

Bancroft PTO Board Meeting

11.18.2025

Virtual and in Person

Attendees:

Katie Carbone

Stephanie Barry

Caroline Hughes Wilder

Annie Traub

Casey Vemis

Caity Castagna

Ilira Grilli

Katelyn Tivnan

Matt Davidge

Christina Ramirez

Kate Kurkul

Christine Barsanti

Mia Angle

Kate Flint

Michele DaSilva Martins

Laura Rubin

Katie Ouelette

Lise Singer (Bancroft staff representative)

Halloween Festival Recap

Annie announced that we had over 700 people attend and a good time had by all. We ultimately had more than enough trunk-or-treat vehicles, but many signed up at the last minute.

Laura heard feedback that it could be shorter, maybe 90 minutes, Annie and Kate agreed. All will take that into account when planning next year.

Kate F said there might have been some confusion on where to drop off candy, but Stephanie confirmed many families utilized her porch drop-off bin. Perhaps we just needed that much more candy because we had so many trunk-or-treats.

Caroline expressed concern that there was so much candy so maybe we explore cost-effective alternatives like tattoos and stickers.

Laura noted that the trunks that had activities helped slow down the candy-grabbing process, so maybe we suggest that in the future. Christine noted that we should not mandate that vehicles provide an activity, but just make sure to suggest it more than we have in the past.

Kate F suggested maybe leveraging some of the games we already have at the vehicles.

Beth confirmed John Rex said the candy walk felt long, so maybe cutting that down would be good for next year.

All agreed having the Bobcat attend was a big hit.

Casey noted the Spiritwear table was popular and all agreed we should look to do that at future events where it makes sense.

School Silent Auction Recap

Steph and Annie announced that the initial silent auction raised \$2,300-\$2,400, which is great - especially considering we have another auction coming up.

Steph is in the process of pulling a list of winners and notifying everyone/scheduling.

Habit Night Recap

Annie announced that we raised \$1,000 (about \$450 in proceed from meals purchased by families and the Bancroft family that owns Habit donated extra to match).

Annie noted that using the coupon code was a challenge, particularly on the self-serve kiosks, and provided that feedback to the owner. Unfortunately, they do need us to use the coupon code, so just something to keep in mind if we do a future fundraiser.

Beth noted that the slower pace of the food prep compared to McDonald's made it easy for her to work the drive thru, mingle in the dining room, and greet families in the parking lot.

Fall Book Fair Recap

Christina Baker managed this and it ran smoothly.

Steph shared that we raised approximately \$2,500.

Tiffany gave Steph her list of requested books, which totaled around \$450. The PTO will purchase and have delivered to the library. Most books were MCBA books.

Caroline suggested getting the list of popular books from the sale so we can leverage it for the Free Book Fair. Steph will reach out to Fantastic Books and share.

Walk and Talks Recap

Another successful fall walking season is under wraps. We'll start it back up in the spring.

Doherty principal will join a spring walk, giving fifth grade parents a chance to meet her and ask questions in a more casual setting.

Bueno Malo Social Event/Silent Auction

Annie stated that the event is now sold out at 80 people. We have 37 auction items, representing a range of categories/local businesses.

Annie asked if we can do a reminder for people to sign up for GalaBid ahead of the event and to remind people that aren't attending to get in on the action. Steph will pull the attendee list tonight and email them with reminders (specifically noting that people need to opt in on text messages to receive real-time updates).

Christine is bringing her computer to help manage the auction on-site.

Wifi shouldn't be an issue.

Annie noted that one of the owners of the Bueno Malo is a Bancroft alum and was very complimentary of the PTO and supportive of our community. Annie suggested that he come in and participate in the Community Read Along.

Staff Luncheon

Stephanie said planning has kicked off. The luncheon will be organized on Dec. 3 on the half day. Custodians are looped in and ready to support.

Learning Express Sip 'n Shop

Annie confirmed this was scheduled for Dec. 7 and noted she was double checking the time with store owner. Will have the Wine Merchant donate Prosecco and will get some sweet treats. Annie requested that we promote the event in the Dec. newsletter. Annie will build SUG. We can use similar language from last year, but omit reference to 34 Park.

Heritage Night

We don't have parent volunteers for this, so Stephanie is organizing. Planning is underway and the event will be held on a Wednesday in January. Laura offered to help.

All agreed that we will not solicit entertainment moving forward, so Stephanie is brainstorming other fun ways to showcase participating cultures.

Community Social Events

Laura spoke to Audra at the Wine Merchant about doing a social event in February (Feb. 5 possibly). There would be a limit of 49 people and we could sell tickets at \$40 for a tasting (one sparkling, two whites, and two reds), similar to what was done last year..

Kate F suggested pairing that event with something else to continue the fun.

Laura is looking at doing something in late spring too, perhaps May to mark the end of the school year. Theresa Murdoch is putting up an all-season greenhouse where she offered to host an event, like flower arranging. Laura will confirm details with Teresa.

Laura also noted that Samantha's Gardens offered to host something for kids on a future half day, like making fairy gardens, flower planting, or cookie decorating. Matthew also noted that they do bird feeders and Christmas decorations at Christchurch. All agreed the timing was too tight to organize something for this holiday season, but spring would be great.

Laura also shared that Spark offered to host a childcare event either on a half day or during a parent social event. They do these normally but would be nice to tie to a Bancroft event and maybe we get a discounted rate by bringing volume.

Free Book Fair

Katie is working with Laura Chabot on this. Caroline and Michele offered to help sort books.

Next step is to sort books and determine what genres/grade levels we need most.

Katie reminded everyone to be on the lookout for free books, particularly graphic novels and popular series like Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Dog Man, and Babysitters Club.

Katie will work on setting the schedule with the front office and grade levels and will then build an SUG and solicit volunteers.

With Chrissy departing, we are also in need of hard shell suitcases to use to transport books between hallways. If anyone has some they don't mind sharing, please let Katie know. Or, if you see anyone giving them away, grab them.

Caity will save Girl Scout cookie boxes to display books (we should have some towards the end of December).

Student Enrichment

Stephanie shared that we don't have an official parent volunteer or staff support for this, so she is organizing this with Lucy and Laureen. Steph is booking as best as she can, but we need help. We've put up posters advertising the teacher support position as a paid stipend position, no interest. Steph is trying to identify gaps in schedule and reaching out to organizations to book, then reaching out to custodial staff/front office to book at school.

Beth noted we staggered some of the events to be every other year to keep it interesting for the kids.

Beth is covering Ball in the House from her budget, which saves the PTO \$5,000. Programming will focus on vocals for younger kids and on how music breaks down racial barriers for fifth grade.

Staff provided feedback that there were too many book talks and storytellers, so we're keeping Cheryl Fay but looking to expand.

For a weather event, we should look at Matt and Danielle Noyes, as suggested by Kate F and Matthew. Casey confirmed we have a note from Danielle in the communications inbox.

Caroline suggested Dan Leonard, a local man who won a treasure hunt and could possibly share his experience.

All offered to help Stephanie sort through emails and reach out to organizations to schedule. All also offered to help staff events during the school day.

Yearbook/Fifth Grade Activities

Stephanie noted that planning was underway for this.

Treasurer Update

Michele noted that our current bank (M&T) is antiquated and has been making our lives more challenging than needed. One main example is how we can't pay vendors/parents via Zelle, we have to cut checks and are charged to send checks electronically. It's very cumbersome and outdated. She looked at BoA, but you have to pay a fee to deposit, which is a non-starter for us since we make a lot of deposits since we collect cash at our events. Michele proposes that we move to TD Bank. Casey proposed looking into Eastern Bank, but the local branch just closed. We need an official vote on the record.

Michele also said that Zelle/Venmo/etc. all require a phone number to be tied to accounts. Right now, our PTO account is connected to Caity's personal phone number, which isn't efficient if we have two co-treasurers and isn't ideal from a privacy perspective. Michele proposed getting a PTO phone number, which would be about \$200 annually (would just need an old phone or some way to forward to both her and Caity's personal phone numbers).

Casey suggested looking into a Google Voice phone number. Steph will look into this. Beth confirmed this is free and can be forwarded to personal phone numbers so we can receive notifications/texts.

Casey asked what other PTOs do. Steph said that we email the townwide PTO contact list and ask.

Steph will send a formal vote to the board re: the bank change after this meeting.

Town PTO Meeting Overview

Ilira attended on our behalf and gave a quick update. The APS budget for next year was a hot topic, as was the Vision of a Graduate (VoG).

Dr. Parvey offered to come to a PTO meeting between Jan-Mar to discuss the budget. Steph already invited her to Jan. and Dr. Parvey couldn't make it, Steph following up with Alison to see if March is feasible.

Vision of a Graduate is a major focus for APS now. They are building the roadmap for each grade's competencies/expectations. Beth noted that VoG isn't just an Andover thing, but it's broader.

They are looking for parent volunteers on Dec. 5 to appear on video to share their hopes/dreams for their kids and how Vision of a Graduate will help achieve them. Videos will be used online and in other marketing materials. Stephanie confirmed we will promote Dec. 5 volunteer ask soon in email/social.

Dr. Riley would like to attend a future PTO meeting as well to discuss VoG. Steph will reach out to her to schedule.

Bancroft won the ACE Pumpkin Cup.

Ilira noted that food insecurity was a major focus during the PTO read-outs at the meeting. Every other school was doing something to address food insecurity. Would love to have Bancroft do something.

Of note, Sanborn is partnering with Village Food Hub and having fifth graders go on-site to help sort food. Sanborn president Kimiko offered to help loop us in.

Ideas discussed include bringing back food donation collection bins at Bancroft PTO events. Michele also proposed tying Spiritwear days to bringing in donations to help make it a regular/anticipated thing.

Beth noted we are still around 25 families in need for gift cards/presents, but that she has not seen an uptick in families seeking food assistance from Bancroft. Cafeteria will make boxes for families to take food home over the weekends and no one has taken them up on it this year. We're doing well on soliciting gift cards.

Beth noted that Bobcat to Bobcat students get to shop at a holiday store driven/supplied by the staff. Gifts are donated from staff and wrapping paper/gift bags are provided so the kids can bring home presents for their family members.

West collected food from wasted lunch food for a food rescue program. 100% volunteer-driven, and supported by an ACE grant. Perishable items are a big hang-up from a health perspective. Beth noted the half days have the biggest amounts of waste. Caroline proposed having volunteers come in on the half day to collect food. Volunteers could come in with bins/coolers and collect unwanted food. Katie proposed linking it to Girl Scouts to help. Katie O noted PA kids have half days on Wednesday so they could help too.

Principal's Agenda

Beth shared that we are in good shape for winter gear donations. Beth will do inventory and let us know if there are specific needs.

She noted that we need new round of playground equipment. Beth just used up the last round of Bruins gear. PTO to buy new playground equipment.

Beth confirmed the K-5 art show will be held during ORFF chorus concert in the spring. Was at winter concert last year but art teachers need more time to ensure everyone has something displayed.

Annie and Beth were brainstorming ways to make the Bancroft Bucks pizza party a bit more exciting for the kids. Perhaps consider getting a banner/photo background to give party vibes. Bobcat to Bobcat update: Beth Dunne is PTO liaison. Beth wants her to come meet with Bobcat to Bobcat team to see how to best connect families in need to the PTO so we can help cover costs/needs while maintaining privacy. Fifth grade events, Learning Labs, etc are examples of events where people could need support. Beth noted that she used to use the free lunch list to identify kids in need, but now that lunches are free it's hard to identify families. Current process is for families to reach out to Beth/Nancy Modlish and they connect to PTO, but each PTO initiative has a different contact. Simplifying it through one PTO contact will make it easier.

ADDENDUM: A vote was taken via our shared Excel workbook on Google Drive (Bancroft PTO _ Board Worksheets, Vote Tally 2025-2026) sent on the evening of 11/18. Results indicate a majority are for the changing of banks to TD Bank (11 yes, 4 abstentions. See full results on the following page.

Bancroft PTO Board Votes Tally

2025-2026

11/18/2025
 Change of Banks (M&T to TD Bank)
 N/A

Stephanie Barry	President	Yes
Katie Carbone	Vice President	Yes
Ilira Grilli	Vice President	Yes
Caity Castagna	Treasurer	Yes
Michele Martins	Treasurer	Yes
Cristina Addesa	Secretary	Yes
Annie Traub	Fundraising	Yes
Casey Vemis	Communications	
Katelyn Kurkul	Hospitality	Yes
Caroline Wilder	Parent Coordinator	
Shelby Baecker	Parent Coordinator	YES
Laura Rubin	Community Events	
Mia Angle	General	Yes
Christine Barsanti	General	Yes
Kate Flint	General	

Yes 11
 No 0