

# Downey PTO Meeting



**Date:**  
Sept. 12, 2023

**Time: 7:00pm**

**Location: Downey Library**

Participants:

Co-Presidents: Liz Polin & Amanda Fairbanks  
 Vice Presidents: Jessica Imbornone & Theresa Latham  
 Co- Treasurers: Elin Agoston & Bill Bruce

Special Ed: Samantha Sturma  
 Secretary: Natasha Thoren

Kindergarten- MaryBeth Hubner & Lauren Holly  
 first grade- Patty Rockensies (virtual only) & Lisa Maguire (not present)  
 Second Grade- Katie Callahan and Heidi Sullivan  
 Third Grade- David DiMuzio (not present)  
 Fourth Grade - Hillary Mosca & Danielle McDonagh  
 Fifth Grade- Darcy Petres & Catherine McVay

Principal:  
 Deb Gallagher

Teacher Reps:  
 Kelly Fitzgerald  
 Caron Miller

School Committee - JoAnna French

Jen Anderson  
 Amanda Sarkis  
 Amanda Farren  
 Kate Maclean  
 Bob Van Leeuwen  
 Cate Hawkins  
 Liz Gauthier  
 Hillary Mosca  
 Erin Kelly  
 Kristine Campagna  
 Anna Leung  
 Danielle  
 Pat  
 Qui

**Virtual Only:**  
**Anna Fomenko**  
**Christopher Jurewich**  
**Eli**  
**Erin Parry**  
**Fai**  
**Femion Mezini**  
**Jenn Kelly**  
**KP**  
**Monet Deveney**  
**Regina Piotrowski**  
**Tracie Charland**  
**Trivedi**

<b>1. Welcome and Introductions (Amanda, Liz, &amp; greater Executive Board)</b>	
7:06 -7:17	Discussion: Describe PTO GB Meeting schedule and participation options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open meeting Amanda Fairbanks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Introductions of the Executive Board</li> <li>◦ Introduce Grade Level Reps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ See individuals listed above</li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ Introduce Principal and Teacher Reps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ See list of individuals above</li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ Introduce Joanna French – school Committee</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Describe the Greater Board Meeting Schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The meetings are posted already and the schedule was sent out via the Downey PTO Welcome email they will be both virtual and in person</li> <li>◦ There will be a lot of new technologically driven processes this year to facilitate ease of use</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Action Items:	
<b>2. School Committee Update: (Joanna French)</b>	
7:17 – 7:18	
<p>Joanna introduced herself and encouraged everyone to meet the new superintendent of schools. She informed the group that there will be a few different dates and places to meet him at over the course of the fall and that she will be sending out an email to all the members of the school community with the dates and locations.</p> <p>Joanna welcomed any questions or suggestions.</p>	
Action Items:	N/A
<b>3. Principal &amp; Teacher Update</b>	
7:18 – 7:22	Deb Gallagher; Teachers: Caron Miller & Kelly Fitzgerald
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deb Gallagher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Smooth start to this year</li> <li>◦ Kids are connecting well and come prepared and ready for learning</li> <li>◦ She'll be sending out a Newsletter end of week with a few points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Short Wed – lunch will only be provided to extended day students;</li> <li>■ Hired an additional lunch monitor she will be scanning lunch cards and with that the system will also notify re: allergies, so she can double check if there are any issues;</li> <li>■ Label all items your child brings to school to minimize lost and found bin</li> <li>■ Curriculum night Sept 25 @ 630pm K-2; 7:00pm all the families will be in the gym; 7:30pm; Grades 3-5</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Teachers same as above</li> </ul>	
Action Items:	Look out for the newsletter
<b>4. PTO Directory/Dues (Liz)</b>	
7:22 – 7:30	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The PTO directory is an opt in form that each family will need to fill out.</li> <li>○ Directory is not linked to paying your PTO dues.</li> <li>○ Tiered payment system this year. <b>Dues for a single child is \$45 and \$65 for two or more students.</b> An option of <i>Other</i> is available for donors that want to be more generous in their support for Downey initiatives.</li> <li>○ All the income generated from annual dues are committed to the PTO operating and enrichment budgets and never reserved beyond year of donation</li> <li>○ Viewed the new look of Membership Toolkit page – you can also send dues cash or check in an envelope with your child and to the attn PTO</li> <li>○ Deb asked how are people being notified about membership toolkit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deb will add it in the newsletter</li> <li>■ Also had the QR code at the picnic and at the welcome email</li> <li>■ Jessica Imbornone – suggested having the grade level reps say a bit about it so people can understand about the membership toolkit and PTO</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Action Items:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liz and Amanda to talk about PTO and membership toolkit at curriculum night</li> <li>- QR codes to be added for each class room at curriculum night</li> <li>- Discuss with grade level reps if they can let people know about it or have the teachers include it in email to classes</li> <li>- Deb will also include in her newsletter</li> </ul>
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5. Budget (Elin & Bill Bruce)

7:30 – 7:39	Discussion: 2023 – 2024 PTO Budget
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Budget Reviewed the 2023 – 2024 budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Actuals reflected don't show what may be in place for this year due to carry over from COVID</li> <li>■ Jump in different fundraising</li> <li>■ In the past enrichment was one bucket tried to move it out into more appropriate buckets (e.g., DEI)</li> <li>■ Big increase in enrichment cost was busses etc.</li> <li>■ Standard line items on staff appreciation and Principal requests</li> <li>■ Student event Expenses – We included Field Day</li> <li>■ Last year we were over budget, so this year's budget is a little larger</li> <li>■ New reimbursement process</li> <li>■ New line item for Student Support</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ New process for reimbursement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Elin will most likely be receiving the reimbursement and providing support for coverage of those expenses</li> <li>■ Elin generated a Google Form to request funds electronically and request reimbursement</li> <li>■ Stressed that we need those reimbursement forms submitted rather quickly after the event to maintain “real” time budget.</li> <li>■ Liz included that if you have an event and need to know the process there is a sheet at the back showing what you need to do</li> <li>■ Approvers on the Google Form: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers' approver is Deb</li> <li>2. Jess and Theresa – points of contact for grade level reps</li> </ol> </li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Amanda Fairbanks moved to approve the Budget</li> <li>○ Theresa seconded</li> <li>○ Natasha took a count – all approved, no opposed</li> <li>○ 2023 – 2024 Budget is approved.</li> </ul>
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Action Items:	
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6. PTO Community Newsletter and social media (Amanda, Jessica and Natasha)

7:39 – 7:44	Discussion:
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discuss format and frequency</li> <li>○ There has not been a true determination regarding the EB members and process for Communications but the PTO wants to communicate more frequently with the Downey Community through all of our platforms</li> <li>○ Monthly Community Newsletter beyond Downey, Facebook, Downey PTO emails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hillary Mosca – stressed that one thing that works is over informing and repeatedly to ensure everyone knows</li> <li>■ Hillary also stated that a newsletter is a large effort and suggested the – 3 things email that the middle school PTO uses. The 3 items this week email was sent out on Sundays and was started by Joanna French</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Action Items:	Follow up with Joanna French on ideas/samples for our own 3 main items email
<b>7. Events &amp; Fundraising (Amanda Fairbanks &amp; Liz Polin)</b>	
7:44 – 8:10	Discussion:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Recent Events/Activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teachers Welcome Back BBQ</li> <li>■ Outdoor Classroom enhancements</li> <li>■ Welcome Back Picnic</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>Near Term Events/Needs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Need to Solidify Committees and Chairs. Expectations of GB member involvement</li> <li>■ Curriculum Night Dinner - Thursday September 21</li> <li>■ Parent Get Together - Friday September 29th 7pm</li> <li>■ Fall Festival - Friday October 20 5:30-7</li> <li>■ Booster Fun Run begins November 1st and event is the 13th</li> <li>■ Lynch Creek Holiday Sale - starts the beginning of November</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Amanda requested participants for members to be a part of committee and chair committees               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Went through the Committees and what they do</li> <li>2. Will also send this around at the curriculum night</li> <li>3. Need someone soon for arcade night</li> <li>4. Curriculum night dinner for teachers (hospitality)</li> <li>5. Fun run</li> <li>6. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Haunted Walkway – Fall Festival                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents do the Halloween Haunted House</li> <li>b. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers can send out info to parents and children etc.</li> <li>c. 5<sup>th</sup> grade parent connects re: Halloween haunted house</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>○ Capital Requests from Deb to date:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Gaga Pit</li> <li>■ Possible paving of lower playground                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There was discussion on how this should be a town expenditure</li> </ol> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Action Items:	<p>Future share calendar of events (Amanda)            Getting dates for committee events that are up and coming (EB with GB)            Fall Festival Oct 20 Heidi Sullivan and Katie Callhan            Deb G – requested that the Co-Presidents come to staff meeting and give update of activities etc.</p> <p>Encourage members to email/call or inform the School Committee of the need for the lower playground to be resurfaced. Budget discussions for 2024-2025 start now</p>
<b>8. SEPAC Update (Sam)</b>	
8:10 – 8:13	Discussion
	<p>SEPAC Liaison – parent run organization for parents with kids with special needs            Coffee Sept 15            Coffee – Oct 14            Booth at Westwood Day – come visit            Sat Oct 1 – social</p>
Action Items:	Check SEPAC website for more info
<b>9. DEI Update (Patty)</b>	
8:13 – 8:16	Discussion
	<p>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – there is an initiative to have all the PTO and schools get on board with DEI projects and to create events with a DEI lens.</p> <p>We are already doing many things to be more inclusive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Separate dues from directory</li> <li>- Having a DEI line item in our budget</li> <li>- METCO – extending to Downey and other elementary schools – thinking ahead to transportation etc.</li> <li>- The Family Formal – instead of Daddy Daughter etc.</li> <li>- Continue to be inclusive with our events</li> </ul>

Action Item:	Include DEI in all our proposed events Teacher Kelly is the DEI liaison and equity leader (share what is happening within the district)
<b>10. Room Parent vs. Greater Board Document</b>	
8:16 – 8:20	Liz and Jessica
<a href="#"><u>Room Parent versus PTO greater board member</u></a> Jessica shared her experience and then her understanding of the differences between Grade Level Reps, GB and EB Deb recommended that every person identify themselves when you send out emails that you are the grade level rep or the room parent etc. She also discouraged people from signing up for room parent and grade level rep at once.  Theresa suggested that as members of the PTO you can volunteer for what you can do even if it is just buying chips or picking up the popcorn for movie night	
Action Items:	Theresa and Izzy to connect
<b>11. Questions</b>	
8:20–8:23	
None	
Action Items:	
<b>12. Close and Next meeting</b>	
8:24pm	Discussion:
Next Meeting: Wednesday October 18th at 7pm Remote via Zoom Theresa motioned for adjournment Elin seconded Adjourned	
<b>PTO updates: Stay connected – Facebook, Downey Website Page</b>	