

PTO Board Meeting Minutes

September 3, 2020, 4pm

Present via Zoom:

Natalia Duarte
Mitch Franzos
Jeanine Weiss
Lisa Guizzetti Zur
Karey Kluesner
Ross Ingram

Discussion:

Natalia discussed her efforts on scoping for outside classroom space. She has worked with Caroline from Grow Pittsburgh on the start of an estimate for adding some outside seats/stumps and got a school property map from the district. Before going any further she needs feedback from Dr. Woods on the viability of this project and we recognized that PTO funds would likely be needed to support it.

Related to the idea of getting the kids outside more, Lisa proposed considering ways to have more winter outside recess, for example providing inexpensive gloves and/or shareable coats.

Lisa also discussed her efforts on masks for the staff and on spiritwear. She is waiting to hear back from another mask vendor and welcomes any final comments on the types of spiritwear to order. Mitch proposed buying some extra spiritwear that the PTO could sell during PTO community events (when we can have them again!). There was general concurrence on this, along with the possibility of using some of this spiritwear for thank yous through the year to individuals or businesses who are supporting the school.

Action: Lisa to finalize proposals for the mask buy and spiritwear sales.

We also discussed a science teacher grant request for classroom technology. We concluded we would need more information to make an informed decision. Mitch volunteered his expertise to talk with the science teachers about their specific needs.

This led to a discussion (for the new PTO members) on budget availability and the process for reviewing and deciding on grants. We considered that it would be helpful to have a more formal grant request process that would provide consistency for all the staff, while ensuring all budgeted funds are distributed during the year. Karey asked how grant decision-making relates to any strategies or needs identified in a School Plan for Excellence or School Improvement Plan. That would be possible when those plans are available and/or created. In the past there have been extra initiatives/fundraisers like the playground. A library renovation has been

mentioned in the past. This led to thoughts about applying PTO resources towards quiet spaces for students in the school. We circled back to Natalia's effort on an outdoor classroom and discussed that the resources needed for that might be applied to inside spaces. There was also some discussion that better linkage of PTO funds to specific high-priority school needs could be helpful in fundraising efforts, both with parents and the local business community. There were several takeaway actions from this discussion.

Action: Mitch discuss technology needs with the science teachers.

Action: Mitch draft a proposed grant request form and process for review by the rest of the Board.

With the delay of the start of the school year, we agreed the first PTO Community meeting will be held the 2nd school-day Wednesday of the month – September 16th.

The meeting was adjourned approximately 5:30 pm.

Previous business action items to carry forward:

Ross has sent a welcome from the PTO to the teaching staff and asked for ways we can support them and a general inquiry on new enrichment ideas. Stand by for input and discussion.

Regarding the Back to School FAQs that have been drafted by Jeanine, it was agreed this will need to wait a week or two to issue once the school year is started and district guidance on some issues is finalized. Natalia suggested that having short video links explaining some of the items could be helpful – something to keep in mind for the future.

Similarly, the 2020-21 Colfax K-8 PTO Handbook will be held off for a week or two until staff has time to determine which previous annual activities will be on hold during a virtual school year and which might be held in a different form.

Get comments to Stephanie on “Getting to Know You” question for Colfax staff and discuss at our next meeting (including where to post). The Board agreed to hold off on contacting the staff on this for a week or two until the school year is underway.

During this school year we need to recruit a new Communications lead and find a new software option (if not MS Word).

Mitch to post 2020-2021 2020-21 purchasing/reimbursement form(s).

Next Meeting:

TBD