

## **SPARK PTO BOARD CONFERENCE CALL**

**8:00 PM EDT**

**Tuesday, October 2, 2012**

In attendance: Heather Hallett , Moshe Haspel, Nicole Foerschler Horn, Meghan McCloskey, Maria Rein, Mary Stouffer , Bret Williams

Absent: Principal Brown, Jenny Lockwood (teacher rep), Irma Seabrook

### **Budget (and Bylaws): General Membership Vote**

We need to hold general membership votes on the budget and on the proposed bylaws change removing the provision (that has been ignored by every year's board) that PTO members are entitled to a copy of the school directory.

A short discussion of voting technology ensued; Moshe explained that Doodle was not a good technology for this sort of vote, as it does not provide for a secret ballot: everyone can see how everyone else voted. He recommended trying Survey Monkey, on the impression that one could provision for a unique URL for each user, preventing against repeat voting.

TO DO: Moshe and Meghan to work on messaging and setting up the vote.

### **Family Science Night**

Final check-in before Family Science night showed everything going "smashingly well." Nearly all of the events are "sold out," indicating that the communications plan worked—flyers weren't needed. The event is a bit short of the desired number of volunteers, but they have enough to make everything work: instead of having volunteers show the presenters to their assigned rooms, they will hand out floor plans.

### **Fundraising**

There was some discussion about numbers: parents might be confused about the difference between the fundraising "goal" (\$127k) on one hand, and the Capital Campaign (\$30k) and budgeted spending (a bit north of \$90k) envisioned by the presented budget on the other.

The discussion emphasized two points:

- 1) The \$127k number represents a goal, determined in turn by the estimated total cost for the “wish list” assembled over the summer. By contrast, the budgeted spending reflects what the PTO believes to be the minimum spending needed to maintain the school.
- 2) The \$30k is a realistic estimate of what we think that a Capital Campaign will bring in, and NOT our goal. If we can bring in more, then it allows other events such as SPARK After Dark and the end of school event formerly known as May Day to be fun, social events with less emphasis on the fundraising.

Bret has a few smaller fundraising events in the works for October or November:

- San Francisco Coffee weeklong “dine out”
- Dine-out at Doc Chey’s
- A DJ and movie night (both donated)

There was some discussion about scheduling the DJ and movie night, especially since the movie cannot start until after dark. Holding the event right after the clocks change, for example, would allow the event to start an hour earlier (friendlier to the younger kids). But if we wait too long, the weather will change.

There was also some discussion about scheduling the SPARK Art Fair. Items ordered will come in on or around November 27<sup>th</sup>; we’ll want to hold the event as soon after that as possible (allowing some cushion for a delay), so as to avoid the holiday party season. Upon consulting the master calendar, December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> emerged as possible dates.

### **Communications Policy**

Event flyers pose a problem at the school. Not only is their use contrary to the “green” mission of the school, but they are ineffective with upper grades (classes without daily homework folders) and they create extra work for the teachers. Ms. Blackwell wants them used only in cases pre-approved by the school.

We still have a number of options for getting the word out to parents about events:

1. SPARKe and website
2. The sign on Briarcliff Road by the parking lot
3. Use “reminder stickers” (possibly distribute at the cafeteria instead of flyers)

And the school is going to make two new options available:

1. Ms. Blackwell is going to start a bimonthly message from the Vice-Principal, which will be sent via the room parent tree. We will have the opportunity to contribute very brief items for inclusion (think of it as SPARK-e “light”).

2. Ms. Blackwell will institute enhanced direct communications w/ESOL parents and parents without internet.

#### **DHUMP and Carpool Update**

This item was tabled for the next call.

#### **Copier**

Mary has the go-ahead to purchase the “gently used” Risograph for the school as per her proposal. Discussion of a copier purchase or lease is tabled until the next call.