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| http://www.westwood.k12.ma.us/userfiles/images/DOWNEY_LOGO_ONLINE.pngDowne­­­y PTO Meeting |
| **2.5.2019** | **7:30PM-9:27PM** | **Cafeteria - Downey School** |
| Type of meeting | Downey February PTO Meeting, 7:30-8pm closed, board members only, 8pm-9pm open meeting |
| Attendees | Beth Murphy, Sudha Sarma, Nayla Daly, Liz Mullen, Liz Gauthier, Anne McMurray, Grace Li, Jo-Anne Stanton, Tammy McGowan, Sandra Castaldini, Liz Polin, Patti Rockensies, Mariam Nasr, Hillary Mosca, Brenda Bruno, Sarah Young-Hong, Miss Gen, Principal Gallagher***Additional Open Meeting Attendees:*** Tiffany Day |
| 1. Welcome (Sudha)
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| 7:33pm-7:35pm | Discussion: Welcome |
| * Brief welcome given to the board
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| Action Items: | none |
| 1. PTO communication (Sudha)
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| 7:35pm-7:45pm | Discussion: Brief WhatsApp Demo (5minutes) |
| * Sudha tried to show “WhatsApp” tutorial to help board better understand how to use and communicate with each other through this app
* Demo video didn’t work but importance of group communication along with ease of the use of this app was stated to group
* Sudha asked group to download app to be able to get quick responses and group chat, this also a way for board members to vote on items when we don’t have a meeting
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|  Action Items:  | Board members asked to please review tutorial, board members to sign up for whatsapp if they haven’t already to make sure they are receiving important PTO board member communications |
| 1. Budget Update (Paula via Beth/Sudha)
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| 7:45pm-8:00pm | Discussion: Brief Budget Update |
| * Current updated budget handed out
* Current enrichment requests have exceeded budget by $994, PTO board to approve allocating additional funds to cover requests
* Tammy said we haven’t done too much more, however there are two additional sections of classes (K and 1)
* Bus requests may exceed budget, projected to need additional $700
* Teacher request for $1250 towards water coolers from PTO made by Miss Gen on behalf of the teachers.
* To be voted on after the meeting
* Teachers currently have access to filtered water in the school.
* Request by Jen Barsamian (BOKS) and Ms. Hone for a better storage option for the supplies in the gym.
* To be voted on at the next meeting after Ms. Hone and Jen Barsamian provide us with more quotes
* Discussion about the need to organize the closet, do we need a whole closet company to put one in, can we look at shelving, organizational units.
* Board will look at closet before next meeting
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|  Action Items: | Board to discuss spending requests after the meeting, Mrs. Hone/Jen Barsamian to find more quotes to organization systems, board members to look at gym closet before the next meeting. New amended budget to be voted on to allocate more funding for enrichment. |
| 1. **Gala Update (Anne and Nayla) Open meeting**
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| 8:00pm-8:35pm | Discussion: Ticket Sales, Classroom baskets, sponsorship, movie trailer |
| * 7 weeks away
* Board saw a PDF of the invite, to be sent out the week of February vacation
* Big mention on the invite about where the money is going and why it is important
* Sponsor list on the invite
* 10,075 in sponsors last year, right now at about 8500.
* Dedham savings has committed $2500!
* Question: What is a suggested donation for businesses?
* We want to incentivize businesses to donate.
* New this year! Live band! Dressy-Casual
* Auction items: 24 items back so far in the past week, usually end up around 60
* Need to push within the community for special auction items.
* Question: can people donate experiences?
* Teacher Donation Experiences to be included in the auction
* Only 2 GLR email acquired auction items have come in.
* Question: how can we communicate what we need from classes for grade level baskets?
* Idea: maybe include pictures to generate ideas
* Grade level “baskets” need to be a coordinated effort between room parents and grade level reps.
* Question: Is there a feeling of, “I’ve helped to create this, but now I have to bid on this?”
* Point made: Last year student created art pieces made a huge impact on our auction profits.
* List to be generated of items from last year to help give people ideas.
* Point made: kindergarten class is humungous, people don’t know each other as well.
* No wine bottles donated for the wine pull yet.
* Idea to send out a separate letter about wine pull donations.
* NEW THIS YEAR: Giving tree sponsorship – minimum of a $100 donation family name will be there, form to go out
* Opportunity to donate to giving tree both before and at the Gala.
* Committee has narrowed down their ask within the community.
* Need to remind the community that money raised goes towards enrichment
* Hard copy of invitation goes out to current downey community, pdf file of an invite will go out to alumni
* Something to tell new families: This was a very different year in that we were able to pull back on asking for money at different events, fundraising has been funneled into one main event.
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| Action Items:  | Gala committee to send out invitations over February vacation, committee to send out information about the giving tree, GLRs to work with room parents on grade level “baskets”, Board members encouraged to reach out to community for donations and to remind the community where the Gala money goes. |
| 1. **Discussion about Dues and New Family Involvement**
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| 8:35pm-8:46pm | Discussion: current family membership levels, how to improve engagement across all the families |
| * Question: How can we help new families understand that your PTO membership helps pay for enrichment?
* need more money from new families
* Idea from Principal Gallagher, maybe a PTO rep should be in each classroom at curriculum night
* Need that personal touch
* People want to feel a part of it
* Idea from Liz: more in-class acknowledgement from teachers about PTO sponsored events
* Kindergarten Social at Trillium for KM, made things less awkward, made people feel more invested
* A lot of 1st time parents, feeling overwhelmed.
* Suggestion from Tammy, about a restaurant night. 6 months, each grade takes a month. Make it more of a parent social.
* Movie night, not a lot of kindergarten families
* Idea for PTO sponsored play date for incoming K families in the spring/summer
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| Action Items:  | Board members to encourage people outside of the PTO board to get involved. Board members to work with community to come up with ideas for grade level “socials” that might encourage more participation. Board members to show everyone that we are an inclusive community that is raising money to fund educational experiences and opportunities for our children. |
| 1. **Play Update (Sarah and Hillary)**
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| 8:46pm -8:54pm | Discussion: Current status of the play as it is “in production” |
| * Need people to step up if we want to have a play next year
* Rehearsals for grades 1 and 2 started yesterday.
* Everything is going well.
* Program needs to be put together.
* Pricing for tickets, $7/ ticket paper tickets
* Director is very serious
* Prop donations needed, waiting on people who signed up to bring them in
* Costumes, a list of suggestions has gone out, parents responsible for putting together their child’s costume and having it ready for the costume check on February 28
* Planning for new director needs to begin ASAP
* If people don’t like the process they need to get involved
* We need a core group to manage the process, not a committee head
* Reach out to the board about involvement in the play if they decline to join the committee send the invite out to the rest of the school
* By April timeframe we need a committee and know if we want the same director
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| Action Items:  | Board to continue to collect feedback and decide if we need to begin looking in April for a new director for next year, People who are interested in helping with the play should join the committee to work on the show for next year (2020).  |
| 1. **A Note from Deb about Dismissal (Principal Gallagher)**
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| 8:54pm-9:17pm | Discussion: Dismissal safety concerns for “walkers” |
| * Jen Ferrara crossing guard concerned about dismissal
* Concerns brought to superintendent and police chief
* Parents are parking on both sides of Downey
* Students are darting across the road
* Frustration lies that putting is too far to walk
* Children can walk to crosswalk and be crossed by Jen
* Concerns about opening both exits, splitting families or children who are going home
* No compromise
* This is about safety
* Students using sidewalk to go down to the other side of the building
* Ask of PTO: if you see bad behavior, please help parents make good decisions
* Potential for No Parking signs to be put up across the street
* Question: Can we exit the whole school out the other door?
* Answer: We try to be as expedient as possible
* Police officer park there
* Current area is not safe to pick up our kids
* Logistics might change when it snows
* Suggestion for parent forum to give feedback and discuss dismissal situation with Principal
* Response: Don’t open up forum for discussion
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| Action Items:  | PTO board to encourage parents to make sure their children leave the school and cross the street safely.  |
| 1. **Mini Courses (Liz P. and Mariam Nasr)**
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| 9:17pm-9:27pm | Discussion: Mini Courses |
| * Mariam and Liz P. met with Principal Gallagher about mini courses
* Principal Gallagher likes mini courses
* Spoke with Rachel from Martha Jones
* Martha Jones has mini courses that go from 3:15-4:15 for about 9-10 weeks
* Examples of mini-courses are: hip-hop class, fun and games, robotics, art
* Martha Jones uses more teachers, Sheehan uses more outdoor vendors to run their classes.
* Proposal to plan for maybe 3 or 4 classes in the fall, put it out there to parents.
* Put out a survey to see where interest lies and what topics , generate interest.
* Survey also to be sent out to teachers.
* Downey houses a lot of special education children who would benefit from smaller groups
* Let’s bring it back to help with social interaction, aides could help facilitate social interactions
* Teacher interest seemed low last year, maybe parents or outside vendors could be pulled in.
* Someone needs to take ownership.
* Half day Wednesday classes not facilitated with aides.
* Some classrooms are available
* Would PTO be covering the cost of the aides? Yes
* Allow a certain amount of spots for students on IEPs
* Parent could request an aide on the signup for their child
* Interest in researching and from parents of children on IEPs looking for social integration in a non-academic setting
* Liz and Mariam to pursue and bring back to next meeting
* A good fundraiser, Martha Jones makes $15,000 a year from mini courses.
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| Action Items:  | Liz and Mariam to continue looking into developing mini courses for the fall. They will put out a survey to parents and teachers to see where interests lie. Board is looking for someone to take ownership of the revived mini-course program. |
| **PTO updates: Stay connected – Facebook, Downey Website Page** |
|  **Next Meeting: March 5, 2019** |