Meeting Minutes

Douglas Elementary PTO

January 18, 2023 Douglas Elementary 6:00pm

**Board Members: Birdie Holley, President – Ingrid Benson, Vice President – Chris Bowman, Treasurer – Raechel Hardin, Secretary – Michaelle Gust, DES Principal – Joelle Sanger (Tom Sanger Proxy) – Jeni Groenewoud**

Meeting called to order by: Birdie Holley, President Attendance: 13

Board Members not present: Jeni Groenewoud

Minutes: Minutes from 11/14/2022 meeting accepted.

**Officer Updates**

**President: Birdie Holley** (birdiewester@gmail.com)

* Volunteer of the Month is Julie Barman for coordinating and executing a very successful Holiday Workshop. Julie is always accountable and makes sure events are organized and fun. Well deserved!
* Birdie will be on vacation and will not be present for the February PTO meeting so Vice President, Ingrid Benson, will run the meeting.
* Happy Snack Crew lead will no longer be leading the group so parents are taking control along with Mary Parker for the time being until we can find a new lead for the next school year.
* Staff appreciation overview – Birdie obtained gift cards from local businesses who donated to the walk-a-thon to give to the staff in December. Each staff member received a $50 gift card. It should be noted that Dunesview gave $1000 worth of gift cards and would not take reimbursement. They are always a big supporter of the schools and Birdie would like to recommend that parents/staff frequent this establishment when at all possible.
* The First Aid Workshop had a lot of interest so another time slot was added. Tony Schippa, local resident and retired paramedic has made a commitment to making our area a heart safe community. Tony will cover First Aid, CPR, and AED use, along with questions you may have. The expense is $5/person and paid by the PTO. This class was made possible from our DES Walk-a-thon. A reminder will be sent out before classes start.
* Reading Month – The lead for this had to bow out so Meghan Lampen and Anna Gregg will be taking over, working with Megan Kelley. Lampen suggested having an illustrator who creates graphic novels come speak to the kids. Lampen will reach out to a contact of hers to see if she can make this happen. Anna suggested that the kids receive something tangible (like a book or t-shirt) during this month. In addition, Megan Kelley will also be having a March reading event sponsored by Back Alley Pizza Joint. When the kids read a certain amount of books during this month they will receive a free pizza!

**Vice President: Ingrid Benson** (ingbenson2@gmail.com)

* No update.

**Treasurer: Chris Bowman**  (cjames.bowman@gmail.com)

* The budget is looking good so far. There was only one line item that went over budget but was evened out by not using the full budget for other line items.
* New categories include: Volunteer of the Month and Parent/Teacher Conference Meals.
* Reimbursements are coming back in a timely manner.
* Parking lot money has been deposited in the amount of $2600.
* Huntington Bank’s downtown location will not be in business next year so the parking lot availability for fundraising is unknown at this time.
* Taxes and audit update: Chris met with an accountant last month and learned that we need to fill out a 990-ez form in May. The audit is from January to December.
* There is a good cash system in place for check writing (dual signature) and deposits.
* A member asked if the money we have is in an earning interest account. Chris stated that as of now it is not but he is looking into putting some reserves into a high yield savings account to apply to future year’s budgets.
* A member also asked if the PTO credit card has cash back options. Chris stated that it does not at this time but it is definitely something to look into in the future.
* A member asked if we needed a budget line item to reimburse the accountant. Chris stated that that will come out of the PTO Admin budget line.
* Move to pass the budget with the increase of Spanish budget.
	+ Motion passed unanimously.

**Secretary: Raechel Hardin** (rhardinfbs@gmail.com

* No update.

**Meeting Information**

* There was no update from the Student Council.
* Holiday Workshop Overview from Julie Barman.
	+ Everything went as planned. The kids loved making their crafts and the teachers loved some extra time to themselves.
* DES Outdoor Experience Initiative overview from Dana Pecina.
	+ Three main areas of focus for Spring 2023 and 2023-2024 school year:
		- Outdoor space between 3rd and 5th grade hallways: “Blue Star Trail”
		- Courtyard adjacent to library: “Trailblazer Courtyard”
		- Outdoor classroom and special education nook
	+ Goal is for all garden/outdoor spaces to:
		- Be sensory-based
		- Be experiential
		- Be heavily student involved, including the planning and creation of the space
		- Be integrated
		- Be play oriented
		- Function as a gathering place
		- Allow easy access to nature
		- Provide decompression and de-escalation
		- Allow curriculum learning opportunities
		- Be fall-winter-spring inspired
		- Be heavily utilized
	+ Spring 2023 emphasis
		- Prioritizing 5th graders seeing their 3rd grad plans come to fruition
		- Phase 1 of our Blue Star Trail and Trailblazer Courtyard completed by May 11/visiting artist
		- Spaces to be used by 4th and 5th for visiting artist with Scotty Jacobs
	+ Current needs:
		- Facilities connection – who is the contact:
		- Schedule ground prep – pull of erosion barrier before February, rototiller, etc.
			* When can we get access?
		- Blue Star Trail: parmesan cheese shakers for seed planting, stumps for seats, pots, sprinkling
		- Trailblazer Courtyard: stone, pavers, lumber for benches
	+ Budget 2022-2023 school year: $6500-$7000
* 3rd – 5th hallway garden: “Blue Star Trail”
	+ 100’x20’
	+ Phase 1 completed by May 11th/visiting artist
	+ Pollinator paradise
	+ Accessible from outside of the building = easier community involvement
	+ Partial seeding, partial plantings
	+ Mulch (possible donation)
	+ Acquire tree stump seating nooks or boulders for seats
	+ Posts throughout for bird feeders/bee hotels and charm
	+ Silver fleece vine
	+ Sweet autumn climatic
	+ Beach grass
	+ Additional considerations/possibilities:
		- Incorporate 3rd to 5th theme, as the space literally bridges the gap between the grade hallways
		- 5th grade garden buddies/mentors to lower grades
		- Meet with teachers whose rooms overlook space to discuss further ideas
		- Wildflower/cut flower area
		- Taller plants on perimeter to screen windows (willow cane, vines)
		- Possible preschool use
	+ Library/Courtyard Garden: “Trailblazer Courtyard”
		- 59’x36’
		- Phase 1 completed by May 11/visiting artist
		- Textural garden
		- Drought tolerant plants
		- Quiet and peaceful transitional space – seen as a continuation of library expectations?
		- De-escalation/Regulation area for behavior management
		- Incorporate mindfulness component
		- Willow can canopy over labyrinth/passage path
		- Sedum ground cover
		- Creeping thyme
		- Mosaics
		- Flagstone
		- Old earth approach laying stone vertically – and fill with sand
		- Additional considerations/possibilities:
			* Neglected plants during summer months
				+ Need to plan to incorporate maintenance into programming
				+ Set up weekly volunteers of will require Scotty to care for $500/summer
	+ Outdoor Classroom
		- In need of (per teacher input):
			* Seating
			* White board
			* Easel
		- Additional considerations/possibilities
			* Rolling beds for planting
			* Potted/hanging plants
			* Outdoor library/little library
			* Garden weaving
			* Bird houses/bee hotels
			* Temporary outdoor art installations
		- Special education nook considerations/possibilities
			* Maintain accessibility
			* Container garden
			* Green/plant wall
			* Heavily sensory inspired
			* Swing or hammocks
	+ Other possibilities
		- Science Bus summer school, after school “garden club”, SCA summer camps, Boys & Girls Club
			* Funding for visiting horticulturists, gardeners, culinary, etc.
			* Arts based + literacy + nature grand opportunities
		- Water features
		- Plant identification/campus tour (i.e. dune grass significance)
		- Student art components
		- Possibility of future phase to do a true community garden on school property
		- Intentional programmatic/curriculum connections
* Member mentioned we may be able to use the industrial arts students or the boy scouts to make benches for seating.
* Was suggested we use $6500 discretionary fund to fund this project.
	+ PTO approved.
* Mentioned that this would be more expensive to get the project up and running but less expensive in the future.
* Also mentioned that people may want to donate directly toward this initiative during the fundraising efforts next year.
* Dana will speak with the science teacher to discuss using possible science funds for outdoor seating area.
* If anyone is interested in getting involved with this project please contact Dana Pecina at danapecina@gmail.com
* Spanish program update from Tyler.
	+ The Spanish program is up and running. There are 6 groups and 5 hours of instruction. Some of the classes are above capacity so they are looking into adding another section to cover those. Due to the increase in hours, the budget also increased. The new budget for the Spanish program is $10,450 for the entire program.
	+ PTO discussed budget increase and stated there was money in the budget from last year that could be used. PTO voted on budget with increased budget for the program and it was passed.
	+ A grant was applied for and the amount of $5000 may be awarded. Will know in March.
	+ A $10 fee will be collected from parents for the classes and this should be paid by check to the DES PTO.
	+ In the future, we will look into setting up a PTO Venmo or Paypal for easier payments.
	+ Below are the final numbers for the program:
		- Kindergarten – 27 (capacity 30)
		- First Grade – 21 (capacity 30)
		- Second Grade – 15 (capacity 15)
		- Third Grade – 13 (capacity 15)
		- Fourth Grade – 22 (capacity 15)
		- Fifth Grade – 21 (capacity 15)
		- Total - 119
* Parent directory update from Rebecca.
	+ Rebecca spoke to Mrs. Gust and Stephanie Allen to figure out a good system for the directory. A Google form will be sent out to parents who can opt in (or out) and give permission for their contact information to be included in the directory. Whoever chooses to have their information included will be on a form that is sent out to every DES family. In the fall, the option to opt in or out of this will be included on Final Forms.
* Principal update from Michaelle.
	+ She thanked those who continue to bring in snacks and food for the staff.
	+ Swimming lessons are going great, the second graders started their lessons this week.
	+ No school on the 27th. Teachers will be working on PBIS plans during this day.
	+ Report cards will be coming home at the end of the month.
	+ Kindergarten roundup will be on February 23rd from 6:00-7:00 pm.
* Boys and Girls Club.
	+ No update.
* Teacher update from Nicole.
	+ She thanked everyone who brought in snacks and soups. She stated it makes them feel loved and appreciated. No other updates
* Parent/Teacher update from Birdie.
	+ Conferences will be February 28th – March 2nd. It seems as though parents like the option to do in-person or Zoom meetings so both options will be included. It was stated that parents can also sign up to talk with the specials teachers as well when they are signing up for conference time slots.
	+ There will not be a book fair during these conferences. The fall book fair will be happening. More volunteers are needed for the book fair.
	+ Teacher meals will be headed by John Von Tolley and Meagan Lampen. They will send out a signup genius for any help they may need.
* Healthy meals/snacks for teachers update from Anna.
	+ Not as many volunteers this time around. She is going to update the signup genius to make it easier for people to volunteer. It was suggested that people could use Instacart to deliver to the school if they didn’t have time to drop something off.
* School dance update from Karen and Joelle.
	+ The plan for the dance is to separate upper and lower elementary kids into groups. One group will attend the dance at the beginning while the other group plays in the gym. They will then swap half way through.
	+ The dance will take place on March 25th from 5:00-8:00pm.
	+ It is a family dance and students can bring any loved one they would like. There will be balloons, music, photo booth and snacks.
	+ In the future, the 5th graders may have a say in the theme.
* Member Comments:
	+ Karen inquired about teacher appreciation in May and where the funds come from for that. The funds come from the budget line. Staff appreciation comes from parking lot income. Chris will update the budget to correctly reflect that.
	+ Rebecca asked if the school had ever considered having “room parents”. Michaelle said this may have been done several years ago and she will talk to the teachers to see if there is any interest in doing this again.

Meeting Adjourned At: 7:20 pm

Minutes Compiled By: Raechel Hardin, Secretary