

Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

Welcome to Bret Harte's new school year! We apologize for the delay in posting these announcements. The Parent Center's computers have not had internet access since our return to school, and we have been waiting for its recovery. Unfortunately that has not happened yet, so we must reluctantly work from home.

School Announcements

MINIMUM DAYS: Remember that every Wednesday is a Minimum Day; school ends at 1:25 p.m.

NO SCHOOL ON 9/3/07: Monday, September 3 is the Labor Day Holiday. There is no school.

STAFF & PARENT BREAKFAST: Join us for an informal back-to-school Staff & Parent Breakfast on Friday, September 7 from 8:00-10:00 a.m. in the Parent Center, Room 102. *If you can bring something delicious to donate to the breakfast such as pastries, egg dishes, fruit, or juice, it would be greatly appreciated!*

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE: The deadline for submissions for the October newsletter is Wednesday, September 12. Short articles (200 to 300 words), announcements and useful tips are welcome. Please send your submissions electronically to bhparentcenter@yahoo.com. Thank you!

JOINT SSC/PTA POTLUCK MEETING: Please join us Wednesday, September 12 at 6 PM for a potluck and a joint meeting of the Bret Harte School Site Council (SSC) and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Meet other parents, guardians and staff members. Learn about all the active groups and activities at Bret Harte. Find out about the teacher/staff retreat and the formation of school improvement teams. Hear a report from the principal. Give input about PTA meetings and the PTA's efforts for the year. Make a difference. Eat dinner. Socialize. Bring a favorite dish to share. Drinks will be provided. Childcare and translation will also be provided. Please email Shawna Brekke-Read (brekkeread@california.com) or call her at 482-1296 for more information.

A BRIEF LESSON ABOUT THE S.S.C.: Attendance at School Site Council meetings offers an excellent opportunity for parents to engage with Bret Harte in a meaningful way and to participate in important decision-making. To learn more about the SSC, please keep reading. If you have questions, contact Sharon in the Parent Center.

Who is on the SSC? The School Site Council is a balanced, elected body of parents/community members and teachers/staff. Additionally, the principal is a member. At least three parent/community members and two alternates are needed to serve. The current term of duty for parents is two years. *Parent members are determined at the first meeting.*

What is the SSC? The School Site Council is responsible for developing, monitoring and evaluating the school's plan for student achievement. This group also determines how federal funds should be spent at the school, such as the purchasing of special programs, new equipment and learning materials. It is mandatory for schools to operate a School Site Council.

When & Where does the SSC meet? The only time commitment required of members is attendance at the monthly meetings (8-9/year) and attendance at occasional additional meetings (1-2/year). Meetings typically last for 60 to 90 minutes. This year they will be held on the second Wednesday of every month (except December) at 5:30 p.m. in Room 102.

Why does the SSC meet? Because we serve many low-income students, Bret Harte receives a significant amount of the federal funds known as Title I funds. The intent of this funding is to provide a supplement to the educational funding for low-income students. *We strongly encourage and invite parents/guardians from low-income families to attend SSC meetings and participate in the decision-making for how this funding is spent.*

How does the SSC operate? At SSC meetings, proposals are made by the principal, school staff, or by parents. The proposal is discussed and then members cast their votes for, or against, it. All parents are welcome to attend the meetings and to offer their ideas and comments, but *only elected SSC members may vote*. The recorded minutes of SSC meetings officially document the process in which such decisions have been made at the school.

Something Special This Year

BRET HARTE "IMAGINE" BAGS: Did you know the City of Oakland has outlawed the use of plastic bags at grocery stores? The law will come into effect later this year, but you can be ahead of the game. "Imagine." The PTA is selling sturdy cotton grocery bags with a logo that identifies Bret Harte (and will put its name in the community), while supporting all of Oakland's public schools. The bags are strong enough to hold two gallons of milk plus additional groceries. At \$10, they cost less than similar bags sold at neighborhood grocery stores. Imagine. You can support Oakland's public schools, spread the word about Bret Harte, and contribute to a better environment, all at one time. Contact Shawna Brekke-Read (482-1296 or brekkeread@california.com) to purchase a bag. Or, leave a note with your name and number with \$10 in an envelope in the PTA box at the front office. Imagine.

Please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Sharon Higgins and Eva La, Parent Coordinators
The Parent Center
879-2068