

Bellefonte Elementary PTO

Homeroom Captains

In an effort to help and support our teachers while involving more needed volunteers in our PTO, we are instituting the role of Homeroom Captain for each grade level classroom at Bellefonte Elementary. The position of Homeroom Captain can be held by one or two individuals that are parents/guardians of students in the class.

There are two primary functions of a Homeroom Captain (or Co-Captains), each with its respective tasks and responsibilities:

1) To serve as the liaison between the PTO and the rest of the classroom parents.

- Attend PTO meetings (or send another classroom parent as a representative)
 - Provide feedback
 - Make suggestions
 - Offer input
 - Make new friends; have fun 😊
- Recruit volunteers for PTO events
- Coordinate and assist in calculating class fundraising for PTO
 - Help with counting Box Tops
 - Update classroom fundraising progress chart (“bucket”)
- Fulfill assignments/requests made by PTO Executive Board and various PTO event chairs (e.g., Teacher Appreciation Week)

2) Assist the teacher

- Organize social events (classroom holiday parties)
 - Coordinate snack donations
 - Recruit needed party helpers
 - Plan party activities/games (at teacher’s discretion)
- Help coordinate volunteers for classroom help (including work that can be done at home)
- Assist with Million Penny Drive door decorating
- Coordinate PSSA snack donations
- Rally volunteers for field trips
- Other help needed may vary based on the classroom teacher

How does it all work?

Part 1

The Homeroom Captains will be under the direction of the PTO Executive Board and will receive instruction, guidelines, support, and assistance in their role. As a PTO we thrive on volunteers who can help with the myriad of events, activities, projects, and services we carry out. We would like to see more parents accept the opportunity to help out in small but significant ways. We feel strongly that more parents will respond to our calls for help if asked in a more direct, personal manner (from a fellow classroom parent – i.e. the Homeroom Captain) rather than a blanket request made in the school-wide newsletter. If given the chance – a real chance – to help their child's class directly, most parents will accept the opportunity to help...and then feel the joy that comes from helping!

Example 1: As part of our Teacher Appreciation Week (TAW) festivities, the TAW co-chairs have planned for a treat to be available in the staff room each morning. They contact the Homeroom Captains with the grade assignments: Monday: Muffins – Kindergarten; Tuesday: Fresh Fruit – First Grade; etc. The TAW chairs give specified amounts of each item needed from each class. The Homeroom Captains then contact the other classroom parents and try to coordinate the donations. Jessica is the HC for a kindergarten class, so she finds three parents in her child's class to donate a dozen muffins. Jessica reports back to the TAW chairs that the assignments have been made, she then reminds those who signed up about their commitment (a couple days prior), the muffins are made, some parents feel good about helping out, the teachers enjoy them and feel appreciated!

Example 2: The Winter Carnival is approaching and we need volunteers to work ½-hour shifts running the games. The chairs of the Winter Carnival contact the Homeroom Captains and ask them to recruit 1-2 volunteers from their class to help. Sally is the HC for her son's third grade class. She contacts some fellow parents in her son's class and recruits them to work a shift at the Winter Carnival. Each HC gets 1-2 volunteers for ½-hour shifts...so we have 25-40 (or so) volunteers working ½-hour shifts and being able to enjoy the other 1 ½ hours of the evening with their families.

Part 2:

The Homeroom Captain(s) will work closely with the classroom teacher to meet the needs of the class. It will be up to each teacher as to how much he/she wants to utilize the Homeroom Captain(s). The position of Homeroom Captain is designed to lighten the load of the classroom teacher through communication with the other classroom parents and coordination of volunteers and donations.

Example 1: Mrs. Smith would like to make a cake with her class as part of a lesson about fractions and following step-by-step directions. Mrs. Smith contacts her Homeroom Captain (let's call her Patty) and gives her the list of needed ingredients for the cake recipe. Patty then sends an email to the other parents of Mrs. Smith's students and asks for volunteers to donate the specified needed ingredients. (Patty can also utilize the nifty tool of SignupGenius.com to help with this!) Donated ingredients are turned in on specified date, parents feel good about contributing in a small but important way, Mrs. Smith doesn't have to shop for ingredients or spend her own money on them, and the class enjoys a yummy treat while learning about fractions and following instructions!

Example 2: Mr. Brown has a bunch of pumpkins he needs cut out for his October bulletin board. He contacts his Homeroom Captain, Jane, and lets her know of his need for help. Jane has a list of parents who have indicated they'd be interested in helping with tasks like this (that they can do at home), so she contacts some of them to see who can help Mr. Brown. A dad named Bob says he'd be happy to do it while he watches TV in the evening. So, Jane lets Mr. Brown know that Bob will help, so Mr. Brown sends home the supplies (the pumpkins) and some instructions with Bob's daughter. Bob cuts out the pumpkins while watching his primetime TV and feels good about helping out with something for his daughter's class (especially since he can't go into the classroom to help because of his work schedule); he sends the pumpkins back to school with his daughter; Mr. Brown's October bulletin board looks fantastic!

Example 3: Miss Ward would like to have a Halloween party for her class. She and the Homeroom Captain (Joe) discuss the time and length of the party. Joe plans 1-2 simple but fun games or activities for the party. He then contacts the other classroom parents (via email, Signup Genius, or phone) to recruit two parents who can be there to help with the party AND to ask for *specific* donations for the party. He might ask for:

- 20 paper plates
- 20 napkins
- 20 juice boxes
- 2 sweet snacks
 - Pumpkin cookies (2 dozen)
 - Cupcakes (2 dozen)
- 1 salty snack (a bag of popcorn)
- 1 fruit (grapes, washed & cut in bunches)
- 1 veggie (bag of baby carrots)

Several parents sign up to donate items for the party; several kids are pretty excited about the fact that *they* are contributing something to the class Halloween party; two kids are pretty excited that their parents got to come and help out at their party; all kids have some organized Halloween fun; Miss Ward didn't have to spend valuable prep time worrying about the Halloween party; a reasonable amount of food from a "balanced" menu is offered to the students for their party; they eat and enjoy; an absurd amount of food is NOT thrown into the trash!

Please note:

The Homeroom Captain (HC) does NOT need to be available to come into the classroom often. The HC needs only to be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with the teacher, the PTO Executive Board and event chairs, and the other classroom parents/guardians. This can be done via email, phone calls, texts, etc. as they strive to coordinate efforts to meet the needs of the class and school community.

The responsibilities of Homeroom Captain can be shared among two Homeroom Co-captains – to lighten the load, decrease the pressure, and share the fun!