

MINUTES
OCTOBER 3, 2011 PTO-EB MEETING

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

President Jenny Ganger
Co-VP Fundraising Sukanya Srinivasan
Co-VP Fundraising Tamara Dubowitz
VP Volunteer Coordinator Mark Beck
Assistant Treasurer Ellie Monaco
Secretary Margie Minkler
VP Special Events Abbie Campsie
Teacher Representative Tony Woods
Principal Adam Sikorski

1. Opening- Agenda Format. Our plan is to limit meeting discussions to what needs to be discussed face to face.
2. Old Business- Bus Transportation for Talent Show. We will pay for bus transportation for the talent show and then get reimbursed from the talent show's earnings. We will ask Sarah Stock-Mayo (who is in charge of the talent show) to handle the specifics, like the number of bus stops, whether permission slips are required, and whether parent accompaniment is required. Diane could give her information on how it works for the 6-8 grade dances, although the parental presence requirements would be different when lower level children are involved. Talent Show coordinators will make these decisions, tell us of their plans, and we will give them the front money.
3. Budget Report. Copies of the current budget were distributed.
 - a. Fundraising
 - So far we have raised a total of \$2500 between ice cream, Spiritwear sales and newsletter ads.
 - Should we sell Spiritwear again this year? Tamara would like us to offer more winter wear and maybe sweatpants, unavailable through Spiritwear. Another clothing company may be better in offering more options and at a better rate.
 - Spiritwear at Centennial celebration? Tamara would like to sell Colfax clothing items at Centennial. A different vendor would have to be used

because of the time limit. Shannon identified a vendor who already has our logos and could probably produce clothing in time. Jenny and Shannon are not available to organize any clothing sales for Centennial. The efforts required to get clothing in this tight time frame and sell it on site may not result in enough profit to justify the efforts. We may also end up with too much inventory. But if Tamara wants to and can do it, general consensus was – go for it.

b. Expenditures

- Principal's discretionary fund: Adam has not spent any of his discretionary fund yet. He plans to use the money to establish a program for struggling kids. Unlike other schools, Colfax has no after school program and no Saturday program serving this population. Adam is already searching, but the process gets very complicated. Names of contacts were suggested including Gabby Gonzales, Catherine Augustine (from CDS). Adam has already talked with Gonzales. Tony suggested that if an in-house program is going to be offered, in-house staff be utilized as the first option, so as not to offend our staff.
- Our program expenses to date: \$175.38 went to "middle level events" (seed money for scarf sale), \$559.61 was spent under "outside equipment" for the big container, \$189.50 went to "school clubs" for Challenge 24, and \$40 was spend under "PTO EB Meetings" for babysitting at the PTO general meetings. We should have a PTO meeting babysitting fund instead.

4. P4P Committee.

- Sukanya approached Leslie Grodin to co-chair the P4P committee and Leslie agreed. She is now the official co-chair.
- Sukanyan will designate a specific task to each EB member and wants the EB to have a bigger show at the event. Our first meeting volunteer sign-up sheet got lost. And Sukanya is disappointed about the lack of responses to her request for helpers. She feels very far behind. CAPA and CDS are already set for their May events.
- Was there too much stuff last year? Did the amount of stuff cause items which could have raised more to get lost in the masses? For example, the American girl doll sold for only \$40. Consensus is, there were not too many items, but people need more advanced notice on what items are being sold. Sukanya will send out the program listing earlier this year.
- Should there be an on-line auction? Sukanya will consider having one, but there are both positives and negatives to that choice.

- Donors are asking Sukanya how we spent last year's money. She can answer with the list from the budget (enrichment grants, the food is elementary program, the Frick environmental program, purchases of technology) plus field trips. We do need more requests for enrichment programs from teachers at the \$1,500-\$2,000 level. Ideally, the requests would be for whole grade programs such as those offered through the Children's Museum or Meadowcroft Village. Tony will review the Teachers' Handbook content on this subject and press teachers. A program on adversity and handicaps is now being provided through the Children's Institute to the kindergarten. Maybe this program could be tied into bullying? And expanded to the whole school?
- We need to ask everyone for donations, especially big items. The donation letter is almost done. Sukanya will add an accurate list of what the PTO does with funds. The FedEx guy will do the printing of the letter again this year. Sukanya will not hand write all the "thank you" notes for the donations this year. Instead, she will divide them up through a system, and, where possible, give them to the requesters to handle. Sukanya will provide the notes.
- Volunteers are needed to get individual donations for the auctions. We also need the maximum number of general volunteers possible. Captains are needed to take on particular tasks: Someone is needed to get the corporate donation request letters to those who need it. We also need an ads person for the program, and a publicity person (maybe Camille and/or Sarah.) Another person could be in charge of coordinating offers to buy teachers P4P tickets.
- Should there be a ticket scholarship fund? Deciding who gets a scholarship would get complicated, and how would people apply? Applications could be completed on the website as checking out. Scholarships could be limited to those eligible for free lunch. But, ticket purchase is a major aspect of this fundraiser. The primary purpose of P4P is fundraising. Other events have the primary purpose of community building. Sukanya does not want any more ticket reductions than those already established. Final decision: "No" to scholarship tickets. We also won't reduce teacher tickets but, instead, will encourage people to buy their teachers a ticket.
- We will make the next PTO general meeting all about P4P to get people excited and interested in volunteering for the committee.

5. Handling Unbudgeted Requests. Jenny has received lots of requests for unbudgeted funding, ranging from the cost of buses, to seed money for sports teams wanting to conduct their own fundraisers (Popp). Should we change the line items on our budget to cover more of these items specifically? How should people make requests for funds? Where should the money come from? Should it come from ice cream sales or not, keeping in mind that we may want to eliminate the ice cream sales

in the long term? Should groups be asked to do something in return for funds if they are not selling ice cream?

a. Proposal of a civil service option. (Tamara and Ellie)

- Tamara described the current system for unbudgeted money requests for clubs, sports teams and (unbudgeted) field trips, as follows. Clubs or teachers go to Shannon or Diane with a request. They are given the option of selling ice cream to earn the money they need. (Ice cream sales take place every other Friday during lunch, so every two weeks, a group may conduct the ice cream sale for that Friday and use the profits toward their cause.)
- Could we just give the groups the requested money instead, without requiring that they sell ice cream?
- One of the benefits of the group ice cream sale is that groups gain a sense of contributing or earning what they get. This interest could instead be served by requiring groups requesting money from the PTO to participate in some civic service. We could have a “good deeds” list spelled out and kids or parents (and sometimes teachers) from the requesting group could perform these tasks to “earn” the money. Examples include: kids could write news letter items, parents could help with recess, a class could pick up trash at lunch, or students could collect recycling around the school.
- Feedback from EB:
 - It may be dangerous to have a policy that we will give out money upon request without requiring people to at least try to earn the money in some way. Both the proposal and ice cream sales are useful in this regard.
 - On the other hand, why require people to do anything to get money for a good cause when we have the money to give?
 - Is this “preachy?” Is it our place to be mandating good deeds? Imposition of this type of requirement on the use of money donated to the PTO may be a turn-off for the school population.
 - Ice cream sales, unlike the proposed civic services, actually raise money. Groups sell ice cream because it earns the money they need. Do groups really want to have to do something to get the money otherwise?
 - The idea of civic service at school is wonderful. How about starting a civics club through our very excited student counsel? Adam’s behavioral plan and golden tickets are also promoting the interest in civic responsibility.

b. Fund request form and rubric.

- We need an established procedure for requesting funds (which now are often just verbal), guidelines on what to request funds for, and standards for how to decide whether a particular request should be granted.
- Tamara passed out a sample rubric from another school, called a “PTO funding guidelines rubric.” Criteria for rating proposals on the example were: academic core enrichment, best practice/research based, innovation, depth/duration impact, and diversity. Should we develop a simpler version more applicable to our school? Should it be applied to all requests? The EB will work toward this.
- For now, we need a funds request form. The form will include: who the request is for, its purpose, and how much is requested. The EB will approve the form via email. Requests will then be required to come in this form. The EB will decide on the requests before or at the next meeting, preferably by email. If a request qualifies as a line item designated in the budget, Shannon will approve the request herself.
- Concerning Megan Popp’s sports request, we will ask for more details on what is needed and decide whether to give her the money directly.
- As a side note, Adam knows the kids want student versus staff games. Could we do something with this? A fundraising possibility?

6. Word Building Workshops. If anyone has a kindergartener or a first grader, or knows anyone who has one, talk up the benefits of word building. Encourage everyone you know to receive the volunteer training in this valuable technique. The first training sessions for the year will be held Tuesday, October 25 at 3:30 and 7:30.

7. Plans for October Meeting. The General PTO meeting will focus almost entirely on P4P- building excitement and encouraging volunteering. Mark will provide his planned word building information at the PSCC meeting. Tamara may want to ask for more volunteers regarding tile sales at the Centennial Celebration, and Abbie will announce the ice skating family fun night as January 23. Otherwise, it’s P4P only.

8. How to Get Issues on PSCC Agenda (Sukanyana’s request) – We ran out of time so did not cover this.

Secretary Margie Minkler