**Downey PTO Meeting Minutes**  
**Date:** Nov. 12, 2024  
**Time:** 7:30 pm - 8:40 pm  
**Location:** Downey Library

Attendees: Co-Presidents: Liz Polin, Amanda Fairbanks, Co-Treasurers: Elin Agoston, Bill Bruce, Secretary: Natasha Thoren, SEPAC Rep: Sam Sturma

Jen Anderson, JoAnna French, Julie Hunter, Kristine Campagna, Lauren Holly, Mary Beth Hubner, Monique DeWan, Rebecca Long, Amanda Sarkis, Jessica Imbornone, Karla Garmendia, Caron Miller, Kelly Fitzgerald and Deb Gallagher

**1. Welcome**

* **Time:** 7:30 pm
* **Led by:** Amanda Fairbanks and Liz Polin
* Amanda and Liz welcomed attendees to the meeting and opened the meeting.

**2. School Committee Update**

* **Time:** 7:40 pm
* **Presented by:** JoAnna French
* **Key Updates:**
  + District budget planning process for the next fiscal year has begun.
  + **Cell Phone Task Force:** Updates on policies at Thurston Middle School (TMS) and Westwood High School (WHS) and their impact.
  + **Wait Until 8th Pledge:** Encouraging families to delay smartphone usage for younger students.
  + "Keeping Kids Safe Online" workshop scheduled for tomorrow at 7:00 pm.
  + Solar panel project at WHS continues.
  + **Portrait of a Westwood Graduate:**
    - Current status and next steps.
    - Community feedback sessions scheduled for the week of November 18.

**3. Principal and Teacher Update**

* **Time:** 7:50 pm
* **Presented by:** Principal Gallagher, Kelly Fitzgerald, and Caron Miller
* **Highlights:**
  + Downey School ranked #15 out of 991 elementary schools in Massachusetts in the *Niche 2025 Best Elementary Schools in Massachusetts* list.
  + Math League will begin in January.
  + Transportation updates discussed, including impacts on dismissal.
  + Positive feedback received on the Downey Fun Run.
  + Thanked the PTO for providing Sweetgreen dinners during parent-teacher conferences.
  + Planning ahead for Teacher Experiences in February/March.

**4. Downey Fun Run and Current Fundraising**

* **Time:** 8:00 pm
* **Presented by:** Amanda Fairbanks and Liz Polin
* **Discussion:**
  + Reviewed results of the Downey Fun Run.
  + Updates provided on overall fundraising progress for the school year.

**5. Upcoming PTO Events**

* **Time:** 8:15 pm
* **Event Updates:**
  + **Holiday Shopping Event:**
    - Scheduled for Saturday, December 7th, from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm in the Downey Cafeteria.
    - Sign-up for shopping helpers to be coordinated through Grade 5 teachers (considering Grade 6 for sensory-friendly needs).
  + **Movie Night:** Scheduled for Friday, January 24th. Decision pending on whether it will be free or ticketed.
  + **Paint Night:** Tentatively scheduled for February.

**6. Planning for EB Membership for SY 2025-2026**

* **Time:** 8:25 pm
* **Key Points:**
  + Still seeking event chairs for several key roles:
    - Multicultural Night
    - Grant Writer
    - Play
    - Mini Courses
    - Book Fair
    - Teacher Experiences
  + Event Chairs will receive budgets and work with SEPAC and DEIB liaisons to ensure inclusivity.
  + Event Chairs will replace Grade Level Reps and gain voting rights on the PTO budget and Executive Board.

**7. SEPAC Update**

* **Time:** 8:30 pm
* **Presented by:** Sam Sturma
* **Upcoming Events:**
  + SEPAC Parents Night Out: Friday, November 15th, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm at Wild Blossom.
  + SEPAC Coffee Conversation with Middle School: Tuesday, December 10th, 10:00 am - 11:00 am at Neroli.
  + SEPAC Community Meeting: Wednesday, January 15th, 7:30 pm at the Westwood Library and on Zoom.

**8. Adjournment**

* **Time:** 8:40 pm
* **Motion to Close:** Amanda Fairbanks
* **Seconded by:** Liz Polin
* Meeting adjourned.