

PTO BOARD MEETING
Springdale Park Elementary School
6:30 PM EST
Monday, December 17, 2012

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

Absent: Morna Gailor, Maria Rein

Vote between meetings: The Nominating Committee presented Morna Gailor as a candidate to fill the "empty" slot (see minutes from November 26; approved to 4-1-2.

Vote: October and November minutes were approved 5-0-1 and 4-0-2, respectively.

Enrichment Grant Committee (Stephanie Frederick)

Stephanie Frederick started by noting that in past years the committee has had a fairly easy time. But this year, the total requests far outstripped the available pool: the committee had \$3,500 to spend, but roughly \$8,000 worth of requests. [Secretary's note: the \$3,500 budgeted for this year's fund represented a \$1,500 increase from the amount allocated for SY 2011-12.] In order to prioritize among many worthy requests, the committee primarily looked at two questions: 1) are the dollars going toward reinforcing core standards; and 2) how many students will benefit from the program?

Applicant	Requested	Granted	Use
Valkova	\$ 238.71	\$ 200.00	4th/5th grade orchestra
Rousso	\$ 250.00	\$ 100.00	K-3 Career centers
McCloskey	\$ 400.00	\$ 100.00	Books for cafeteria
Blassingame	\$ 270.00	\$ 270.00	K/1 Starfall
Emerson	\$ 1,387.44	\$ 1,387.44	1st grade math enhancement
Rousso	\$ 120.00	\$ 120.00	Hotel expenses for conference PTP
Mobley	\$ 500.00	\$ 250.00	K-3 Agricultural project
Slack	\$ 381.49	\$ 281.49	5th grade science kits
McCloskey	\$ 375.00	\$ -	Lice kits
McCloskey	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	Epi pens
Cofield	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 800.00	AR Party

During discussion of the grants, a number of Board members expressed dismay that the Debate Team had not applied for a grant. There was broad consensus among the Board that the Committee had done an excellent job of triage among the various requests. Mary Stouffer noted that there had been some confusion over the amount that the Committee had available to allocate (the Valkova grant did not count toward their total), and moved that the \$200 surplus be added to the AR party budget. Moshe

Haspel objected to using Enrichment Grants for AR parties for a number of reasons: 1) parties are not strictly curricular in the same sense as, say, software or books; 2) there is scant evidence that incentivizing participation in AR has any long term, positive effect (and that indeed, some studies suggest that reading among “reluctant readers” drops below the original baseline, once incentives are discontinued); 3) the first quarter AR party demonstrated that a lower-budget party could still be quite enjoyable; 4) the AR proposal provided no budget detail besides a request to spend \$5/child/party, which is excessive; 5) the Grants Committee would be spending its entire budget in the first of what was supposed to be two budget cycles; and 6) the purpose of the Enrichment Grants is supposed to invite teachers, parents, and students to innovate—not to go tell the Board that they “underfunded” something that the Board had already examined and funded. Other Board members cited how excited the students get about the parties as a reason to support them.

Vote: Motion to approve the package of Enrichment Grants with Mary Stouffer’s proposed change passed 5-1-0.

Fundraising Update (Bret Williams)

A second fundraising letter has gone out for the Capital Campaign. A Principal’s Breakfast is scheduled for Friday, January 11. Everyone who has made a donation to the Campaign is being invited, regardless of donation level. The hope is to encourage people who made small donations to donate more substantially. This event is being catered by San Francisco Coffee.

In terms of other fundraising events, two additional dine outs are scheduled: one at Yeah Burger, scheduled for January 22, and one at Harry and Son’s for Thursday, March 21. The Book Fair came in above expectations, and SPARK After Dark is on track thanks to Irma.

Bret has also drafted a letter to the business community, but does not intend to send it out until the revised budget is set. He wants to know how much money needs to be raised and for what purpose. Nicole and Heather encouraged Bret to send the letters out anyhow, since the meeting to discuss mid-year budget adjustments will not take place until January. Bret reiterated his discomfort; Nicole said that she would send the letter.

TO DO: Nicole will pick up business letters and mail.

House Party Update (Nicole)

The House Parties will be the subject of a PTO Presidents' corner on House Parties encouraging parents to hold and attend parties. The House Party Committee has issued a challenge to each Board Member to host a House Party; Nicole intends to host a “beer tasting” in the spring. Moshe Haspel stated that even if the House Parties did not raise much money, they could still provide a valuable service in helping build

community. However, he expressed concern that the House Party Committee has not produced the hosting materials promised in the fall [Secretary's Note: See minutes from 9/17/2012].

Principal's Update (Principal Brown)

The Local School Council (LSC) met earlier that day and identified three areas of concentration for the coming year: 1) Math curriculum; 2) SPARK expansion; and 3) Social studies. Morna Gailor, who now serves on both the LSC and the PTO, will serve as LSC/PTO liaison.

In response to parent requests, the school has created a new food allergy policy; a letter describing the policy has gone out to parents. We're one of the first schools to have one, so this is an area in which SPARK is an innovator.

Principal Brown has sent out a letter to parents in response to the tragedy in Newtown, CT. The school is required to conduct one drill per month (fire or tornado), and will add lockdown drills to the repertoire.

The PTO-funded professional development day is scheduled for January 8th. The teachers are in the process of preparing parent-friendly math games and math activities. The kids will only be under parental supervision in the classrooms for 110-150 minutes. The remainder of the day will be taken up by assemblies, extra garden time, specials, lunch and recess.

The SPARK Awards Day committee has recommended holding awards ceremonies as part of the year-end parties instead of having a separate ceremony. They feel that this will allow the teachers to make more individualized comments about each student.

Next year, SPARK is projected to be beyond capacity, even using the conference room for instruction. The school has started conversations with Carla Pinneman (sp?), property manager @ APS about possibly leasing space at DHUMP.

SPARK AFTER Dark (Irma Seabrook)

Preparations are trucking along; the committee is making a push right now to get volunteers who can solicit donations. So far, 28 donations have been pledged, including some really nice ones. They are looking at creating some kids' art projects; Nicole Borse is focused on that part. There has been some debate about the caterer and the amount to be spent on food; Board members agreed that the budget is the budget.

Treasurer's Update (Mary Stouffer)

Mary has met with Ms. Beaumont to go over the Leveled Book Room budget. Conservatively, about \$20k can be taken out of reserves and brought to the general fund.

DHUMP needs the space where Ms. Pirnstill has been storing all of the PE equipment, so she needs a shed. Mary has researched sheds and found a 10 x 12 model that she and Ms. Pirnstill believe would be suitable, with an installed price (including leveling the site) for about \$3500. Moshe Haspel raised concerns that, at that price, a building permit would be required (and that review by the Urban Design Commission may be required as well); Nicole stated that a permit would not be needed.

Vote: Appropriate up to \$3500 to purchase and install a shed, with the provision that the reserve for next year's Leveled Book Room spending not be touched; approved: 5-0-3 (3 absent).

Mary also noted that the PTO Thanksgiving recognition of the teachers was a much appreciated surprise. Thanks go to Heather and Nicole for coming up with that idea and bringing it to fruition. One Board recommendation was to use a web form instead of e-mail to gather the "thank-you" messages to reduce the labor involved.