

MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 22, 2010 PTO-EB MEETING

This meeting of the 2010-2011 Colfax A.L.A. PTO Executive Board was held at 7:00 pm in the music room of the school. Jenny Ganger led the meeting and distributed a written agenda. Present were:

President Jenny Ganger
VP Communications Camille Harris
Co-VP Special Events Nora Simpson
VP Fundraising Lisa Chotiner
Co-VP Volunteer Coordinators Cate Axtman and Mark Beck
Treasurer Shannon Ewing
Co-Secretaries Margie Minkler and Sharon Manley
Teacher Representative Tony Woods
Principle David May-Stein (until 7:30)
Darcy Gordon (during donation letter discussion)

Update - AYP status. David announced that Colfax made AYP Status. The appeal was successful.

1. Ice cream sales /Healthy School Environment Committee. Jenny and David held discussions with the parents, mostly kindergarten parents new to the school, who expressed concerns at the PTO/PSCC meeting about the ice cream sales. David has included the Healthy School Committee as a PSCC committee for these and other interested parents. The committee will focus on new fundraising ideas, proposing those ideas (which may or may not be accepted), recycling, and other health issues. (Nothing will be done to change the bus idling issue raised at the PSCC meeting because the buses are following the laws for idle time.)

Some EB members raised the possibility of eliminating further discussion on the ice cream issue by eliminating the sales. The issue comes up yearly and consumes a lot of time and energy yearly. Concern was also expressed about alienating new, enthusiastic kindergarten parents. Others experience the complaints about ice cream sales as patronizing. David assured all that great care is being taken to ensure that the complaining parents are not alienated. Additionally, whether the PTO continues to sell ice cream, ice cream will be sold for fundraising at the school because it works so well.

If teachers find volunteers to handle the sales, teachers may request two weeks of ice cream sales for their class's cause. Tony will notify teachers of this option. One identified need is clay for the art teacher's new kiln.

2. Fiesta Monday night. (Nora) Fiesta will be a potluck with music. Nora chooses not to have ice cream sales there. Kindergarten teachers will not be present because of

a scheduled training. Mark and Sharon volunteer to be at the PTO table. At the table, Entertainment books will be sold; a donation jar, volunteer forms and Yahoo group sign-up sheet will be present.

3. Spending tech. money. (David) David would like the Technology money raised and remaining from last year to be spent on Elmo Systems for the kindergarten teachers. A whole set costs \$1190. The library will have one and the art teacher does not need one. Four systems are at the school and there will be enough money in combination with the Tech. money to purchase the systems for the kindergartens.

4. Plans for Oct. 6 PTO/PSCC meeting.

a) PSCC agenda (David): i) presentation from Healthy School Environment Committee on healthy food in schools; ii) lunch and recess; iii) maybe test results if available, iv) request for agenda items for next meeting. David will address the parking issue in the newsletter, and AYP status in an article and a letter.

b) David would like a partner/helper for the PSCC, possibly Cate Axtman. Cate is unwilling to commit to this because of extensive other obligations.

c) Motion for meeting time limits. Jenny made a motion based on a parent suggestion and general concern for the length of PTO/PSCC meetings: During future PTO (and possibly PSCC) meetings, each topic would be allotted a specific amount of time. If not covered in that time, topics would be tabled until the next meeting. Each speaker is allotted one minute, with 15 seconds for follow-up. David said this will not work for PSCC meetings. In the past, five to ten families have complained to the parent hotline that they did not have a voice at the PSCC meeting. David will continue to use his best judgment to consider all the competing interests, and will attempt to limit the length of the meetings by limiting the agenda to three items. He will also rely on parents to speak up at the meetings if they feel things are going on too long.

After consideration, the motion for the meeting limits was withdrawn. PTO may try to limit the length of its meeting by changing the format to updates and information only, having no questions until all committee chairs have delivered their updates, and addressing additional questions and concerns through the formation of subcommittees by the interested parties.

d) PTO agenda. The budget will be available as a handout for everyone who attends the meeting. Attendees will be directed to contact Shannon with any budgetary questions or concerns. Mark will spend three minutes on word-building and 1 minute on encouraging volunteers. Nora will list future events and request that anyone interested in helping contact her. Camille will give an update in communications. Any person wishing to distribute a handout at the meeting will produce and bring the handouts.

5. Newsletter. (Camille) The deadline for submissions is September 24 - this Friday. The plan is to publish the first week of October, maybe the eighth. Conference

day is October 11, so the newsletters could be distributed then. Camille distributed an outline for the current issue. Sharon passed out a cartoon created by her son, which may be included. Pictures from Fiesta may be included. Ideas for future issues include: a writing contest for students (and parents?) linked to the book of the month, with winning entries published in the newsletter; art submissions; and a sports page.

6. Donation letter. (Darcy and Jenny) The discussion on the donation letter began through email, and continued at this meeting. A Consensus was reached for a donation letter giving individuals the choice of checking a box for donations to the “area of greatest need” or checking a box for “other” to be written in by donor. The envelopes will include the request letter, a cut and return portion and a return envelope with no stamp. The goal is to send the letters out in late November, with labels done by November 15, mailing out by November 23, and arriving at homes November 29th. Options to explore for the stamping and labeling of the outgoing donation letters include: using the school’s bulk mailing rate (by loading the school bulk mail meter?), obtaining mailing labels through the school (?) both of which Tony will check on, simply buying stamps, employing school students to compile the mailing, or employing a group mentioned by Camille based on Wilkinsburg, which offers these types of services for very low rates as an employment opportunity.

7. Volunteers/word building program. Mark requests that everyone look at the Yahoo cite for the file containing the volunteer list. For the word building program designed for kindergarteners, first graders, or possibly second graders struggling with reading, Mark will be offering two volunteer workshops. The workshops will be scheduled toward the end of October (25, 28-29?), with follow-up in December. Mark will schedule these with Jenny. The volunteers will be trained to use word building kits provided to each classroom. Following the workshops, Mark will practice with each participating volunteer as they begin to work with the students.

8. Centennial. The centennial is September 17, 2011. The centennial committee will be independent from the PTO.

9. Miscellaneous. Responsibility for maintaining the PTO bulletin board is returned to the Secretaries, as Lisa Chotiner, who had volunteered to do it, has returned to work and does not have time. Sharon will put a display on the board including photos of the EB and Lisa’s crossword of EB names. One idea is for the board to focus on volunteers.

Shannon is working with the library on a Birthday Book fundraiser. On an individual’s birthday, they may donate ten dollars and receive the purchase a book as a gift for the library. A plate with the child’s name will be attached to the donated book.

A teacher appreciation lunch will be organized for December. Maybe Meredith Strassburger would be willing to help organize. Other volunteer parents will be recruited.

(Skipped Middle Level Update- Lisa S. unavailable)

Co-Secretary Margie Minkler