

## **Downey PTO Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** February 5, 2025

**Time:** 7:00 PM

**Location:** Downey Library & Virtual

### **1. Welcome and Introductions (7:40 PM)**

- Meeting called to order by **Amanda Fairbanks**, seconded by **Liz Polin**.
- Attendees introduced themselves. Executive Members present: Liz Polin, Amanda Fairbanks, Elin Agostin, Natasha Thoren, Sam Sturma (Absent Bill Bruce). Attendees: Karla Garmendia, Cate Hawkins, Joanna French, Monique Dewan, Deb Gallagher, Kelly Fitzgerald, Theresa Laham, Fai, Melissa Bruce, Hillary Mosca, Jessica Imbornone, Amie

### **2. Principal and Teacher Update (7:41 PM)**

- **Principal Deb Gallagher** provided school updates:
  - **Math League** has been very successful appreciation extended to parents and volunteers.
  - **Student Council Events:** Several community service projects are ongoing, including the **100 Days of School Food Drive**.
- **5th Grade Parent Meeting:** Memory book will be **paid for by parents**, not PTO.
- **Teacher Representative Kelly Fitzgerald:**
  - Parent-teacher conferences scheduled for **April 9 (afternoon) and April 30 (evening)**.
  - Teachers excited about the upcoming **Teacher Experiences Auction**.

### **3. PTO Events (7:47 PM)**

#### **Recent Events**

- **Holiday Shopping Event** (M. DeWan, M. Bruce, D. Pallotta, D. McDonough)
- **Movie Night** (Amanda Sarkis, Ann Hancock)
- **Bowling Night** (Katie Callahan, Lisa Maguire, Jen French, Christine McKee)

#### **Upcoming Events & Needs**

- **Paint Night** – Friday, February 7 (T. Laham, J. Imbornone)
- **Teacher Experience Auction** – February 23 - March 6 (Cate Hawkins)
- **Park Street Book Fair** – Wednesday, April 30 (D. DiMuzio, K. Mudarri)

- **Downey Family Formal** – Tentative March 15 (J. Imbornone, H. Mosca, A. Minerva, J. Ostroff, C. McVay)
- **Multicultural Night** – Date TBD (Volunteers Needed)
- **Downey CommUNITY Night** – May TBD (Art display, musical performances, community service project) (Volunteers Needed)

#### 4. Teacher Experiences / Silent Auction (7:50 PM)

- **Cate Hawkins** provided an update:
  - Auction runs **February 23 - March 6**, with **winners notified on March 7**.
  - **15 teacher experiences** available—some with multiple winners.
  - Additional **generous donations** received.
  - PTO will send teachers a description of their experiences for review and edits.

#### 5. Treasurer Report – Elin Agoston (8:01 PM)

- **Financial update** provided, including current balances, recent expenses, and projected budget needs.
- **Author Visit:** PTO will purchase **5-10 books** to donate to students who are unable to participate in the book sale.
- Questions about the budget can be directed to **Elin Agoston**.

#### 6. Executive Board (EB) PTO Open Positions (8:15 PM)

- **Elections in May** for the **2025-2026 school year**.
- EB members serve **1- or 2-year terms**, attend monthly meetings, and report at general PTO meetings.
- Flyers were sent home to lower grades to inform parents unfamiliar with PTO roles.
- **Positions Open for Nomination:**
  - **Co-Presidents**
  - **Treasurer (1 of 2 positions)**
  - **VP of Enrichment**
  - **VP of Events & Fundraising**
  - **Secretary**
  - **Communications & Social Media**

- **SEPAC Liaison**
- **DEIB Liaison**

## **7. School Committee Update – Joanna French (8:24 PM)**

- **Current focus: Budget season**—most K-5 programs remain unaffected.
- **Key topics discussed:**
  - Proposed **Mandarin teacher** position at the high school.
  - Increase in **wellness curriculum** at the high school.
  - Addition of a **wellness resource** at the middle school.
  - **2.0 FTE** proposed for **building substitution**.
  - **Capital needs planning** for district and town facilities (Thurston, Sheehan, etc.).
  - ADA funding may come from **grants** and will be incorporated into the capital planning report.
  - **Teacher contract negotiations** ongoing (occur every three years).
  - **Next School Committee Meeting:** February 15.
- Feedback to the School Committee **matters**—parents are encouraged to **share input**.

## **8. SEPAC Update – Sam Sturma (8:21 PM)**

- Updates from **Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)**.
- **Upcoming Events:**
  - **Coffee Meetup** – Wednesday, February 12.
  - **Executive Functioning Training Session (All Ages)** – February 27.
  - **Café Conversation with Superintendent** – March 17 (**1-on-1 sessions available**).
- More info at: [WestwoodSEPAC.org](https://WestwoodSEPAC.org).

## **9. DEIB Update – Elin Agoston (8:23 PM)**

- Ongoing initiatives focused on **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)**.

## **10. Questions & Closing Discussion**

- Open floor for any remaining questions.

- **Adjournment (8:43 PM):** Motioned by **Liz Polin**, seconded by **Natasha Thoren**.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, March 6 (Virtual)**