its effect on their overall performance was negative.

Q. What's the plan to meet Adequate Yearly Progress?

A. What the teachers already outlined in the first presentation. The classroom blitz should mimic what's already happening in class. Students who are performing above expected levels should be doing the same work, but maybe a bit more challenging, or may get extra, more challenging projects.

Q. Is there a plan to get more classroom teachers into the aftercare program?

A. Some teachers already are, but it's up to them. There are a maximum number of work hours they should not

exceed, because they already work long days and need to rest and recharge. Shepherd follows some DCPS policies on aftercare because the school district supports the program; but doesn't follow all of it.

Q. Are we gathering information from families leaving Shepherd as to why they decided to leave?

A. We have a loose tracking system. The principal talks with families who are leaving and asks them why. She doesn't know how honest they all are, but the most common reason -- outside of leaving the area -- is for a school that offers a full language immersion program.

Q. As we focus on test scores and bringing below-proficient students up to proficient levels, what are we doing to engage and challenge students who are doing well and might even be gifted?

A. The practice at Shepherd is not to have students skip a grade. Recently, there was only one case where a student was testing extremely far beyond grade level, but ultimately, the parent decided against the skip. Students who are doing well academically may still not be socially or emotionally ready to move ahead. We should rely on the teachers to be giving advanced students reading and activities that are above grade level, to keep them challenged and motivated.

Primary Election Next Week

The presidential preference primary election is slated for Tuesday, April 3. The District of Columbia government is saving money this year by conducting its own primary election for D.C. Council and other offices at the same time. The polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Even though there will be no classes due to spring break, Shepherd Elementary is home to Precinct 62 and will be open for voting. Bring your children with you to the polls; let them see how much we value democracy!

**Shepherd Elementary School**

7800 14th Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20012
Office Telephone: 202-576-6140
Office Fax: 202-723-0011

Jamie Miles, Principal – jamie.miles@dc.gov
Robyn Brooks, Admin. Assistant – robyna.brooks@dc.gov
Bianca Bostic, PTA President

The Mustang Newsletter Editor: Mark Pattison

Layout/Design: Yolonda Walden

Production/Distribution: Angela Anderson

Student Contributor: Sophia-Rose Herisse

Send your submissions for the next issue of *The Mustang* to:
SESmustang@gmail.com