

Downey PTO Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, March 6, 2025

Time: 7:30 PM

Location: Virtual

EB Attendees: Liz Polin, Bill Bruce, Natasha Thoren, Elin Agoston, Amanda Fairbanks

EB Members Absent: Sam Sturma

Teacher Representatives: Caron Miller, Kelly Fitzgerald, (Principal Gallagher – absent)

1. Welcome and Introduction (7:33 PM)

- **Meeting Called to Order:** Amanda Fairbanks motioned to open the meeting; Bill Bruce seconded.
- Liz Polin welcomed attendees and announced that **the new Executive Board will be voted in at the next meeting in May.**

2. Teacher Update (7:35 PM) – Kelly Fitzgerald and Caron Miller

- **Author Visit:** The event was a success, and the students loved it.
- **Student Council Update:**
 - **Downey Lions Courage Initiative** – A stuffed animal lion is traveling between classrooms to encourage students to exhibit courage (e.g., inviting others to play, answering questions).
- **5th Grade Activities:**
 - **Memory Book Club** is underway.
 - **Students are preparing for their upcoming chorus concert.**
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:**
 - **April 9th** (daytime)
 - **April 30th** (evening)
- **Future Enrichment Experiences:**
 - Teachers are considering **replacing traditional enrichment programs with class-selected field trips** for a more meaningful experience.
 - Teachers will coordinate with the PTO to discuss options.
- **Field Trip Transportation:**
 - Teachers **expressed appreciation for PTO funding of buses** for field trips.

3. Upcoming PTO Events (7:45 PM)

Recent Events:

- **Paint Night (February 7)** – Hosted by **T. Laham & J. Imbornone**; a fun and successful event.
- **Bowling Night (February 8)** – Organized by **Jen French, Katie Callahan, Lisa Maguire, and Catherine**.
- **PTO-Funded Author Visit (March 4)**.
- **Teacher Experience Auction (February 23 – March 6)** – Coordinated by **Cate Hawkins**.

Upcoming Events:

- **Park Street Book Fair (April 30)** – Led by **D. DiMuzio & K. Mudarri**. - This event needs an additional volunteer for Tuesday and Wed
- **Downey Family Formal (May 10)** – Coordinated by **J. Imbornone, H. Mosca, A. Minerva, J. Ostroff, and C. McVay**.
 - Decorations are being planned, and logistics are in progress.
 - The date has been secured.
- **Enrichment Activities:**
 - **Colonial Trade Outreach**
 - **School-wide Drumming Performance**
 - **Additional enrichment activities** are still scheduled.

4. Open PTO Executive Board Positions for Next Year (7:51 PM)

- Recruitment efforts are ongoing for the **2025-2026** Executive Board.
- A **nomination form will be sent out soon**, and voting will take place at the May meeting. Below when it says “filled” it means individuals have verbally committed, voting occurs next meeting. Please let us know if you or someone you know is interested and feel free to nominate individuals as well.
- **Open Positions:**
 - **Co-Presidents** (still needed)
 - **Treasurer (1 of 2) – Filled 1 of 2**
 - **VP of Events and Fundraising** (still needed)
 - **VP of Enrichment - Filled**
 - **Secretary - Filled**
 - **Communications & Social Media - Filled**

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

5. Budget Update (7:48 PM)

- **Bill Bruce provided an update:**
 - No major changes since the last meeting.
 - Expenses are beginning to increase as the school year progresses.
 - **A small surplus is expected at year-end.**

6. SEPAC Update (7:52 PM) – Presented by Amanda Fairbanks for Sam Sturma (Absent)

- **Upcoming Events:**
 - **Café Conversations with Superintendent Piowar** – March 17, 10:30-11:30 AM @ Neroli
 - **Candid Conversations with Superintendent Piowar** – March 18 (Virtual, 20-min 1:1 sessions available)
 - Session options: **12:00-2:00 PM or 6:30-8:30 PM**
 - **SEPAC Community Meeting @ WPS** – May 14, 7:30 PM

7. DEIB Update (7:54 PM) – Presented by Elin Agoston

- **Upcoming Caregivers Conversation Event:**
 - **Topic:** *Can You Tell Me How to Get to Sesame Street?*
 - **Speaker:** Discussing his journey to joining Sesame Street and his story of diversity and perseverance.
 - **Date:** March 16, **3:00-4:40 PM @ Pinehill**
 - **Registration:** Link provided, all are welcome.

8. School Committee Update (7:56 PM) – Bullet Points from JoAnna French (absent)

- **Facilities Study:** Report to be presented at the April School Committee Meeting (April 10).
- **World Language Program:** Updates at the high school and recent press coverage.
- **Visual Arts Curriculum Review:** Kicking off this spring.

- **Budget Process:** Moving forward with **FinCom**, then to **Annual Town Meeting (ATM)** on May 19.

9. Teacher Experiences & Silent Auction Update (7:58 PM) – Presented by Cate Hawkins

- **Teacher Participation:**
 - 22 teacher experiences were offered, accommodating up to 89 students.
- **Auction Items:**
 - A mix of **donations from Downey families and local businesses** resulted in **41 auction items**.
 - A wide variety of options were available for all participants.
- **Next Steps:**
 - **Winners will receive an email notification** once the auction closes.
 - **For tangible items:** Winners will receive instructions on pick-up.
 - **For teacher experiences:** Teachers will be notified, and parents will coordinate with them directly.
- **Special Thanks to Cate** for organizing and managing this event!

10. Next Meeting & Adjournment

- **Next Meeting: Monday, May 5, 2025 @ 7:30 PM** (Downey Library & Virtual)
 - This is the meeting where **the new Executive Board will be voted in**.
 - A **survey will be sent out prior** to gather feedback.
- **Adjournment:** Liz Polin motioned to adjourn; Natasha Thoren seconded.
- **Meeting Adjourned at 8:08 PM**