

**Springdale Park Elementary PTO**  
**PTO Board Meeting**  
**October 5, 2009 – SRT 3**  
**6:30pm – 8:30pm**

**Attendees:** Yolanda Brown, Elizabeth Lieberman, David Rein, Clare Richie, Lynne Kushner, Elizabeth Mothershed, Guido Sacchi, Aaron Danzig, Kris White

**PTO Board Meeting Notes**

**I. Welcome** – Icebreaker: Performed an informative exercise to learn a bit about each of the directors – what we have in common and what unique qualities and experiences we bring to the table.

**II. PTO Board Format & Feedback:** Feedback from the 2008-2009 Board was discussed with the new board

1. Secretary Positions should be better defined and related more closely with the communications group
2. The length and action of board meetings should be controlled better
3. The items that are to be voted on should be identified via email prior to the meeting
4. Committee Updates should be shared via email freeing up more meeting time for higher level priorities. Every Tuesday the board is to submit its committee updates to a blog on Ning that Guido and Lynne will set up. The board will then have the chance to discuss the information on line and any decisions that need to be made can be voted on at the next board meeting. These committee updates/discussions are to be posted each week on the blog. Guido will send the how tos of blog use on Ning once it has been set up.
5. David made the point that 8:30 shall be the set closing time of each meeting and that a vote should occur if more time is needed.
6. Goals should be set by the board with regards to what they want to achieve this calendar school year.

**III. Big Picture Board Objectives/Goals Discussion**

Elizabeth Lieberman discussed the structure of the PTO and that its purpose should be to focus on higher level priorities. The entire board agreed with this focus and came up with a list of “potential high priority” topics or Board Driven Functions that they could focus on:

1. Corporate Partners - It was suggested that we focus on 5 high level partners whose support can be targeted to the schools needs. PK is a volunteer that wants to spear head these efforts. We also want to check into the conditions for being an Atlanta Partner for Education like Heery.
2. Teacher Relationships – the goal would be to create a wonderful environment for the SPARK teachers.
3. Technology / Resources (incl'd gardens) – Focus on the “Modernization of the APS Schools”, i.e. band width issues, fiber optic solutions, etc. Guido would spear head this goal.

4. Community Outreach – Focus on getting the spark kids involved in the community, possibly having the older students do community service type of projects. There was discussion under this category have documenting this first inaugural year and creating a video and time capsule for the future. Clare expressed an interest in this goal. We also discussed creating a buddy program where older kids had some leadership role or opportunity to interact/work with/do projects with younger kids at SPARK.
5. Parent Involvement – Focus on increasing the involvement of our parents in the “daily life” at Spark. There is a disconnect in our communications from top level to parents and we want to focus on mending that. Creating a project list template that would be used to recruit volunteers and communicating with our parents at the classroom level were some ways expressed that we could reach out to our parent community. David Rein expressed an interest in these efforts.
6. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Initiative – we discussed creating traditions that our children can look forward to when they reach the 5<sup>th</sup> and final grade at SPARK. We are concerned that with the transition and continuing ‘issues” at SPARK our 4<sup>th</sup> graders, soon to be the first 5<sup>th</sup> graders and graduating class of SPARK will be “ignored”. Kris White expressed an interest in working on this goal.

#### **IV. Board Roles/Responsibilities/Transition Plan**

We discussed the roles of each of the board member positions and discussed the need for more development of each. Our goal is to create job descriptions for each which will in turn help us to set realistic expectations of the Board. The Board Roles were delegated as follows:

President – Elizabeth Lieberman  
Vice President – David Rein  
Secretary – Kris White  
Treasurer – Guido Sacchi  
Director of Operations – Clare Richie  
Director of Programs / Activities – Aaron Danzig  
Director of Communications – David Rein  
Director of Student enrichment – Elizabeth Mothershed  
Director of Fundraising – Lynne Kushner

Each board member is to submit a job description for this board role by Wednesday October 14<sup>th</sup> to Elizabeth Lieberman. The group will then discuss the submissions and finalize the roles by the next board meeting. Once these roles have been clearly defined, we will develop an info flyer that will be posted on the school’s website and in the digital dolphin. We are hoping that this will clarify the “mystery” around the PTO Board and what it actually does, while in addition creating interest for future elections.

Lastly it was discussed about the need for 1-2 teacher members on the board. Ms. Brown has asked all teachers to let her know if they would be interested in serving as the teacher representative. She is waiting to hear from all teachers before proceeding

forward. It was also suggested that we have one teacher to represent the younger kids (K – 2) and one teacher represent the older kids (3-4/5). We also thought it would be helpful to have a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher be on the board to help with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade committee activities.

#### **V. PTO Structure/Outstanding Committee Needs/Potential Volunteers**

Janet Warnecke has stepped up to be our volunteer organizer. She will handle the recruitment of parents for tasks that we define on our project volunteer lists. We want to be “proactive” and very specific in our designation of volunteers. It was discussed that we should use phone calls and personal contact as ways to make people commit to their volunteering obligations. The PTO board is to submit to Elizabeth and Kris any persons whom they think would make a great volunteer and should make a note of the area in which we think they would prove most useful. We want to create a list for Janet within the next 3-4 weeks of parents she should call and recruit for the many wonderful volunteer opportunities we have at SPARK.

It was also discussed that we should thank our volunteers by name in the digital dragon on a weekly basis – highlighting their efforts and identifying other ways parents can help out. We want to make a point of letting others know who is helping SPARK.

One final suggestion was made to ask our teachers who they think would make great volunteers from their parent pool based on their involvement in class.

#### **VI. Board Meeting Schedule – November through May**

We discussed the best day to host our PTO Board meetings and most felt Monday was the best option and that the time, 6:30-8:30 was the best choice. We decided to hold the board meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month and we will check this against the school calendar to note any holidays or other conflicts and adjust the schedule accordingly. The board meetings for the rest of the year will be: 11/9, 12/14, 1/11, 2/8, 3/8, 4/12, and 5/10.

Lastly Ms. Brown expressed her desire in making sure our strategic goals (item III) align with the school’s vision. We want to make sure that we are able to explain the “whys” of our goals. That being said, a suggestion was made and accepted to hold a strategic planning meeting for the PTO. It would be a 4 hour meeting in the morning on either October 23 or 30<sup>th</sup> where the board would come together and define the PTO board roles, fine tune our strategic goals for 2009-2010 and prioritize our activities. More details will follow.

#### **VII. Topics and Schedule for General PTO Meetings - November through May**

We discussed the general PTO meetings and came up with a strategy that we hope will create more attendance and parental interest in the meetings. We want to limit meetings to an hour and introduce a topic at each meeting. We will have speakers come and present information on the topics at each meeting. A typical meeting could be 20 minutes of topic discussion, 30 minutes of PTO business and 10 minutes of Q&A. we have yet to come up with the scheduled meeting dates but discussed limiting them to every 6 weeks.

## VIII. Communications

- **Yahoogroup** (as is, moderator, phase out, PTO role) – it was decided that the PTO board is no longer allowed to use the school's yahoo group as a venue to discuss school issues. We will post all correspondence from the board on the website and in the digital dragon on a weekly basis. We need to develop a process for getting comments to and from parents. We will work with the room parents to develop this. Also there is a need for the exchange of comments between board members – again here NING was brought up.
- Digital Dragon (timing, content, protocol, internal review, ABG question) Need to work with Preeti and Sara Henderson on this.

## IX. Ms. Brown Updates

1. **Pictures** – The school did not select “pre pay”. The LifeTouch salesman selected pre pay for us – Mary Lin had prepay and Morningside did not. Ms. Brown has discussed this through with LifeTouch and we will receive proofs for all students, full refund if photos are not acceptable, retake opportunity on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, and all pictures for the year book even if the pictures were not purchased. We will communicate all of this to the parents when the final agreements have been set in stone.
2. **One Academic Fair** – 1<sup>st</sup> ever science fair at SPARK for K-4 students.
3. **Leveling of K Classrooms (\*info not out yet to the parent body)** – Spark has received 2 teachers, one for K and an additional for EIP. The process for leveling the kindergarten classes will be to first ask for parent volunteers, then will be to use a lottery system. We need 4 children per classroom to move into the new class. Parents will be notified by Wednesday 10/7 and are to return their requests for moving to the office by Friday 10/9. On Monday 10/12<sup>th</sup> the lottery will be held to fill any remaining slots – we need 4 per class to move. Wednesday 10/14<sup>th</sup> families will be notified of the final changes.

**We voted on and passed the idea for the donation of \$150 to the 2 new teachers at SPARK to aid them in the purchase of classroom set up materials.**

4. **Classroom Space** – the challenge classes will be moved into the new Hirsh Building on October 15<sup>th</sup>. The new kindergarten class will be in one of the challenge classrooms as will the new EIP class.
5. **School Partners** – we are still in need of our core group of corporate or business partners that will help SPARK. Whether they are in kind donors or want to apply for a partnership, we need them. Heery is our first partner in the “Atlanta partners for education” – they will be holding lecture series for the kids at SPARK. Ms. brown will see if she can provide us with the standards for being involved in this program for us in our corporate partner search.

**X. Church - Gym and Parking - thoughts from PTO meeting/Clare's memo/Next Steps**

There was a brief discussion of the plan for the new parking lot and the feedback Clare and Mary Stouffer plan on sharing with the DHUMC and APS. The PTO Board is to give feedback on Clare's proposal via NING or email should NING not be set up in time.

**Topics not discussed due to time constraints:**

Pizza Party – External Invites/Board Support

Mascot Committee/Selection Plan

Community Outreach Event/Tours

Teacher Lounge

Cafeteria/ Murals

Old Business/New Business

**Director positions were delegated based on discussion Elizabeth had with each board member:**

<b>President</b>	Elizabeth Ross Lieberman
<b>Vice President</b>	David Rein
<b>Treasurer</b>	Guido Sacchi
<b>Secretary</b>	Kris White
<b>Director - Campus Operations/Physical Resources</b>	Clare Richie
<b>Director - Campus Programs/Activities</b>	Aaron Danzig
<b>Director - Communications</b>	David Rein
<b>Director - Fundraising</b>	Lynne Kushner
<b>Director - Student Enrichment</b>	Elizabeth Mothershed

Meeting adjourned at 9:20pm !!!!