

## **MINUTES**

### **SEPTEMBER 6, 2011 PTO-EB MEETING**

This meeting of the 2011-2012 Colfax A.L.A. PTO Executive Board was held at 6:15 pm at Ellie Monaco's house. Jenny Ganger led the meeting and distributed a written agenda. Present were:

President Jenny Ganger  
Co-VP Communications Sarah Sirlin  
Co-VP Fundraising Tamara Dubowitz  
VP Volunteer Coordinator Mark Beck  
Treasurer Shannon Ewing  
Assistant Treasurer Ellie Monaco  
Secretary Margie Minkler  
VP Events Abbie Campsie  
Teacher Representative Tony Woods  
Teacher Representative (Middle Level) Kip Dawson  
Principal Adam Sikorski

Welcome to Kip Dawson Kip was introduced and welcomed as the new middle level teacher representative.

1. Minutes from August Meeting (Margie) Copies of the minutes from the last EB meeting were distributed, reviewed and corrected.

2. Events (Abbie)

a. Fiesta (Abbie) The Fiesta signs have been posted at school and reminders have been sent home. We will have 15 tables at the event, we already have the decorations, and we will be baking churros to sell that night. Abbie will need to get the kitchen keys from Adam for the churros. A "cash box" table will be set up by the churros. Tamara will have Spirit Wear samples and order forms (people must have money when ordering) and Jenny will handle volunteer forms for Mark (who can't make it.)

Kip reported that at least 6 students in her class (and probably a total of 15-20) from the East Hills and Point Breeze areas are interested in going to Fiesta but have no means of transportation. Solutions were explored: the kids could stay after school and help but would have no way to get home; PAT buses do not work from these areas to the school; and hiring a bus involves too much expense and overkill on size. Kip believes that an earlier

and more extensive promotion would help bring more parents, and thereby alleviate the children's transportations needs. We will keep this in mind for the future.

b. Other events Our next big event will be **Talent Show**, run by Sara Stock-Mayo, on the first Saturday in December. We will plan a better and earlier promotion for this event per Kip's concerns expressed above. A whole-school **ice skating** event will be held on a Thursday in January to be announces. Jenny mentioned that it is necessary to get a date early or the rink will be booked. (There will be a separate middle level ice skating night planned by middle level folks.)

c. Middle level events (Jenny) A middle level party/dance/costume/sock hop will be held at the end of October. Kip relayed how much the 6<sup>th</sup> graders on student counsel want to have and plan this dance party!

### 3. Sept. 14 General Meeting plans

a. Flyer/publicity/garden vote Jenny prepared a flyer announcing the PTO general meeting with the edible garden vote and sent it out by email. Margie will copy the same flyer and distribute it to teachers' boxes on Thursday to go home with students. Jenny will send the email notice to Kip and Mark, who will email it to middle level teachers, who will then email it to middle level parents. (In the future, we will try to consolidate mailing to email for middle level.)

b. Gym and babysitting Both the gym and babysitting are available for the meeting. This information will be added to flyer.

c. Format Jenny would like the board members to sit together in front facing out towards the room during the general meetings. This way, we will be easily identifiable for questions and other communications.

d. Reports? Calls for volunteers for specific programs? Jenny will prepare a power point for the meeting. Each committee/VP will present their own report and make a call for any needed volunteers. (Tamara and Tony will not be at the meeting so Jenny will present their reports.)

e. Food? Question of whether to serve food at the general meeting is left open. Jenny will decide.

f. Oct. general meeting: finalize time The next general meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 12 at 3:45 p.m.. We will give the afternoon time a try at this meeting because the Jewish holiday, Sukkot, begins at sundown and this after school time works best for teachers.

4. Budget report (Shannon)

a. Report of what we've spent so far Shannon distributed an updated budget. It reflected the total, to date, profit for ice cream sales (+ \$177), the beginning of the year 50\$ field trip fund distribution to each teacher (- \$1,000), and the \$559.61 expenditure for outside playground equipment per our email vote. (Tony will remind teachers to submit their requests for the additional field trip/enrichment money by the 18<sup>th</sup>.) A deposit has also been paid to the University Club, where the 2011 P4P will be held. University Club offered us the best deal. Adam will reserve the nearby Sci-Tech parking lot for the event, saving us a lot of money in parking cost. Finally, \$237.59 of the playground fund was spent as a 50% deposit on a new rocket to replace the existing broken one. We will need to spend more of this money, for instance, on cleaning the now mossy carpet. The playground has not been used much during lunchtime recess because of the shortage of staff and helpers, but it is used a lot during second recess.

b. Outcome from annual review/audit Katherine Cosentino agreed to handle our required annual audit and review and has completed a report for us. This report was distributed to each attending member. The report noted that our bylaws required bi annual audits, yet we are only being audited annually. No one at the meeting knew why the biannual audit requirement was included in the bylaws; Shannon will ask the creator. Meanwhile, Shannon moved to change the bylaws to require only an annual review. Jenny seconded the motion and all voted "yea." However, a change to the bylaws may require a vote by the full PTO at the general meeting. We then all voted "yea" to taking any required vote to amend the bylaws for annual reviews at the general meeting.

c. Other Should we publicize that parents can pay for the planners (and other things like the chess club t-shirts) purchased by the PTO? We will include these purchases in the list of things done by the PTO in the donation letter, and may mention the option of contributing at the next PTO meeting, but no more than that. Tamara suggested we add a general contribution box at the PTO table at each event. She will try to get this together for Fiesta with an accompanying poster listing what we do.

## 5. Volunteers (Mark)

a. Homeroom representatives It has been more difficult to get homeroom representatives this year. So far, Mark only has 9 out of 28. More are trickling in and Mark may not have gotten all those who signed up. Do parents need more information about the job of a representative before they will volunteer? Mark will find out which rooms do not have representatives yet, and in those rooms he will send a description and request for volunteers to parents. Or, if any teachers don't want parent homeroom reps., we will assign a representative from the PTO.

b. Volunteer database Mark continues to work on the volunteer list, in the form of a Word Document, and has shown it to Jenny. The list is cumulative, including last year's list, others who have mentioned their interest and any new volunteer forms received this year. We need more information from lower level, rather than upper level, parents. Diane has agreed to be in charge of the list.

c. Word Building Mark was requested and has agreed to have a word building update workshop. The workshop is scheduled for October 24.

d. Clearances Mark and Diane will decide what to say at the general meeting about clearance. Next year, Diane will provide forms at the kindergarten information night for the parents to complete themselves (at a cost of 10\$), rather than suggesting parents wait for the school to process the applications. The school process takes too long!

## 6. Communications report (Sarah)

a. Newsletter (submission deadline Sept 16) Expected contributions: Jenny will add her contribution after the meeting, most likely focusing on how to sign up for the yahoo group and ways to donate to the PTO. Marin and Camille will be asked for photos from Fiesta, and students who went will be asked to write up something about it. Kip may ask her students in particular. Since the complete budget is available on the website, we will only include a description of what we made and spent so far this year in the newsletter. Mark will include a note on how people may volunteer.

Should the newsletter be emailed instead of printed for everyone? We will stick with paper copy because it seems good for the students to have and

hold, and avoids concerns with publishing photos of the students on the web or through email.

b. Directory update Leslie Gordan (?) is creating the directory. Some people were missing from the directory last year. We will try our best to make sure everyone is included.

c. Yahoo Group report The yahoo group is hard to sign up for. Is there an easier way? Should we migrate to FaceBook? The fact that there are 5 different groups may get too confusing. Google may be a better option and many people have gmail addresses. Camille will be consulted.

## 7. Fundraising (Tamara)

a. Party for Play plans We will get an update from Sukanya in the future.

b. Donation letter Our first big fundraising effort is the donation letter. Sarah Galusha is organizing it. We each received a copy via email and a paper copy at the meeting. The following edits were agreed upon:

We will ensure that there is an anonymous donation option. Recognition at the different levels will occur in the newsletter only. Checks shall be payable to "Colfax PTO." We will contact Lori to create a pay pal button on our website, and describe how to use this payment option in the letter. The option of designating contributions to a particular cause will be completely eliminated, as it results in serious bookkeeping difficulties. Finally, Adam's edits are necessary before the letter will be distributed, and all further comments must be provided by Friday.

Adam agreed to take on the job of printing out the labels for the mass mailing, and the PTO will stuff the envelopes and put on the labels. Adam knows the addresses for the mailing can be produced by the office quickly as long as no particular order is required, and it is not. The mailing list may be just the names available at the beginning of the school year, though, unless the office can get an updated list quickly. We want the mailing to go out now.

c. BoxTops, ice cream dates, Target? Grants? Others? Tamara is getting help for grant writing.

d. Vending machines for teachers? This would not be a big fundraiser, but some teachers are asking Adam for a vending machine in the teachers' lounge. The teachers could be polled to determine the true need. All agree

any vending machine provided must be stocked with healthy products, many of which involve refrigeration. There is an electrical hook-up. But the cost and amount of work involved in stocking a vending machine with healthy food seems prohibitive. Whether it is an appropriate use of PTO funds is also questionable. Also, the need may be diminished, as Adam just confirmed with food services that salads will now be offered every day for lunch in the cafeteria. In conclusion: a vending machine in the teachers' lounge is unlikely. Lori will be in charge of looking into options and costs because it was her idea. Only a vending machine with healthy food will be permitted.

e. Middle Level Trip fundraising plans (Jenny) The middle level kids will be raising money for the middle level trip through many fundraisers, such as entertainment books and coach bag bingo. Student Counsel will also be fundraising for charity. It is important to us that the separation between our fundraisers and those of others be clear. Sara will ensure that the newsletter incorporates the distinction between the middle level and PTO fundraisers. As the year progresses, the PTO wants every fundraiser to clearly state who is raising the money.

Tony knows some primary level teachers resent having to send the middle level fundraising order forms home with the primary children. Collecting and compiling the sales forms takes a lot of work. Some teachers believe this should not be the job of a primary teacher when these fundraisers benefit only the middle level. Others believe it is appropriate for the whole school to actively support the middle level trip takers. So the question is raised: should the forms for Sarris candy and the like be sent to all students or just those at the middle level? Is there a way to distinguish between buying and selling? For example, could only middle level students be given the paperwork to sell the fundraising products, while primary students would be offered a chance to buy the products for themselves from the middle level students? This seems best, but how would it work in practice?

8. Next meeting Neither Adam nor Shannon are available to meet on our planned date of Tuesday, October 4. We will instead meet at 6:30 on October 3 at Margie's house. Shannon, Sara and Mark can't make this date, however.

Secretary Margie Minkler