

MINUTES
MARCH 3, 2012 PTO-EB MEETING

This meeting of the 2011-2012 Colfax A.L.A. PTO Executive Board was held at 4:00 pm at Margie Minkler's house. Jenny led the meeting and distributed a written agenda and budget. Present were:

President Jenny Ganger
Co-VP Fundraising Sukanya Srinivasan
Treasurer Shannon Ewing
Secretary Margie Minkler
Co-VP Communications Sarah Sirlin
VP Special Events Abbie Campsie
Parent Engagement Specialist Diane Condie
Middle Level Teacher Representative Kipp Dawson
Principal Adam Sikorski

1. Opening and Old Business No old business except we need past meeting minutes.
2. General Meeting The PTO will go first at the next general meeting. We will focus on the budget and officers for next year. Also coming events will be reviewed: the plant sale, teacher appreciation week, talent show (to be held Thursday March 29th, rehearsals/act presentation prior), Carnival, and maybe a movie night. (Sukanya knows popcorn could be donated to a movie night, but since it's not really healthy, should we accept?)
3. Current Budget (Shannon)
Fundraising (Shannon and Sukanya):
 - The *plant sale* is happening this year and already in the works.
 - The *healthy fundraiser* is the fun run, which we are still planning to have. No date has been set, and planning is just getting started. Because of the community and health aspects of this event, it's fine if it doesn't make money.
 - Should we do a *read-a-thon* this year? We do not need it for fundraising. Also, it's not a good time for it. Sukanya believes it works best in the fall in conjunction with the book fair. Maybe the librarian could then be in charge. Also with advanced planning, Kip believes author Sharon G. Flake (Skin I'm In) could be brought in. Conclusion: the read-a-thon is a good plan for the future, like next fall in conjunction with the book fair, it needs advance

planning, and should focus on encouragement of reading rather than fundraising.

- The *winter fundraiser (P4P)* shows \$24,376.72 of income in the budget. This will be reduced by about \$4,000 for the University Club bill that has not yet been paid. Congratulations to Leslie and Sukanya!

Expenses:

- The *principal's discretionary fund* is being used for the after school program, a main cost of which is buses. We will be getting the bus bills and they do not yet show up on the budget.
- None of the automatic *field trip money* has been spent. Teachers tend to wait until the end of the year. There is no policy against taking earlier field trips, but they tend not to happen (due in part to PSSAs?) Is there a way to encourage teachers to spread field trips throughout the year?
- *P4P money*- We spent \$750 so far for Food is Elementary and \$487.50 toward the Frick Environmental program. Abbie mentioned that Bon Appetite magazine offers school garden grants, and she will apply for one on behalf of Colfax. There have been complaints from participating kids about chaos during the Food is Elementary class time. Sometimes two classes are brought together, possibly resulting in an overly-large group.
- *Ice cream sale profits*- Only kindergarten has spent the money they raised selling ice cream. We are waiting for all other groups to request their earnings and June 30 is the deadline.
- *Chess club*- Adam was asked if he wanted to ask the PTO to cover the remaining cost for this year's chess club. The total yearly cost is \$1650, the school paid half (\$825) already in the fall, so \$825 remains. The PTO paid for the novice chess classes separately. Adam originally said he would wait to figure out how much money the school had available before asking the PTO, but after strong encouragement, Adam moved that the PTO spend \$825 from enrichment funds for the chess club. Shannon seconded the motion and everyone voted yes. **EB Action: approved \$825 for the remaining cost of this year's chess club to come out of "enrichment" funds.**

4. Party for Play (Sukanya) P4P went well this year. The venue was different and cost a lot more than the golf club (\$2800 versus \$4500), the main expenses being food and parking. There were less attendees (178.) The silent auction did better than past years (\$8400), live auction made \$3500, tickets raised \$8000 and baskets raised \$900. We had more ticket purchases at the patron level and more teachers in attendance. The phone app for credit card swiping worked great. Lots of items are left over, which can

be used for teacher appreciation baskets or Carnival. People liked having the cookie table, and there were leftovers. The DJ donated his time. People asked for his name so hopefully he will get some business from it. Evelyn also agreed to donate her time in the future.

Did this venue work better to eliminate disenfranchisement? Sukanya received no complaints about the venue but it did not bring in the people we were hoping for. Maybe the venue can change next year? We could charge less for tickets and eliminate food to cut costs. But there could be a problem having alcohol and no food. Sukanya is not going to run P4P next year, but will pass on all of her information in case the new person wants it.

5. Other Updates

- Communications (Sarah) We only have one “shout out” for the newsletter (a “shout out” is a message up to 100 characters for \$2). The deadline is March 16th and the newsletter will come out April 1st. Sarah will make a flier about the “shout outs” to go home in combination with Diane’s flier (for PSCC meeting?). And Adam will make an announcement about them during community time this Friday. The Carnival date will be included in the newsletter.
- Events (Abbie)
 - Carnival is scheduled for June 11th. A company sent information about selling reusable cups for venues like Carnival. There is a local seller who will beat any price. What should we do? In the past people have been encouraged to bring their own water bottles. Zero Waste was also used. Jenny said it’s up to Abbie and her committee to decide. Abbie’s choice is: we will buy water bottles unless Josh wants to take over supplying water and wants to include purchase of reusable water bottles in his plan. Per Jenny, Josh could use the same funds we would use for supplying water. Either way, everyone must have access to water.
 - Talent Show rehearsals/tryouts will be held 8th and 9th periods this Friday. Sara Stock Mayo will provide guidelines and Meredith, Michelle Levine, and Abbie will facilitate. Rehearsals/tryouts will be held in Ms. Moule’s room, although she is not involved in the show. Ida announced the rehearsals over the loud speaker today and a flyer went out to 3rd-8th graders.
- Volunteers - skipped because Mark could not make the meeting.

6. Funding

- Funding Deadline Dates Jenny requested input from Tony on good deadline dates, and is waiting for his reply. Both Kip and Adam agreed that the

deadline for all end of the year fund requests should be soon. Last year's rush came the first week of May, once enough time past after PSSA's. With the agreement of Kip and Adam, we will set April 30th as the deadline.

- Potential 8th Grade Field Trip Kipp is thinking of taking the 8th graders on a field trip to the August Wilson Center and/or the Teeny Harris Exhibit at the Carnegie Art Museum before the April 30th deadline. Would the EB consider a request sooner? The 8th graders could use the \$10 already allotted to each student for this field trip without needing a vote. Kipp will check to see if that's enough. (Forty 2nd graders are going to the Tiny Harris Exhibit and will be chosen by lottery.)
- Mr. Saunders Funding Request By email earlier in the day, Mr. Saunders requested the PTO pay for supplies of music, guitar strings, violin strings and clarinet reeds, totaling \$126.23. Jenny distributed his email to the EB prior to the meeting. Shannon moved that we pay for these supplies out of "enrichment" funds, Margie seconded the motion and all voted yes. **EB Action: approved \$126.23 for requested music supplies to come out of "enrichment" funds.***
- Ms. Bateman Funding Request Shannon presented a request from Ms. Bateman, the art teacher, for PTO funds for various art supplies. The request had two parts.
 - Ms. Bateman previously spent \$91.11 for supplies and requested reimbursement. Shannon moved that we reimburse her and all voted yes. **EB Action: approved \$91.11 to reimbursement the art teacher for previously purchased supplies to come out of "enrichment" funds.***
 - Ms. Bateman requested the PTO purchase additional art supplies totaling \$8436.74, including a kiln (price of \$2940) and a list of other items including print making equipment (prices totaling \$5496.74.) We need to take this request to the general PTO because it is over \$5,000. But the EB could vote to give a smaller amount, like \$2500, and then ask the general PTO body to approve the rest. Another option would be to ask for parent donations. We could establish a registry at a local art store, Staples or Michael's and parents could make purchases there for our art department. On the other hand, we just raised all this money from P4P, and what a great opportunity to spend it. Copy paper and other school supplies are also needed. These items may be a better subject for a donation requests as they are general and very easy for people to pick up. We reached a consensus about using PTO funds for the art supplies. Shannon moved that the PTO pay \$2500 toward the purchase of the requested art supplies and all voted yes.

We will move at the next general meeting that the PTO also pay for the remaining \$5,936.74 in requested supplies. We also want to make sure she is getting the best prices. **EB Action: approved spending \$2500 toward requested art supplies from “enrichment” funds. The PTO will be asked to vote on the remaining \$5936.74 at the next general meeting.***

- Board members liked the idea of a “wish list” of needed school supplies that parents could purchase. A list will be developed with input from Adam, Kipp, and the ITL’s, and Sarah will publish it in the April newsletter. We will plan on publishing another wish list in the first newsletter of next year (or in the first mailing home to parents?) Where to store the received supplies? Maybe the mail room. Another idea to cut down on paper costs is to use computer communications unless paper is needed.

7. 2012-2013 Elections and Officers We need new co-presidents for next year. Tamara is possibly interested. No other ideas were presented. Abbie wants to return as Events VP and Ellie as Treasurer. Jenny is willing to fill another position or no position at all if unneeded. Even if not a board member, Jenny would like to come to a few board meetings for continuity. It is unknown whether Mark wants to continue as volunteer coordinator.

8. 2012-1013 Budget We have about \$50,000 in the bank and \$33,000 in expenses left for this year. This leaves an almost \$20,000 surplus for next year, although we may spend some of it. Certainly, our goal of carrying over \$10,000 is met. It looks like we can safely plan another \$50,000 budget for next year. Should we increase it?

We agree that the principal’s discretionary fund should continue. Should spending of the fund be under the charge of a committee? The committee concept is already in effect because decisions are now made with the IT group, even though the principal has the final say.

Shannon proposes an increase in the principal’s discretionary fund and an increase in the amount given to teachers to \$50. All of this could be done with the unused money allocated for enrichment grants. Should we increase the per-child field trip amount? Many see little benefit in carrying too much money over each year. Middle level sports may be cut. Should we fund them? If other schools do not have sports teams, there will be no one to compete against. Adam expects the sports programs to take a significant cut, but not to be eliminated. Uniforms will be needed. Should we have a line item for sports in the next budget? Adam said we will know the school’s needs better after Friday when school specific budget information is provided. Decisions on whether and how to increase the PTO’s budget can be better made after this.

Any other desired changes in expenditures? Abbie would like funding for the edible garden to come from outside the school and would like to see those interested in keeping the garden take care of this. The cost seems to her a lot given the limited grades using the garden and the neighbors eating the garden's produce. It was noted that school encouraged neighbors to eat the produce over the summer in order to keep the garden healthy. Others think the garden is very valuable as part of the whole school atmosphere as well as for education. It may also be a selling point for the school. Conclusion: we will keep supporting the garden, but will ask for grants.

Overall, we may be able to cut down on expenses by applying for grants for next year, including a grant for art supplies. We will eliminate the Isadore Foods fundraiser, and can add a fundraising dinner offered by the Big Burrito Restaurant Group. Jenny wants us to be prepared to pay for a \$50,000 budget. If we get grants or have additional fundraisers, then great.

*Sukanya needed to leave before these votes were taken.

Secretary Margie Minkler