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| **Downey PTO Meeting** | | | | |
| **5.7.2019** | | **7:00PM-9:00PM** | **Cafeteria - Downey School** |
| Type of meeting | Downey May PTO Meeting, 7-8pm closed, board members only, 8pm-9pm open meeting | | | |
| Attendees | PTO Board Members Attending: Beth Murphy, Sudha Sarma, Anne McGowan, Nayla Daly, Hillary Mosca, Paula Timofeev, Sandra Castaldini, Liz Gauthier, Darcy Petres, Jenn Killilea, Brenda Bruno, Kerry Donlon, Sarah Young-Hong, Liz Mullen, Liz Polin, Amber Crowley, Deb Gallagher  ***Additional Open Meeting Attendees:*** Amanda Fairbanks, Sue Saliba, LaShanda Williams, Katie Sechler, Jessica Imbornone, Stephanie Redmond, Carla Kath | | | |
| 1. **Welcome (Sudha and Beth)** | | | | |
| 7:07pm-7:10pm | Discussion: Welcome | | | |
| * Brief welcome given to the board * Sudha and Beth have been out and about recruiting people * Interested new faces should be coming to the open part of the meeting | | | | |
| Action Items: | Board None | | |
| 1. **Budget Update (Paula)** | | | | |
| 7:10pm-7:20pm | Discussion: 2018-2019 Fiscal Update | | | |
| * Discussion about “Why we raise money” * Paula handed out “Big Buckets” graph to the board, that showed where the money comes from and expenditures on the back * Grossed $27, 833 from the Gala * Issue with dues: Lowest percentage of dues paid is from Kindergarten * We need to think about the time and effort it takes to bring in the money when planning next year’s events. * We need to figure out if we are living within our means, is this level of intake and spending sustainable? not likely. * Average operating expenses/year $34,000/year which is what we will need to keep up with yearly expenditures. * Biggest expenditure is enrichment $12,549 for the 2018-2019 year. * Second biggest expenditure is field trip buses $7,922. * Principal and teacher requests also a large expenditure. * Buses are expensive, parents need to know. * $4291 paid for community events such as the picnic, movie night, variety show * Question: have we thought about having a website vs. a mailing? would save time and money * Thought: we need a “welcome back committee” * Note about My School Anywhere (to be used to money collection and online directory), a new company has taken * Would like to piggyback on what middle school is doing. * Makes everything seamless * Enter the app, pay your dues, you are entered into the online directory | | | | |
| Action Items: | Executive board and Greater board members to figure out which fundraisers are sustainable and to continue to raise funds for the yearly expenditures we have committed to (buses, enrichment, teacher requests, community events). Board members or PTO members (people who have paid dues) to volunteer for the “welcome back committee.” Welcome back committee to decide whether we will go with a digital platform vs. paper platform for dues collecting and the directory. | | | |
| 1. **EB Board 2019-2020 (Beth and Sudha)** | | | | |
| 7:20pm-7:48pm | Discussion: Executive Board, Grade Level Reps, GLR Meeting Frequency Review | | | |
| Executive Board 2019-2020   * Open positions on EB: Secretary, VP position * New Position: Communication Director (strategy, GLR memos, social media, flyers, PTO bulletin board, constant contact, westwood weekly etc.) * Comm Directory would be responsible for overall oversight and strategy into the Downey PTO communications * How can we be a better board? Communications Director can assist the presidents, that person would have a team. * Role would be pivotal, we are bringing in big money, need more assistance * Would expand the board to 7 people. Odd numbers make it easier to vote within the executive board. * Question: would the communications director negate the need for a vice president? * Answer: in the bylaws the current role of the VP is to run the gala, might need to revisit the bylaws * Current VPs main focus has been the Gala -- Gala is super important to everything we do and the major fundraising events that we do * Trying to make the executive board and bylaws as streamlined as possible. * Question: How does the PTO change our bylaws? * Executive board roles need to be filled in first and then GLR positions * Need a vote to add in new position, communications director * VOTE: Majority Rule, Board voted in favor of adding communications director   Grade Level Reps – 2019-2020 and GLR meeting frequency review   * When filling in the open positions board can vote by online survey, if necessary * Hopefully people coming to the open meeting at 8 who would be interested in filling gaps on the board. * Up to 3 grade level reps are allowed under the bylaws. * Roles and Responsibilities need to be made more clear for the 2019-2020 board, will be sent out electronically. * Committees to be renamed “volunteer group.s” * We know there are lots of people who can’t come to the meetings. * We know there are people who would like to juist do committees and can’t get to monthly PTO meetings * VOTE: ***minimum*** of 4 GLR meetings, September/January/April/June, board voted in favor. * Executive board would meet more frequently. * GLR meetings would consolidate roles and responsibilities, would be mainly to vote, want to foster smaller committee groupings * Would like to bring in more people from the community. * Conflicts with PTO meetings and people working on committees for monthly events. * Would like to streamline the general meetings because people are already meeting. * Question: How do you get the voices and opinions of the greater board when needed? * Answer: Maybe executive board can send feedback, maybe specific committees can report out to share knowledge with greater board. * Need to share knowledge with other board members. * Committees need to be able to “run with” their events, presidents can't be involved in every decision. * Proposed 4 GLR meetings to also be the open downey community meetings. * Concerns about only having 4 meetings when we are bringing in this kind of money, need transparency about the budget and money being brought in. * Need to meet when there are critical events that need to be discussed. * In reality it seems like it has been a challenge for people to get to the monthly meetings. * Question:When should we be meeting with Deb? * Answer: EB supposed to meet 3x a year. * VOTE: Change the bylaws to a minimum of 4 meetings a year for the greater board. | | | | |
| Action Items: | Presidents and potential bylaw committee to amend bylaws to add new position to executive board (communications director), also to scale down the minimum amount of greater board meetings to 4x a year. Board members to make nominations for communications directory, vice president, and secretary roles along with open grade level reps positions. PTO members (board members and general community) should make their interest in taking on a new position known to the presidents of the PTO. | | | |
| 1. **Mini Courses (Liz Polin)** | | | | |
| 7:48pm-8:04pm | Discussion: Status of 2019-2020 mini course project: Proposed courses, structure, timing, and questions | | | |
| * Fall 2019 will be the pilot of the mini course program. * 2 vendors secured for the fall: Dance Force (looking for a place to meet within the school) and Westwood Chefs ( to run in the teachers room), looking for a handful of offers before they check with Mrs. Carde about spaces * Principal Gallagher said to fill Mrs. Carde in now so they can plan for which spaces they will need before they are given away to other town programs * school will bounce parks and rec if needed for mini courses * concerns voiced about getting rid of rec programs because they are being replaced with mini courses * Anne McMurray to reach out about the potential for an irish step dancing course, * Kerry Donlon asked what about ballroom dancing? Volunteered to help with Mini Course committee. * Tentative time frame for courses to be the end of September through the week before Thanksgiving, we are modeling after Sheehan’s layout * Liz and Mariam have been talking about registration, waiting for the my school anywhere demo on Thursday for to see about online registration, payments and waitlist, Mariam to attend the demo. * Each course will have a different cost * Question about which days of the week courses would take place? Tentative plan is mon/tue/thurs 3:30-4:30, snack from 3:10-3:30, * Are in need of parent volunteers, need coordination with parents, would help with snack and dismissal. * Information about mini courses needs to be run through the board for the budget. * Hoping for a 25% profit margin, that would be ideal. * Liz and Mariam have reached out to people about a sports and games course -- board members were unsure if this was needed due to the fact that we have sports and games through rec on short wednesdays and we don’t want to lose the rec program. * Also looking into courses in karate, and yoga. * Question: Is there a possibility of any stem or foreign language courses? * Answer: have reached out to 10 other vendors, open to suggestions * Would like courses to run all three terms: fall/winter/spring * Ask of the board: does anyone else want to help out? this is a large endeavor for 2 people. * Can we send out an end of the year ask to the Downey community to get more committee members? * in the june meeting will start by asking who wants to participate in which committee? * Point made: it would be helpful to see the list with missing spots so people know where they should sign up. | | | | |
| Action Items: | Liz and Mariam to continue reaching out to potential vendors to add more courses to the Fall 2019 selection. Liz and Mariam to reach out to Mrs. Carde about where the courses can be housed at Downey. Mini courses to be piloted in September. PTO board and downey community to sign up to join mini course committee. Committee to send out sign ups for Fall mini courses (both for students and parent volunteers). | | | |
| 1. **Open meeting -- Welcome – Meet and Greet (Beth and Sudha)** | | | | |
| 8:04pm-8:21pm | Discussion: What we do and what we need from the Downey community | | | |
| * Presentation: Why we need money from the community and where it goes to * Slide show shown about committees and behind the scenes work * Money comes from things such as: Family sponsorships, membership dues, scholastic book fair, holiday mom’s night out * Money goes to things such as Enrichment, Outdoor Learning Center, Field Trips, Community Events, Teacher Supplies and Gifts * 45% of budget that comes in is for enrichment * Outdoor learning center-- idea came from principal, parents got on board once they realized what it was * Wheels are turning about what to do with money in reserves * Katie S. purchased mulch and dropped it off today * Gala sponsors want to know what we are doing with the outdoor classroom * President of needham savings dropped into gala to see where is money is going * We have a responsibility to show the community what we are doing with the money * buses are expensive! * teacher reps have been spreading the word about PTO sponsored enrichment and field trips * Committees sizes: Biggest to smallest: Fundraising/Gala, Outdoor Classroom, School Play, Multicultural, fall festival, membership directory etc. | | | | |
| Action Items: | Committee heads to identify gaps or needs for more people to volunteer and make those needs public. Downey community to volunteer to help with “volunteer groups” to ensure that events are well run and successful and no one person is taking on too much. | | | |
| 1. **Next year’s play (Sarah Young Hong)** | | | | |
| 8:21pm-8:25pm | Discussion: Preliminary planning for the 2019-2020 Downey Play | | | |
| * This year our kids, the play committee, and directors put on a great show! * We would love the opportunity again for our kids. * Unfortunately, the effort level required for this year’s production is not sustainable. * The director was great, brought skill in many areas, particularly helped students with confidence on and off the stage. * Sarah reached out to another applicant, proposed a few ideas, reservations about the fact that she lives in chelmsford, would be a tough weekday commute. * Deerfield school uses a production company, pays someone to do it, nuts to bolts, grades 3-5 * Need to talk about whether or not we want to consider something along those lines. * 150 to 200 a kid, would cover the majority of the cost. * Question: could we open up again to the community for applicants? * Answer: need to consider the role the PTO would have to pay, in the past we haven’t had much luck finding people in the Downey Community who want to take on this task, it is a HUGE undertaking * Question: What about a 2 week program, like sheehan? just 5th graders * It boils down to what do we want to offer the kids? * Timeline for planning: we would like to have a plan before we end the school year, director has to be picked by end of this year, can’t go into the fall without a director chosen * What needs to be done before june? need to gage who’s interested in supporting the endeavor * Idea: When we put it out there that we are looking for a director this time, could we make it sound like we are more open? Might get more support * Response: Elementary Drama is hard but we are more open to hearing about options * Need to inform downey community that the play might be changing shape * If people feel passionately about the play and the structure of the activity, they need to join the play committee * This past years expenditures per student $145, we made $2000 | | | | |
| Action Items: | Downey Committee members to volunteer to be on and chair the play committee, committee needs to choose a format, are we hiring a single director and hoping for community support or are we hiring a company to take care of everything? Committee needs to inform community if there are structural changes taking place. | | | |
| 1. **Hospitality committee (Sue Saliba)** | | | | |
| 8:25pm -8:30pm | Discussion: teacher appreciation update | | | |
| * Committee is 6/7 people, Katie Sechler is doing a ton! Sue, Jess, Brenda, Liz, Katie, Jen Lee, Harshini have all been tremendous in working together to make this committee successful. * Everybody is doing a ton. * Big group effort, everybody steps up and asks “what can I do?” * Met about teacher appreciation week and came up with a plan. * Some people were happy to Join the committee, no need to attend monthly meetings. * Principal Gallagher loves the committee, parents just come in and do their thing, very quietly, busy busy busy * Principal Gallagher stated that this group, especially, has made a big impact on the community | | | | |
| Action Items: | Committee to keep being awesome. Committee to finish rolling out all plans for teacher appreciation week. | | | |
| 1. **Art night and Kids Rule the School (Beth)** | | | | |
| 8:30pm-8:37 pm | Discussion: update | | | |
| * Art night is Monday, May 20th, 5:30-7 * Not a PTO event, do have a committee of PTO helpers * Kids rule the school in June. * Principal; Gallagher suggested: Maybe recruit a 5th grader to come pick names? * Names to be drawn on Friday, May 10th. * Is a great, no-cost, fundraiser for the school. | | | | |
| Action Items: | Art night volunteers to continue to work with Ms. Friberg to make the night go as seamlessly as possible. Principal Gallagher to choose 5th grade students to help her pick names of winners on Friday, May 10th. | | | |
| 1. **Review 2019-2020 events schedule (Sudha)** | | | | |
| 8:33pm-8:40pm | Discussion: Adding a multicultural event to replace movie night, other plans for next year | | | |
| Multicultural Night :   * Sudha has been asking for this event for as long as she has been on the PTO * This event can be as simple as showing pride and culture * We would like to have an event that demonstrates diversity at downey, there is so much here and we want our children to be proud of our differences. * Could run similarly to Girl Scout’s Fair * Could include participation from extended families * Could include stations like learning a game from another place, writing your name in a different language * irish step dancers to come * This event could go in so many different ways * It could be about food, music, and dance. * This gives our kids the opportunity to be proud of where they’re from and to share with others in the community, would be exciting for the kids to be a part of this   Planning for next year:   * will finalize events next month, don’t want to surprise people * idea to combine holiday fair and scholastic book fair * tammy, monique, to do holiday fair   A note about the PTO scholarship   * awarded to a former Downey student for $1000 * sudha beth and deb had to read essays. most about inclusion as a downey core value, * 13 applicants, most we’ve ever had * had to score them * Nayla Daly said presenting the award last year was an amazing experience | | | | |
| Action Items: | Board and community members to form a volunteer group for Multicultural night, likely to take place in January instead of movie night. Volunteer group chairs to work with Beth, Sudha, Principal Gallagher, and Mrs. Carde to finalize events and date for next year, 2019-2020, by the June 2019 meeting. | | | |
| 1. **Volunteer Working Groups Overview (Sudha and Beth)** | | | | |
| 8:40pm-8:50pm | Discussion: Largest needs for volunteers | | | |
| * We need hep with the Halloween party/fall festival * We have nobody to chair the event, we need somebody to lead it or it will have to end * Elimination of bouncy houses was key * Question: Do we need this event? * Answer: Yes, our 5th graders need it for the open house, the community loves it * Do we need costumes? (This question was unanswered) * Monique took on most of the event, and then it turned into a HUGE commitment for her * This is not sustainable, need more bodies * People are great about volunteering on the day of the event but the behind the scenes work needs help. * Ask of the board: Is there anyone who wants to step up and co-chair the festival? * Darcy Petres was nominated, not sure if she could commit to such a big halloween event. * Idea: maybe call it a halloween dance? set up the haunted house and dance in the gym and set up pizza and cookie decorating in the cafeteria? | | | | |
| Action Items: | Sudha and Beth to communicate to the community the need for a halloween party chairperson and committee members. Board or other PTO members in the community to volunteer to help run this event. | | | |
| 1. **Principal Update (Principal Gallagher)** | | | | |
| 8:50pm-8:55pm | Discussion: Update on current school happenings and end of the year | | | |
| * MCAS: just finished ELA mcas in grades 3-5 * math next week, then science and technology * thank you for getting your students here * please consider vacations in regards to the mcas schedule * TEACHER GIFTS: end of year please think about funds for class gifts, ethics law guidelines, gifts from individual family cannot exceed $50 * collective gifts cannot exceed 150, can give gift to the classroom that exceeds that amount * will send this information to downey community to promote awareness of ethics law * CLASS SIZES: within guidelines for next year, 39 currently registered for kindergarten, guidelines are up to 22 in grades k-3 * co-teaching is looked at as an option on a yearly basis, should we continue co-teaching or have a learning center model, this is IEP driven | | | | |
| Action Items: | Principal to send communication to community re: ethics laws and teacher gifts. | | | |
| 1. **Final Notes About the PTO** | | | | |
| 8:50pm-8:55pm | Discussion: Who is a member of the PTO? | | | |
| * If you pay your dues you are a member of the PTO * executive board and GLRs have a vote, members of the greater board * anyone can be a volunteer group member * to the open meeting attendees we have openings for GLRs, secretary, and VP, let us know if you are interested | | | | |
| **PTO updates: Stay connected – Facebook, Downey Website Page** | | | | |
| **Next Meeting: June 4, 2019** | | | | |