

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 1, 2010 PTO MEETING

These first 2010-2011 school year meeting of the Colfax A.L.A. PTO was held at 7:00 pm in the school cafeteria, immediately preceding the PSCC meeting. The meeting was led by PTO Co-President Jenny Ganger and accompanied by slides outlining the information presented.

All those in attendance were welcomed and the new 2010-2011 PTO Executive Board (EB) was introduced:

Co-Presidents Lisa Chotiner and Jenny Ganger
VP Communications Camille Harris
Co-VPs Special Events Nora Simpson and Sukanya Srinivasan
VP Fundraising -needed
Co-VP Volunteer Coordinators Cate Axtman and Mark Beck
Treasurer Shannon Ewing
Co-Secretary Margie Minkler and Sharon Manley (arrived later).
Middle Level Representative Lisa Stupar
Faculty Representative Tony Woods
Parent Engagement Specialist Diane Condie (absent)
Principal David May Stein

1. PTO/Colfax Calendar. There is a new PTO/Colfax calendar at www.colfaxpto.org (go to calendar) including all PTO and school events as well as demarcation of each day under the 6 day school schedule!
2. What is the PTO? All parents and guardians of Colfax students are automatically members of the PTO. The PTO missions are to i) support learning and enrichment; ii) build community; and iii) help parents organize around policy issues. Through fundraising efforts, the PTO has brought many resources to Colfax such as teacher grants, field trip grants, student clubs and activities, teacher appreciation, the playground, recess equipment, lobbying of district and city for needs, and laptop computers for students. The PTO has brought school families together through sponsoring events such as Party for Play, Fiesta, Carnaval, ice skating and movie nights, battle of the bands, and a talent show to be added this year, as well as by facilitating communications and providing a forum for organizing around policy issues. The PTO hopes to build on these successes in the coming year and greatly wishes for the participation of all members. The more family participation, the better the school is for our children.
3. PTO and PSCC. The PTO is our "Parent Teacher Organization." PSCC is the "Parent School Community Council." The roles for each organization have evolved over time and continue to change, but in the recent past:

PTO

- Supports learning and enrichment through field trip grants, classroom grants, student clubs and activities, playground and outside equipment, computers and other technology, as well as eight grade promotion and related activities.
- Builds community through family fun nights, middle level dances, battle of the bands, Fiesta, Carnaval, winter party, talent show, musical, teacher appreciation, directory, newsletter, email alerts, and website.

PSCC

- Discusses in more depth school, district, and educational policy issues such as behavior management, PSSA scores, achievement gap, curriculum, and traffic safety in more depth.
- Organizes and raises money as needed to address policy concerns along with the PTO.

4. Goals for 2010 (Reports from Board Members). The Colfax PTO will raise about \$30,000 this year. The PTO will fund field trip enrichment grants, teacher grants, staff appreciation, student clubs, computers and other technology, playground repairs and insurance, recess equipment and more. But help from all members is needed.

a) Budget report presented by Shannon Ewing. This year's PTO Budget was presented as printed on the back of the Colfax PTO Meeting Agenda handouts available to attendees. The amounts listed in the budget as income are based on amounts raised last year by the same fundraising activities. Additional fundraisers may be added.

b) Fundraising presented by Lisa Chotiner. The first PTO fundraiser will begin at Fiesta. Entertainment books will be sold to raise money. All are requested to participate in the ongoing fundraisers such as box top collection, ink cartridge and toner collection (collections may also be taken from work sites), and "Farms to Colfax" (delivering local farm produce directly to the school for family pick up.) Ice cream sales will be conducted at school on Fridays at lunch.

Several attendees expressed concerns about the ice cream sales as unhealthy. Information was requested on how PTO decisions such as this are made and what could be done to invoke a change. Ms. Ganger agreed to review the bylaws, but believed the procedure to be as follows: EB makes decisions for the PTO with consideration of input from its members. An item may also be voted on at General PTO meetings by all those in attendance. Most likely, any vote must be preceded by a motion for a vote and a second to that motion; notice would then be given to the PTO at large that a debate and vote on the issue would occur at a certain meeting set in the future.

In response to the concerns, Mr. May-Stein requested that no action be taken on the issue of ice cream sales at this first meeting. Instead, another time could be scheduled for a specific meeting to discuss the issue of nutrition/and concerns raised by PTO ice cream sales.

c) Special Events presented by Nora Simpson. The first special event will be Fiesta. Family fun nights are held throughout the year, and Carnaval is held in the Spring. Input and help with any and all of these events is welcomed.

Reported by Ida Simpson, a “Back to Football/NFL Play 60 Campaign” will be taking place this year. Colfax will compete to win a \$10,000 grant offered by NFL Play 60 (through the NFL and United Way) to be used for health and wellness improvements in the awarded school. Through the contest, NFL Play 60 seeks to encourage youth health and wellness as a national priority and to fight rising childhood obesity. The campaign will be kicked off with a pep rally called “Back to Football Friday” on September 10 at 2:15 in the Colfax gym. (This date is also the second day of Rosh Hashanah, but was selected by the NFL.) Students are asked to dress in Steeler colors and gear to show their enthusiasm.

d) Communications presented by Camille Harris. The Newsletter will be issued every 6 to 8 weeks, with approximately 6 issues in the year. Ms. Harris will make a list of things she wishes to include in the Newsletter, and all people are encouraged to send information to her about these items or any other events for publication. Personal ads will be included in the Newsletter this year as a fundraiser.

Colfax PTO is now on Facebook, and still has the PTO Yahoo email group. If anyone wants to join the email group or get information about the meetings, they may give or send their email address to camille.harris39@yahoo.com. All meetings and events are also announced through fliers sent home with the students. These fliers are presently the means of communication with those who don't have email or internet access.

Sharene Shealey, a Colfax parent and School Board member, was also introduced. Although Ms. Shealey's district does not include Colfax, she is a valuable School Board source for information and communication.

e) Volunteering Directly with Students and Teachers presented by Mark Beck. Volunteers are needed for, 1) recess/lunch monitoring (children are able to play on the lower playground only when extra adults are present to supervise), 2) “Word Building” (a proven method of individual tutoring in reading – training will be offered to volunteers), 3) homeroom representatives, and 4) helping as needed by individual teachers in classrooms. The homerooms still needing representatives were listed.

All volunteering with the students requires two clearances: a criminal clearance and a Child Abuse (Act 33/34) clearance. A volunteer may get their own clearances or apply for them at school, in which case the cost will be covered by the district. If a person is volunteering on a continuing basis at Colfax, clearances do not need to be renewed once they have been obtained.

f. Sign up sheets. Directory and volunteer sign-up sheets for Party for Play, Fiesta, Ice cream sales, Talent Show and general interest were placed at the entrance door and passed around during the meeting.

5. Middle Level Update presented by Lisa Stupar and **Cindy** Pace. Parents from the middle level grades meet separately and organize separate social activities for this

age level. A letter will be sent home to parents asking for their interest in volunteering with these activities.

The Middle Level fundraisers raise money only for the big middle level trip scheduled at the year trip. The two organizing Middle Level parents conduct a homemade scarf sale in winter. Students have opportunities to earn money themselves to be applied directly to the cost of their own end of the year trip. It is possible for students to personally earn the entire cost of their trip.

The combined meetings of the PTO/PSCC will be held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm, with the next meeting scheduled for October 6, 2010.

Co-Secretary Margie Minkler