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| http://www.westwood.k12.ma.us/userfiles/images/DOWNEY_LOGO_ONLINE.pngDowne­­­y PTO Meeting |
| **12.5.2018** | **7:30PM-9:00PM** | **Cafeteria - Downey School** |
| Type of meeting | Downey December PTO Meeting, 7:30-8pm closed, board members only, 8pm-9pm open meeting |
| Attendees | Sudha Sarma, Beth Cronin, Hillary Mosca, Nayla Daly, Anne McMurray, Paula Timofeev, Jo-Anne Stanton, Liz Gauthier, Kerry Donlan, Brenda Bruno, Patti Rockensies, Sandra Castaldini, Liz Polin, Principal Gallagher, Amber Crowley, Ms. Gen***Additional Open Meeting Attendees:*** None |
| 1. Welcome (Sudha)
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| 7:35pm-7:42pm | Discussion: Welcome |
| * Brief welcome given to the board along with a quick recap of events
* There were 2 carloads full of food taken to the food pantry from the Thanksgiving food drive
* A photo was sent in from the food drive to the Hometown Weekly
* The new playground items have been installed, the kids love them!
* The Holiday party at Tammy’s was well attended.
* Thank you given to all those who have been involved in the events over the past few month.
* As stated at November 2018 meeting, we have a new PTO email address.
* Agenda was reviewed for the rest of the closed meeting.
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| Action Items: | none |
| 1. Downey Play (Sudha)
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| 7:42pm-8:00pm | Discussion: Update |
| * The committee and PTO have finally secured a director
* We are headed in a new direction for the play this year, it will be a ”new-style” production
* There has been a lot of behind the scenes work.
* Committee tried to keep the play the same with 2 casts and 4 performances, but we couldn’t find a directory who wanted to do that.
* Committee underwent a lot of negotiation with the new director and there are a lot of changes being made
* The informational meeting showed that there is no flexibility with the 2x a week, 2 hours a day required schedule.
* Process took a really long time, at the point now either go with this option, or cancel the play
* A reminder given to the board that that we are the biggest cheerleaders of the PTO, we need to be “1 PTO”
* Please direct feedback to Sudha and Beth, questions from the community can be directed to the executive board.
* Committee is aware there is a lot of disappointment revolving around students not being able to commit to the play because of the new requirements.
* Request given to please put a positive message forward about the play
* Director is a professional, very qualified
* Mrs. Starsiak was an amazing asset, basically “wonder-woman.”
* We want our message to be the same coming from all of the PTO members when talking to the Downey community
* Committee looked at every avenue, this is really the only choice.
* After the informational session, the director was worried that the Downey community wasn’t behind her, unsure if we should continue
* Point made: This is a community activity, we don’t want to subsidize 10 children if that’s all who can participate
* Expenses for the play are at about $5800, $125 per student to make up the cost of less students involved, need 50 students to net $2000, won’t know until sign ups go out
* Sign-ups will go out this week, at the end of 3 weeks, based on student sign-ups will make a decision about the play.
* Original poll showed 35 students grades 3 to 5 are interested, a number of people have since said they won’t be able to join due to suggested commitment level
* Point made that PTO is doing this for enrichment, that’s our mission, everyone can still participate but they have to arrange their schedules accordingly
* Point made: If we want an all school event, parents will have to commit, they might have to be the ones to run an all school event, maybe that’s direction to move?
* We are negotiating with other director that we really liked for 2020, trying to lock her in now.
* Thanks given to Paula and Sarah for committing to such a huge undertaking.
* Director will find a role for any kids who wants to make the commitment
* Idea given: In the future, maybe we could do the play on short Wednesdays?
* Point made: In the future might welcome other ideas from different directors since we now have moved on from our original format. We can be more flexible with our next director.
* Question: Should sign ups go out through GLRs or Principal Gallagher?
* Answer: Let’s send out through Principal Gallagher, along with link to video of the show.
* Question: what has the response been from kindergarten parents?
* Answer: there have been decisions made in the parent meeting, this is a different style production, new director doesn’t believe kindergartners should be involved, MTI agreement for the script says that you cannot change the production at all to add-in parts
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|  Action Items:  | Committee to send sign-ups for the play out through the Downey School. Committee to gage interest in the play and see if we should proceed with the new production and director as planned. |
| 1. Grade Level Reps (Sudha and Beth) OPEN MEETING TIME BEGINS HERE
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| 8:00pm-8:18pm | Discussion: What is working, what is not working? |
| * Question directed to GLRs how do you want to be contacted? Have you heard from parents in your grade?
* Question to GLRs: Is the amount of send-outs driving you crazy?
* Answer: No, but when they come in, we can’t always get them out right away.
* GLRs are given 48 hours after they receive the send-out email to distribute them electronically.
* We are trying to get more volunteers, how can we accomplish this?
* Question to the board: Are non-pto parents volunteering?
* Answer: Trying to get a handle on that, going to check in with Tammy and Maureen about recent events and sign-up
* Point made: Some people are volunteering to work events but not signing up. For example: A parent emailed the PTO email asking to just show up because they couldn’t sign up online.
* Point made: What’s app? group is a good way to catch up on PTO business, votes, and giving feedback, you don’t always have to reply but please look at that
* **New role for 2018-2019** - *Special Education Liaison*, Liz Polin
* Update from Liz: Feedback from parents, they love it, but they feel they need more outside community support.
* Discussion about being sensitive to the needs and accommodations of these students.
* More messaging needed about early access to certain events, so people avoid showing up early, avoid confusion
* Not excluding children but needs to be about support and accessibility for students with certain needs
* Fine line of confidentiality, how do we invite certain children in without putting them on display? Need to avoid Kids being kids, “I want to be first”
* Halloween party, we should have better blocked kids from entering the party early.
* Question about events: Could we have a “buddy” for other kids? Could we send a survey to the specific subset of kids? Could this happen again during the holiday fair? Could we have a different entrance? Might feel like segregation?
* We should use this is a chance to create and raise awareness, put it out there for everyone to know that there are circumstances that allow certain families to access these events earlier because of special needs.
* Crowd control would be helpful
* In anticipation of holiday fair and book fair we should blast out a reminder to the community to not enter the building before 5:30.
* Idea to send out a survey in the new year to better improve our inclusiveness of students with special needs.
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|  Action Items: | GLRs to send out emails within 48 hours of receiving them. Board members to work on getting community outside of the PTO board involved with PTO events. Board members to check What’s App and stay knowledgeable about PTO news. Liz Polin to continue to check in with the community about what can be done to better serve our children with special needs and to relay this information back to the board. |
| 1. **School Update (Principal Gallagher, Amber Crowley, and Miss Gen)**
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| 8:18pm-8:25pm | Discussion: Update on playground, enrichment, and outdoor classroom from the Downey Staff |
| * New playground equipment has been installed (two climbing walls, one set of monkey bars), kids k-5 are loving it, it’s awesome!
* The table looks beautiful, umbrella moved inside for the winter.
* Would like to talk in more detail about dedication to Mrs. Rocha
* Principal Gallagher is thinking it could take place at 2:30 during the school day, students could then have open recess for the remainder of the day.
* Could try before the holidays, or wait until after.
* A friday would be good.
* Question: Should we wait until the spring?
* Principal Gallagher to reach out to Mrs. Rocha’s husband and see what works for them.
* Need to get plaque
* ***Enrichment update from the teachers***
* 5th grade had states of matter, in house enrichment from the discovery museum which wrapped up today
* Mrs. Crowley shared a slide show from the discovery museum 5th grade enrichment
* 3rd grade also had discovery museum enrichment too, also went well
* $8300 of $11,000 budgeted for enrichment has been spent
* Point made: Community is unaware that PTO sponsors all of these enrichment events, we need to get it out there
* Request from Principal Gallagher: If budget is approved for this enrichment next year, for Mrs. Carde to run the scheduling, to rule out the middleman
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| Action Items:  | Members of the Downey school to reach out to Mrs. Rocha’s family regarding the dedication ceremony for the playground, Playground committee to adhere plaque to new outdoor table, Committee to work with Principal Gallagher and faculty to choose a day and time for the ceremony, teachers to continue to reach out to PTO with enrichment requests. PTO and Downey faculty to better advertise that PTO sponsors many of these enrichment events with the help of the communities generosity and PTO donations. Mrs. Carde to coordinate future scheduling of enrichment events. |
| 1. **Gala (Nayla Daly and Anne McMurray)**
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| 8:25pm - 8:40pm | Gala Update |
| * Started tapping sponsorship prospects, have a solid list coming together
* Supreme development has shown interest in being a sponsor,
* Also looking at local banks, Washington Street businesses
* Save the dates are ready
* Save the Date will be on social media this week, through email, and in backpacks next week.
* Business sponsors will be advertised in Downey directory next year, which may be electronic.
* There is a shuttle that will drive you home from the Hilton.
* This year’s gala will be more inclusive, dress is less formal
* Community needs to be aware that the gala is responsible for the bulk of the funds that come from the PTO to the Downey school.
* Idea to have a photo montage of enrichment and PTO sponsored events to be shown at the gala? Maybe a loop?
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| Action Items: Gala committee to send out save the dates through email and student backpacks next week. Committee and PTO board to continue looking for local business sponsorship, along with sponsors within the Downey community.  |
| 1. Movie Night (Hillary Mosca and Liz Gauthier)
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| 8:40pm-8:45pm | Discussion: Update |
| * 4 movie choices: Smallfoot, Incredibles 2, Hotel Transylvania 3, Peter Rabbit
* Event will be free of charge and will include a bottle of water, a popcorn, and a box of nut-free candy.
* Idea Maybe a movie ticket to get their popcorn candy and water
* Need more popcorn, we ran out last year
* Ran out of Swedish fish last year as well
* Going to request 5xl bags of popcorn.
* No cash to change hands
* Drinks, water, and candy to be provided, advertised as a PTO sponsored, cash free event
* Bowling to be discussed in January, Booked for Feb. 9th, Sign-ups for bowling to come out in January
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| Action Items:  | Hillary and Liz to send out survey to the Downey community to choose movie from the list we generated. Committee to deliver request to showcase cinema for popcorn donation. Committee to pick up supplies (bottled water, candy, popcorn containers) before movie night. Committee to advertise event in January. Committee to mention the Gala and PTO in their signage for the event. |
| 1. **Playground Equipment (Sudha Sarma)**
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| 8:40pm-8:45pm | Discussion: Update on Playground |
| * Downey PTO received a very nice thank you letter from Heath, finance director for the school district.
* Check for the equipment has been mailed to the school district by the Downey PTO.
* Current status of playground is pending.
* Playground equipment to be ordered, was approved by the school committee.
* This had to be voted on because it was a gift.
* Most recent hiccup: We were told we need other bids by the school department after they approved the money for the playground.
* Principal Gallagher to talk to schoolboard, not the town money, it’s the PTO money
* 6 week order period, and install time, hopefully before the ground freezes.
* table has been ordered, plans to be made for the dedication
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| Action Items: | Principal Gallagher to check with school board to see if it is necessary to obtain bids from other playground companies, playground equipment to be ordered and installed by the company, committee to plan dedication ceremony in honor of Mrs. Rocha, someone to reach out to the Rocha family about date and time when we have them. |
| 1. **Social Media (Sudha Sarma)**
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| 8:45pm-9:00pm | Update and Reminders about Social Media Use |
| * Request to please be mindful of comments about the PTO and the school, remember, you represent the board and the school
* People who have feedback about events and issues at Downey are encouraged to be a part of the solution
* Point made: We need more parent involvement!
* The PTO needs to have more of a presence
* We should work on personal recruitment
* Idea to have a “Next-up” sign at the PTO table at each event.
* Idea to send out enrichment slide show to the community so they can see what programs their money is sponsoring.
* Idea to add more PTO signage in the office, post more on Facebook
* Principal Gallagher presented an idea about student and or parent driven book club to build community
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| Action Items:  | PTO board members to be more mindful of their comments outside of the board. PTO board members to direct feedback to Beth and Sudha or Executive board members. PTO board members to work on ways to encourage more involvement from the Downey community. |
| **PTO updates: Stay connected – Facebook, Downey Website Page** |
|  **Next Meeting: January 8, 2019 PTO Social** |