

Downey PTO Meeting



9.12.2017

7:00PM-9:00PM

Room 1 – Downey School

Type of meeting	2017-2018 Beginning of the Year PTO Meeting
Attendees	Todd Nicholson, Sarah Young-Hong, Liz Gauthier, Jen Killilea, Anne McMurray, Beth Murphy, Sue Saliba, Maureen Sullivan, Hillary Mosca, Harshini Muttiah, Lori Warren, Nayla Daly, Tammy McGowan, Meg Kara, Liz Mullen, Danielle Mason, Pascal Haddad, Tara Billini, Jen Shea

1. Welcome: Intros and Updates. Positive Start (Todd Nicholson)

7:04-7:06PM	Discussion: Sharing of names and positions, catch-up
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- Group was welcomed by Todd
- Went around the table and introduced themselves by name and position to ensure that all members were aware of each other's roles

2. Send Out Packets. Communications Coordinator (Sue Saliba)

7:06-7:18	Discussion: How did everything go?
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- Sue Saliba informed the board that everything went well with August send-out, a few new families didn't get packets, and they were directed to Diane Carde
 - Questions raised: What can be done about not having emails for newly enrolled families? How to best obtain new families email addresses? Needed to communicate PTO news to families, how do we reach families in all grades?
 - Teacher Rep. Tara Billini said spoke with Principal, got permission from families in her 2nd grade classroom to forward email information
 - Ideas raised to include PTO sign up paperwork with school registration paperwork and to have "Welcome" tables for new families at picnic
 - Idea raised: Teacher Rep. Jen Shea thought to include PTO information with Kindergarten welcome letter, group liked this idea
 - Group agreed there needs to be a process for integrating new students into the Downey community when unable to obtain communication information
 - Request to send "cute" PTO event pictures to Lorri Warren for posting on Facebook (will check for permission)
 - End goal of communications conversation: PTO wants to be more welcoming and "out in front"
- Action Items: Todd will speak with Diane Carde about the best way to communicate PTO business with new families

3. Halloween Party Update (Lorri Warren)

7:18-7:20	Discussion: What's Going On?
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- event will take place from 6-7:30pm October 27th
 - Committee is planning to have a bouncy house, an inflatable obstacle course, and a photo booth (repeated from last year)
 - Committee would like to reach out to people outside of the PTO board to coordinate the planning and be involved
 - PTO discussed that they are not responsible for planning of Haunted House, should be planned in advance by 5GE and Principal
- Action Items: Anyone with ideas for planning the Halloween party should forward them to Lorri Warren, Todd to check in with DJ and Lori to advertise for committee help on Facebook

4. Hospitality Committee Update (Sue Saliba)

7:20-7:22	Discussion: beginning of the year events and new members
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- Committee wants to reach out to potential new members, not currently on the board. Jennifer Lee was mentioned.
 - Group was informed by the teacher reps that the welcome back teacher breakfast went well
 - Members of hospitality committee informed the board that the Welcome Coffee was well attended by members of the Downey Community
 - Brief discussion of Curriculum night dinner for teachers, that it is to be paid for and setup by committee (who need to be given the number of staff members attending the dinner) See section 5 for more details
- Action Items: Hospitality committee is looking to add members for help with Staff dinners and Teacher Appreciation

5. Curriculum Night (September 28th) (Todd Nicholson/Sue Saliba)

722-730	Discussion: What needs to be done?
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- Board discussed flowers. In the past they have been donated to school for curriculum night, should we continue this tradition and the PTO will pay? Group agreed flowers should not just be for main classroom teachers, but for entire staff. Question raised as to how much to spend?
- Discussed giving Diane Carde payment for babysitters, Diane Carde will find and take care of babysitters
- PTO to not just give a check to Diane Carde for teacher dinner, PTO should relieve Downey staff of ordering and setup as well

Action Items: Hospitality to order and setup teacher dinner, Jenn Killilea and Liz Mullen to decide on flowers for staff (if we are purchasing, what kind from where?), Maureen Sullivan will cut a check to Diane for the babysitting money.

6. Treasurer Update (Maureen Sullivan)

7:30-7:35

Discussion: Any new business?

- Treasurer stated that not a lot is going on at this point in the year

- money from Enrichment budget has been given for Potato Hill (see enrichment)

- Informed group that 33% of family dues have been paid so far

-Request to inform families who use PayPal to write out their family names

-Request to look at monetary figure for enrichment. Current budget was discussed at last meeting, June 2017.

-Brought to the attention of the group that in the past 80% of PTO budget reportedly went to enrichment, \$18,000 reportedly spent on enrichment approx. 3 years ago.

-PTO agreed they would be open to spending more than originally allotted on enrichment

-Group made note that \$10,000 put in budget in addition to enrichment budget for outdoor classroom

-Group was informed that there will be a book fair update in the next email blast. Class schedule for book fair will be on flier.

Action Items: Downey Staff to continue to schedule enrichment opportunities, Maureen Sullivan to look at budget as needed and see if it needs to be increased, Maureen Sullivan and Rachel Macy looking for help with setup, breakdown, and timeslots during the book fair

7. Picnic Update (Meg Kara)

735-752

Discussion: Picnic update for Friday the 15th

-Concern raised: Possible rainstorms? Plan B? Should we move it inside? Group agreed to keep it outside and just postpone if necessary

-Committee update: Ice cream truck ordered and permit is obtained, 10% back from driver, less choices of ice cream available to move the line more quickly

- Group informed that Sign up genius looks good for event

-*Spirit shirt update:* Principal vetoed single color shirts per grade, still supports spirit shirts. Not going to start shirts in kindergarten or tie into grade levels

-PTO will continue to pay for Kindergarten shirts (not spirit shirts)

-Have left over large shirts from previous school year

-ordered small shirts in new style, emblem now includes all values on Downey emblem

-Will be selling both models at picnic, a couple of new colors will be in stock

-Principal agreed that spirit days will continue throughout this school year

-Spirit shirt question raised: Should we have parent or teacher order forms? Group agreed, "Yes" Will have parent order forms

Action Items: Committee to set up and run picnic, as scheduled, on Friday the 15th at 5:30, Todd to bring in shirts and set up t-shirt table, order forms will be available for adult sizes if parents or staff want to order

8. Gala Update (Nayla Daly and Anne McMurray)

7:52-7:59

Discussion: How is it shaping up so far?

-Date set for March 10th

Committee informed the group that they have been renegotiating of the contract at Blue Hills Country Club, they wanted 1500 room fee, came back with 750 room fee

- Question raised: Work is already done, should we keep the gala at the BHCC even with the room fee?

- Board agreed, "yes" we should keep it at BHCC and pay the room fee.

-Question raised: How much should drinks cost? Downey can get a cut.

-Committee members stated that details for Gala are under negotiation, they are building a committee, looking for people to volunteer, especially need help with a silent auction team, "go-getters"

-Committee would like to do more with sponsorship

-Theme: honoring the community, a theme of inclusion "Around the world?" representing different cultures and food, maybe reflected in auction

Action Items: Committee to continue planning gala and building committee. Decide on drink prices, auction items, and themes. Get more sponsors.

9. Enrichment (Tammy McGowan)

7:59-8:04

Discussion: 2017-2018 plans for enrichment

-Group informed that Potato Hill enrichment is officially booked

-Group informed that every grade, K-5, has Discovery Museum coming to Downey within the teachers' preferred timelines (\$1000 per grade) aligned with common core curriculum.

-Request from Mrs. Goldman for whole school music enrichment.

-2nd and 5th grade writing enrichment being planned

-Concern raised: Might need more money than originally budgeted, idea to submit a grant to the Westwood Foundation for Education, idea for grant writing committee to follow-up

Action Items: PTO to continue to fund teacher and school requests for enrichment. Allow for more enrichment money than budgeted, if needed. Grant writing committee to create and submit grants to the Westwood Foundation for Education to obtain more funding for enrichment (check with Kara Buckley member of foundation).

10. Downey Directory Update (Sarah Young-Hong)	
8:04-8:07	Discussion: What's new with the directory?
-Group informed that 2017-2018 is to be put together by Jeannine Salcedo again, waiting on Aspen to finish being updated by parents	
-Discussion about possible colors: group agreed they should be bright, maybe hot pink?	
-Concern raised: we need someone to take over the writing of the directory, maybe as soon as next year.	
Action Items: Jeannine Salcedo to wait for Aspen to finish being updated, Jeannine to finish putting together directories and PTO have them printed. Directories sent home with PTO members who have paid their dues.	
11. The Downey Play (Sarah Young-Hong)	
8:07-8:18	Discussion: Who's going to direct our play?
-Questions raised: Who can direct our play? Sarah has put out feelers to Northeastern and Westwood Rec to find interested parties	
-Committee wrote job description for Downey faculty to be sent out to gauge interest amongst staff	
-Question raised: Can Ms. Starsiak returning to direct? What kind of support would a new drama person need/ time frame?	
Action Items: Play committee to get resumes, see who's available, check costs, quick turnaround, contact performing arts department at WHS, Sarah to reach out to Catherine Starsiak to check potential availability, Sarah to send job description to PTO and teacher reps and Principal Gallagher	
12. Purchasing a Cabinet (Todd Nicholson)	
8:18-8:22	Discussion: We need a new PTO cabinet in the Downey Cafe
-Group informed that Principal checked with PTO reps at welcome coffee about the PTO cabinet, needs to be replaced	
-Custodian asked for something on wheels. Group would like a cabinet that is a little bigger, also needs to lock	
-Group gave permission for Todd to research cabinets	
-Idea raised to use furniture pads to move cabinets instead of wheels	
Action Items: Todd to continue research	
13. Bylaws Update. Voting for Board Members (Todd Nicholson)	
8:22- 8:40	Discussion: Changes to bylaws and bringing in new board members
-Brought to the attention of the board that there are 19-20 members on the current board, 8 people in their 3 rd year, 5 in second year on board. Bylaws say 1 or 2 year terms for officer positions	
-Board wants parents in community to be involved in PTO events, maybe join the board in future years, board wants to keep expanding	
- Language needs to be written for what to do when no one wants to take over major roles in PTO board	
-Proposal to change language about co-presidents choosing nominees for board members yearly, want to avoid the end of the year scramble for positions	
-Proposal to ask current board members to commit to terms for the following year by the end of March, collect nominations by Mid-April, and vote by end of April	
-Question raised on how to word things for transitions into the following years	
-Proposal to have a vote for officers, and add elections provision in the bylaws for officers to be voted on by the board	
-concern raised: no chance for an incoming K parent to be a rep	
- Pascal Haddad new edition, 5 th grade rep	
-Idea raised: Send out a constant contact to school saying who grade level reps are and that PTO positions are filled	
Action Items: Todd and committee to continue to work on rewriting the bylaws, Todd to double check with Lorri Warren about 5 th grade rep, also invite Kathy Jones 5 th grade parent volunteer to be a 5 th grade rep	
14. Other Business (PTO Greater Board)	
840-8:50	Discussion: Outdoor classroom, joining of committees and openness of PTO
- <i>Outdoor classroom:</i> Deb reaching out to Sheehan to meet with people there	
-waiting to discuss with Joanne Stanton (currently building her own outdoor classroom at her school)	
-plan to begin building in the spring	
- <i>Other Notes:</i> committees are open to community members who want to join	
-Idea to email newsletter beginning of the month through constant contact in the name of openness and transparency,	
-Idea to begin a "things each committee does" write-up which would include written procedures and notes for each committee to continue on a year to year basis. Each committee could put procedures in a binder done within a month of event	
-Sarah to send out summary template, going to put PTO info in the cloud so it is available to board members. Maybe through google drive? Or drop box?	
Action Items: Outdoor classroom committee to visit Sheehan, outdoor classroom committee to write grant proposal to give to Lowes, Sarah to send out committees list to the PTO board, Grade level reps to forward book fair information and introduce themselves in communication following the picnic.	
15. Next Meetings: October 10 and November 14	
October 10 th open meeting, Superintendent Emily Parks invited, Principal thinking about presenting something, PTO board will continue what we usually do with more voices and help available.	