

## **PTO Meeting Minutes – JANUARY 26, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05PM. Present were Sue Borgos, Stephanie Bakken, Karen Nichols, Kirstin Johnson, Lori Coughlin, Mark Herlinger, Susan Robertson, Mark Donato, Kim Brummond, Sherry Beardshear, Cori Loehr, Gail Axt, Amy Dickson, Cheryl Fleetwood, Rich McClintock, Kirsten Kahn, Karen Utke and Kim Benson.

### **PRESIDENT'S OPENING COMMENTS**

Sue Borgos opened the meeting with a welcome to all and a short introduction to the topics for discussion this evening. Other than a few committee reports, the primary topics for discussion are a fundraising form from Kirsten Kahn and funding issues for two faculty members.

### **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

No formal report.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Karen Nichols distributed the balance sheet and indicated we are lagging behind in the fundraising events that have been held this year. For example, grocery certificate sales are down \$800.00 as compared to this time last year as are e-book sales. Last year e-book sales generated \$2,400.00 and this year only \$1,500.00. In addition, we have a bigger burden this year in terms of Crow Canyon scholarships. Karen also informed the group that we are losing money on school events and we need to figure out how to at least break even. Food sales could help with this.

### **COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS**

#### **SCHOOL SAFETY**

Mark Herlinger and Susan Robertson stated that their committee's purpose this year has been twofold:

1. Compliance with DPS policies (e.g. ensuring the required number of drills are being conducted, making sure the safety backpack contains the required items and that those items are in good working order.)
2. Improving safety – determining what else can be done.

They believe that the first task has been completed. They are now focusing on improving safety. Mark discussed that he would like to beef up security in terms of building access. They will be looking at a wide spectrum of solutions from encouraging stricter enforcement of the existing policy (doors should be locked except for the start of

the day and the end of the day) to looking into the cost of providing coded access to the school. Mark and Susan both cited examples of where they feel the children's safety has been compromised.

Karin Johnson thanked the committee for getting walkie-talkies for several key personnel to ensure that Karin can have immediate contact with people on the playground.

### **GREEN COMMITTEE**

Rich McClintock reported that DPS has now hired a sustainability coordinator. He is going to set up meeting with him. Rich continues to talk with the US Green Building Council regarding ways to heat / cool our school more effectively and efficiently.

Another subcommittee has been established to deal with the playground. Sarah Christian, an Ebert parent, is working on a landscaping plan for the school grounds with its main intent being to cool the playground.

### **SOS REPORT**

Kirsten Kahn distributed her proposed fundraising worksheet and a rubric to be used to review incoming requests. The purpose of the worksheet is to encourage people to approach the PTO with new fundraising ideas. The purpose of the rubric is to ensure that what we learned from the survey responses is respected. Sue Borgos also handed out a proposed cover sheet to go with the worksheet. There was some discussion and initial feedback was positive. Due to time constraints it was agreed that more comments should be offered by email, after everyone has time to look it over.

### **ELECTIVES**

Sherry Beardshear briefly updated us on the Electives. In particular she mentioned that there are some new electives on Wellness and an elective sponsored by the School Safety Committee.

### **WEB SITE**

Kirsten had some ideas about making more things available electronically and using less paper. However, due to time constraints, we will discuss this at another time.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

### **SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR PTO PRESIDENT AND OTHER CONCERNS FOR THE BOARD**

Sue Borgos indicated that there needed to be a search committee for next year's president. Those present felt that perhaps an eBlast would be a better way to start.

Lori Coughlin indicated some interest in the position. Sue will also send out an eBlast to see if there is more interest out there.

Sue also brought up for discussion items raised in an email by Sherry Beardshear regarding continuity and experience of the PTO Board. After discussion, it was decided that PTO Board positions should be held for two years and be on a rotating schedule to ensure continuity from year to year. In other words, the Treasurer and Secretary should serve alternating 2-year terms. Karen Nichols agreed to serve as Treasurer for another year. To get the alternating year terms started, Stephanie Bakken will not serve as Secretary next year. Thus we will also need to send out an eBlast advertising that position as well.

### **PRESENTATIONS BY AMY DICKSON AND CORI HERBST-LOEHR RE: THE SCOPE OF THEIR DUTIES AND THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING.**

Cori Herbst-Loehr and Amy Dickson attended the meeting to share with the PTO their desires for next year in terms of their respective roles. With the district budget looming and the possibility that it will not contain the funding for their salaries, Karin Johnson, asked them to come and share with the PTO what they do now and what they would like to do in the future. Ms. Johnson prefaced their presentations by stating that it is people, not fancy amenities, which sustain the school's rich curriculum. Gail Axt shared that sentiment and said she would give up library improvements if it meant being able to keep an excellent teacher or paraprofessional at the school.

#### Cori Herbst-Loehr

Cori currently is a paraprofessional who runs the tech lab as well as maintains all of the school's computers. She strives to ensure a seamless integration of technology with the classroom curriculum. In addition to the classes she teaches, she also heads up the yearbook, prepares the parent newsletter, acts as an art facilitator for the kindergarten class, and runs a DSA video cinema portfolio class.

Cori's ideal position for next year would be to become a full time digital arts teacher. She is endorsed to teach art and is currently trying to get her credentials in order so that she can teach full time next year. Because she is not yet licensed in Colorado, she is currently classified as a paraprofessional which not only keeps her salary low but prevents her from getting extra pay for work she currently performs. For example, she serves as Ebert's STR (school tech. rep.) which requires mandatory attendance outside of school hours. Teachers get paid for this. Cori does not.

Cori expressed her desire to stay at the school, if possible. However, she understands there are many competing demands for our limited funds. She does not believe a tech person in the district would come at work as a paraprofessional as they are 1.0 FTE (full-time equivalent.) Cori proposed that if she isn't fully funded by DPS perhaps a

stipend from PTO could make up the difference. She would like to receive \$4,000 above her current salary.

### Amy Dickson

Amy is currently a 1.0 FTE, but only half time at Ebert. Her time is evenly split between our school and Steele Elementary. At Steele, she is primarily a facilitator (which means, she does mostly professional development programs and teacher mentoring.) At Ebert she holds a facilitator position but primarily does reading intervention. In order to better serve Ebert students, Ms. Johnson identified, based on benchmark tests, students who were struggling with reading. Amy created a program where she works individually with these students, as well as with volunteers, whom she trained, who also assist these students. The highest need was found in grades 2, 3, and 4. Currently she is unable to serve grades K, 1, and 5 because she does not have enough time with only a half time schedule here.

Amy would love to work at Ebert full time. She feels she can be more effective not having to travel to two different locations. She also has a student at the school and is invested in the community. If she was hired as a 1.0 FTE, she could teach an elective, do more facilitation including professional development and teacher mentoring, and take over some other things teachers are doing such as SLT (school leadership team), SAL, and SIT. Amy would also like to start a writing center.

She also reported that a new law takes effect next year that makes it mandatory to provide an extra 30 minutes of reading for any student who is reading below grade level. It is a paradigm shift in that they want to keep kids out of special education instead of waiting for them to fail and then providing them with intervention. There will be children in every classroom that the school will be required to serve. If she is here as a 1.0FTE, she would also have the time to serve the entire population of students who would fall into this category.

### Sherry Beardshear

While we were not originally scheduled to discuss Sherry's funding as part of this discussion, she felt that given the topic, this was a good time to chime in. At meetings in January and December, we had been discussing what we should do with regard to the electives coordinator position. It was clearly more work than a normal volunteer position and we have had difficulty finding new facilitators for that program as a result. Sherry felt that she should define what the position truly entails. Sherry said that the hours she puts in is the equivalent of a .25 FTE. She also pointed out that it is different than other volunteer positions because for those few hours on Friday afternoon she is basically the principal of a short school day. She is responsible for everything from making sure kids are where they are supposed to be to handling behavior issues and tending to physical injuries.

Sue Borgos stated that we fully intend to find a way to pay the person who holds that position, but the PTO board wants to do it a way that addresses the long term needs of the school and does not jeopardize the electives program.

## **BUILDING COMMUNITY / RAISING FUNDS – THROUGH FOOD SALES**

Gail Axt attended the meeting because she wanted to share her concern about the increasing number of comments she hears from parents who think that a strong, cohesive community does not exist at Ebert. She said that it saddens her, but she believes it is rectifiable. Her suggestion was to reintroduce food at all school events. Gail stated that having a few minutes before and / or after an event to eat something provides an opportunity to socialize and connect with other parents. She would also like to see the PTO provide food at these events to raise funds. She feels we can't be shy in these economic times about fundraising.

Sherry Beardshear recommended that the PTO ask for someone to serve as the "community-building coordinator" to head up the food sales at school events. A motion was passed to do just that. Cheryl Fleetwood volunteered to get the word out about the new position through the room parents. In the meantime, Cheryl suggested that she ask a room parent to recruit people to work on food for the gala and "For the Love of the Arts."

## **CROW CANYON FUNDRAISING**

Cheryl also reported that the fourth graders will focus their Crow Canyon fundraising efforts on the gem sale in lieu of selling food at "For the Love of the Arts." It is something fourth graders have done in past years and it has generated significant funds, so it seemed to make sense.

## **VOLUNTEER NEEDS**

This needs to be addressed – we ran out of time.

## **SCHOOL BUS ROUTE INFO FOR BACKUP DRIVERS**

There was some discussion had on this matter. Karin Johnson believes that it is now a non-issue, since the driver who had problems will no longer be serving the school. However, we did discuss the possibility of a parent riding the bus one day and mapping out the exact route for each bus. Kim Brummond indicated that she might be interested in doing this. There was no real resolution on this issue at this time.

## **SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AT DROP OFF**

There had been some issues with milk delivery at the time of school dropoff in the morning creating a hazardous situation. This situation had been addressed by Ms. Johnson prior to this meeting, so we believe, at the moment, it is no longer an issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM.