

PTO BOARD MEETING
Springdale Park Elementary School
6:30 PM EDT
Monday, September 17, 2012

In attendance: Principal Brown, Heather Hallett, Nicole Foerschler Horn, Jenny Lockwood (teacher rep), Bret Williams, Mary Stouffer, Moshe Haspel

Absent: Meghan McCloskey, Maria Rein, Irma Seabrook

Votes that took place between meetings:

- *Vote to sponsor tickets for the Teacher and Paraprofessional of the year (cost: \$220) - Approved 6-0-1*
- *Vote to approve a \$3250 venue deposit for SPARK After Dark event - Approved unanimously*
- *Vote to authorize up to \$1400 for Teacher Appreciation Events - Approved 5-0-2*
- *Vote to spend up to \$500 for art supplies needed immediately (Ms. Collins to fold this into a larger budget request for the forthcoming budget) \$500 - Approved 5-0-2*
- *Vote to allocate up to \$600 for the "birthday popsicle fund" - Approved 4-3*
- *Vote to approve up to \$1000 for Family Science Night expenses - Approved 6-1 (see minutes from 9/11 Conference Call)*

Book Fair (Celeste Smith)

The Book Fair will take place the week of October 22-26 with the theme "Every Reader is a Star." Students will have "viewing times" when they may peruse the books during the school day and fill out wish lists, followed by "buy times" when they may make purchases. Families are also encouraged to attend the "Family Night" event on Thursday the 25th.

Because the Family Night event can get crowded, the committee proposes to encourage students to attend in two shifts: grades K-2 from 4:30 to 6:00 and grades 3-5 from 6:30 to 8:00. The Book Fair Committee has invited the 5th grade Committee to sell pizza as a fundraiser during the intersession.

The Book Fair Committee is also exploring an incentive or contest to encourage contributions to the All for Books fund (All for Books is a non-profit that provides books to disadvantaged children).

The Committee also asked the Board to help it define its scholarship program more clearly. Last year, students were given scholarships of up to \$10 to purchase books. But there were some issues with implementation, primarily due to ambiguity in the policies.

The board was split on the best strategy for Book Fair scholarships. One proposed approach was to target the neediest populations (students eligible for free/reduced price meals and especially students residing in the battered women's shelter). The other proposal was to ensure every student came away with books, regardless of that student's family income. Assuming a constant scholarship budget, the first proposal would provide more books to fewer students; the second proposal would provide books to a wider audience.

A second question for discussion was whether the scholarships should carry a "hard limit." One side felt that we shouldn't grouse if a student came a dollar over since, after all, the scholarships were going to books (and could not be applied to other Book Fair merchandise). The other side argued that a hard limit ensured fairness; that learning to work within a budget was a valuable lesson (learning about scarcity and trade-offs is a 1st grade standard, adding money is 3rd grade math); and if the spending cap on the scholarship was too low, then it should be raised for everyone.

Other issues requiring discussion included: recognition that some parents may perceive the scholarships as "charity" and not want to accept the scholarship; the question of what to do if a student was "short"; and the question of whether a student would lose the scholarship if he/she brought money to buy day.

After much discussion, the following compromise proposal was hammered out:

- Prior to the fair:
 - Teachers will be notified by the fair chairs of the new scholarship policy process
 - Teachers will receive confidential a list of free/reduced lunch students to use as a cross reference
 - A letter from the school will go out to free/reduced lunch students families advising them of scholarship opportunity (and provided the opportunity to opt out; free/reduced lunch students who return no form will get a scholarship by default)
 - Other students will be permitted to request a need-based scholarship (non-free/reduced lunch students who return no form will get no scholarship by default)
- At selection day:
 - Students with scholarships will be encouraged to select books totaling \$12-15
- At buy day:
 - Students with scholarships will be permitted to purchase up to \$15 in BOOKS ONLY
 - Students with scholarships will be permitted to supplement with their own money to buy more books (or to purchase merchandise with their personal money) without loss of scholarship
 - Students must have enough money on hand (including the scholarship amount) to purchase the books he/she has selected-- no "spotting" kids the extra dollar.
- On Friday:
 - Any student who did not get anything at Buy Day or Family Night will be permitted to select one book.

Although a quorum was technically present, the Board agreed to table a vote on this compromise until the absent Board members could be consulted.

House Parties (Aileen Almassy)

The House Parties have gotten off to a slower start than initially hoped, with the start of school and transportation related chaos among the distractions. One party has been held so far, a few additional ones are being planned-- so not a lot of money has been raised yet.

Concerns were raised about the balance between the "fun" and the "funds" in this fundraising activity. Board members recognized that the "fun" (AKA community building) was a good in its own right, and that increased affinity would likely lead to more contributions down the road. But the Board recognized the need to be more realistic about the fundraising goals for the House Parties for this pilot year.

The Board asked that the House Party Committee prepare guidelines for potential House Party hosts about how to plan, schedule, and publicize their parties.

Immediate Appropriations (Mary Stouffer, Principal Brown, Heather Hallett)

A few items require appropriation or purchase before the final budget is completed:

- Replacement bulbs and other spare parts for the Promethian Boards (\$1,216 quote)
- CINS membership (\$100)
- Sundries to be purchased from the Principal's Discretionary Fund (\$1,000 envisioned in the PTO budget)

The Board members present agreed to hold votes on these three items electronically due to the number of absent Board members.

Budget (Mary Stouffer)

Given the number of Board absences, members present recognized that a complete discussion of the budget would not be possible. However, Mary walked members present through the budget lines as they currently stand in order to facilitate that upcoming larger discussion.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Monday, October 15, 6:30PM @ SPARK