

**PTO BOARD MEETING**  
**Springdale Park Elementary School**  
**6:30 PM EDT**  
**Monday, October 15, 2012**

In attendance: Principal Brown, Heather Hallett, Moshe Haspel, Jenny Lockwood (teacher rep), Maria Rein, Irma Seabrook, Mary Stouffer

Absent: Nicole Foerschler Horn, Meghan McCloskey, Bret Williams

**AR Party Budget (Ms. Cofield)**

Ms. Cofield, who was disappointed that the level of funding (\$2,000) allocated to the AR (Accelerated Reader) party budget by the Board and approved by the membership was much lower than her requested amount of \$5,500, was invited to speak. She presented a video on the AR Program, focused on three main points: 1) parents of “reluctant readers” believe that the AR program is effective in encouraging their children to read more; 2) teachers recognize the AR program as an key supplement to the classroom-based reading curriculum; and 3) students enjoy the AR parties, meaning that the program provides effective incentives to read. Ms. Cofield stated in the video that she considered the program very effective and planned to continue it as is.

Members of the Board who had voted for the lower funding level were not satisfied with the video. They felt that 1) the video failed to address the concerns that they had raised about some of the items such as cotton candy used in the previous year’s parties; 2) the video failed to provide a justification for the increased budget request [Secretary’s Note: the previous year’s AR party spending was roughly \$2,700, so the requested budget was a bit more than twice that from the previous year]; and 3) that involving parents, teachers, and especially students in lobbying for the AR party budget created an adversarial situation where none was needed.

**Member Votes (Moshe Haspel)**

As per the plan approved by the Board, two items placed before the membership for vote via SurveyMonkey. Ballots were sent out on October 8 at 9:40 PM, and voting closed at Midnight Friday October 12. Of the 364 members eligible to vote, 92 cast a ballot, for a participation rate of 25.3%.

The vote totals were as follows:

- Motion to approve the 2012-13 PTO Budget passed 82-6, with 4 abstentions.
- Motion to approve the Bylaws amendment striking the passage stating that PTO members are entitled to a copy of the PTO directory (i.e. allowing the PTO to distribute the directory to all parents) passed 83-2, with 7 abstentions

### **Book Fair (Maria Rein)**

The Book Fair, scheduled to take place the week of October 29, is on track, though it could use some additional volunteers.

### **Fundraising (Bret Williams)**

Bret Williams was out of town; item tabled for the next meeting.

### **SPARK After Dark (Irma Seabrook)**

The SPARK After Dark Committee has assembled a good team, meeting once a month. Every committee member has accepted responsibility for a particular aspect of the event. The committee has already secured a couple of sponsors, and will be sending out letters to local businesses seeking donations. Among the early donations: Lanier Parking has donated as \$1,200 VIP parking pass, and Mason Murer Gallery (the auction venue) has donated some art.

### **Holiday Decorations (Irma Seabrook)**

Board members, even those who tried to cut the decorations budget, unanimously agreed that the Halloween decorations look great. One issue to be resolved: apparently, one of the contract cleaning crews threw out a bunch of last year's decorations, despite the fact that they were stored in clearly-marked plastic tubs. The PTO is working with APS facilities to identify the contractor responsible and request compensation.

### **Teacher grants (Ms. Lockwood)**

The Teacher Grants Committee is getting ready to meet. They will have 2 application deadlines, one for each semester.

### **Inman Taskforce Update (Heather Hallett)**

A "listening session" took place at SPARK that morning. There seems to be preference for a 6th grade academy over an 8th grade academy, though there is far from consensus on that or indeed any question touching on the Inman issue. There was also a discussion of locations, ranging from the Howard School campus to properties near Inman.

### **Math Curriculum (Principal Brown)**

Principal Brown reminded the Board that she had asked the PTO to make professional development for the teachers, especially around teaching the new math curriculum, a top priority for the year. A teacher learning session is scheduled for January 8<sup>th</sup>, the day after the students come back from Winter Break. We will need Level 3 volunteers to assist with special learning exercises to take place that day.

TO DO: Heather Hallett will meet with Suzanne Scully to coordinate volunteers.

Principal Brown would like to add a session from Math Solutions in February. This training will cost \$700-750 per person. As such, it will likely involve a smaller group of teachers, who will in turn work with the other teachers to implement new curricular ideas. The idea will be to rotate teachers through these trainings over the next few years so that everyone gets trained in at least some areas.

Board question: Why not use Everyday Math like Morningside? When SPARK opened, Principal Brown polled the teachers coming from Morningside; they said that they didn't really use it, once the doors were closed. We started with a focus on reading; we know that we need to boost the math.

### **Value Added (Principal Brown)**

Principal Brown addressed the question of Value-added, which was new to the district last year. She noted that SPARK actually fared very well last year using these measures, and that the SPARK leadership team makes data-driven adjustments whenever possible. And it is important to understand that students at SPARK remain high performing. There is widespread confusion among principals about what these data tell us, but Principal Brown is committed to using this and any other information to improve the school.

### **Board Change (Heather Hallett)**

Meghan McCloskey has resigned her Board position. Maria Rein and Irma Seabrook will convene a Nominating Committee as per the bylaws.

**NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12 @ 6:30 PM**