

Springdale Park Elementary PTO
PTO Board Meeting
November 5, 2009 – SRT 3
8:30-9:30 pm

Attendees: Yolanda Brown, Elizabeth Lieberman, David Rein, Clare Richie, Lynne Kushner, Elizabeth Mothershed, 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.

CR – handed out Maria’s draft of book fair plan for comments from board, Claire will consolidate board comments. Send in comments by Monday November 9th.

AD – Seat backs are on the way....for K-2 from Lakeshore learning. Distributing them the week of November 9th.

DR – yearbook: Ruth Durranga Thomas is taking on yearbook. Has no volunteers and needs many. She is using LifeTouch which will make it easier to put it together.

Proposing hardcover – all in agreement. \$3300 total for the whole school @ \$24 for 366 students...need 400 books ..DR will check the prices and send us out an email about costs, evaluation, etc. Communications will need someone to sign contract when we are ready. DR will submit comments to board and ask for our input – need to move quickly on it. he will basically analyze the program and the books...

What is with NING? EM will follow up with Guido on getting this thing set up...

EM- Job descriptions, need a few more, need this outlined.

LK – are we ready each other’s communications? EM – if a response is needed then FLAG it to get a response by....KW – in subject line please put PTO, RESPONSE needed by>>>> so that the board knows to read it and respond ASAP. Ning is still going to be crucial for our communications and decision process.

EM/KW/EM – we need childcare during PTO meetings to get more involvement. We need ot get volunteers so how do we reach them if they aren’t involved at schools. Let’s do that concerted effort thing we discussed last time to say “hey you can now volunteer for..”

VOLUNTEERING: Come up with volunteer needs, submit our people who we think could do something for SPARK. At retreat we can come up with this list and make this happen. Are we taking on too much, should we utilize the room parents and require there to be a certain amount of volunteer hours from each class? Let’s define what we need and sell it as a rewards system for classes that have the most “volunteer hours” or something like that. Fundraising has no shortage so how do we sell our volunteer needs. Let’s prepare this as a topic for our retreat – define our goals, our needs and make a strategic plan to achieve them. Use the list of PTA applications with volunteer commitments to make the calls and say “you signed up for this and here is what we need you to do...”

CR – let’s make sure we don’t get caught up in strategic planning and over plan everything...let’s be efficient and set goals and move forward and evolve from there.

YB/EL - Nov. 20th PTO retreat is set. All can attend except Claire. Will be at the school from 8 to 12. Have some time but need descriptions, need to narrow the key topics to narrow topics to discuss at this retreat. DR – each one gets 10 minutes to have the floor and discuss their main idea of why they are on the board, or their personal goals, ideas, missions, etc. CR – or we brainstorm all together as a group and write it on the board and then rank the topics and discuss as we go along.

Pizza party is our role model for community relationships and developing the school. Let's do a kids night – movie night at SPARK where SPARK students can bring in their friends to take a tour of the school, see the classrooms and then see a movie in the cafeteria.

Donor recognition party – no meeting before hand. kris

II. Community Open House

1. 5 board members there – EL, EM, CR, LK, DR

Event Goals

Read info from EM and make comments TONIGHT. Meet at 7:45 before it all starts to go through the plan/schedule one more time. EM wants to walk through it one more time.

Show everyone how great the school is and how much we need support – form daily activities to capital improvements. Community support for event space, supplies, volunteers.

Tour – parking – info was sent in the flyer so people should know not to park at the church. Ms. Russo is there in the morning but later we will need ot make sure the lot is empty at pre-school drop off time.

People can “peak” into the classes, teachers are aware and know there will be visitors.

Sign in sheets, banners, food in cafeteria and the rutland building

Staff members – 41, Teachers 26, Students 366, 21 classes plus specials

2. Plan / Schedule

III. Big Picture Board Objectives/Goals Discussion

1. Childcare for PTO meetings to get more involvement – who takes this on to organize? Get teacher volunteers or pay from budget \$\$?
- 2.

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. 5th Grade Initiative – we discussed creating traditions that our children can look forward to when they reach the 5th and final grade at SPARK. We are concerned that with the transition and continuing ‘issues” at SPARK our 4th graders, soon to be the first 5th 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 14th 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 4th grade teacher be on the board to help with the 5th 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 2nd 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 30th 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 23rd, 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** – 1st 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 10/12th the lottery will be held to fill any remaining slots – we need 4 per class to move. Wednesday 10/14th 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 15th. 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:

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:20pm !!!!