Meeting Minutes

Douglas Elementary PTO

May 8, 2023 Douglas Elementary 3:30pm

**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: 10

Board Members not present: Jeni Groenewoud, Tom Sanger, Joelle, Sanger

Minutes: Minutes from 4/17/2023 meeting accepted via email.

**Officer Updates**

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

* Despite three open board positions, no outside applications were received. Thus, Ingrid Benson will retain her role as Vice President and Chris Bowman will continue as Treasurer. Raechel Hardin, currently serving as Secretary, will assume the role of Treasurer Assistant as well in the upcoming year.
* Volunteers of the month are Karen Kerridge and Ashley Sieblink for their work on Teacher Appreciation Week.

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

* Walkathon Update – Next year’s Walkathon will feature a theme to generate more enthusiasm. Moreover, the incentives will be slightly modified, and classrooms that surpass their donation targets will be eligible for rewards. With numerous parents volunteering, the event seems to be poised for success.

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

* In April, expenses were minimal. Our total budget for the year was $103,744 while our fundraising income in 2022-2023 totaled $74, 722. Our carryover income from 2021-2022 was $87, 748. In the upcoming year we will have less carryover funds so it is crucial to adhere to our yearly budget to anticipated income. School clubs and the SCA will invoice us at year-end, and although the visiting author exceeded the budget, we can utilize funds from other areas to compensate. Fortunately, the supply closet budget line has a surplus, so we can use that to address the shortfall. Overall, the budget is in good shape.

**Meeting Information**

* **Principal Update (Michaelle Gust):** Michaelle has expressed interest in organizing a last day of school celebration and is seeking input on potential themes. In the past, we have held activities such as kickball, luaus, and beach parties. She suggested a water theme this year. If you are interested in helping with this event, please email Michaelle at [mgust@saugatuckps.com](mailto:mgust@saugatuckps.com). The budget for this event is approximately $300, which can be covered by the admin expenses budget line. This week, we have visiting artist and the art show on Thursday the 11th from 5:00-6:30 pm, which is an open house event. The spring TK-2nd grade concert is scheduled for May 16th at 6:00 pm at the High School. High School graduation is on May 25th at 6:00 pm. There will be a senior walk at DES on this day at 10:00 am where the seniors will walk the halls and as they pass by each classroom our students will cheer them on and congratulate them. On June 1st and 2nd, we have field days scheduled. The lower elementary will have their field day on June 1st at 12:30 pm and the upper elementary will have their day on June 2nd at 12:30 pm. Snacks are not needed since the event takes place directly after lunch. On May 31st  in the morning, the 5th graders will visit the middle school to meet their upcoming teachers and to visit their classroom. The 5th grade graduation is on June 7th at 6:00 pm on the High School field and has a budget of $250. On June 8th, the 5th graders will go to Michigan Adventure, which is paid by the PTO. They are allowed to bring extra money for anything they would like to purchase at the park. Finally, June 9th is the last day of school, and it is a half-day.
* **Teacher Update (Mrs. Hale):** Teacher Appreciation Week was fantastic, and the decorations and daily treats were well-received. Teachers are requesting board games that can be used for indoor recess. The staff has inquired if they could use the playground budget to purchase new games and store them in a storage area, allowing all grades to use them at different times. The PTO has agreed to this proposal, and they encourage parents to donate games as well. It was suggested that we incorporate the donation of books and board games into screen-free week as well as sending out in the newsletter to encourage parents to donate any board games they don’t have a need for. It was suggested that the PTO make an Amazon wish list but we are hesitant to ask for additional donations beyond the Walkathon. Instead, teachers are encouraged to make their own Amazon Wishlist if they desire.
* **Kid’s Big Idea Update (Student Counsel):** The student counsel gathered ideas from the student body, and after narrowing them down to 10 feasible ideas, they presented 2 ideas to the PTO. The first idea was to purchase 6 Oculus VR headsets for $350 each, which could be used for educational purposes. Mrs. Bollinger would be responsible for keeping them updated. It was suggested that they could be used as a station in each classroom for students to study certain subjects. Concerns were raised regarding the technology becoming obsolete and the lack of parental controls. The second idea was for a book vending machine which costs between $1000-$2500. The machine would be used as a PBIS reward and positive reinforcement for students. Tokens or cards would be used to purchase a book from the machine. Scholastic dollars could also be used to save money in the PTO budget when replacing books. It was decided that we would move forward with the book vending machine for now and if the school raises enough money during the Walkathon, they may consider purchasing Oculus VR headsets for each classroom. It was also suggested that each classroom who exceeds their classroom target donations for the Walkathon by a certain amount would receive an Oculus VR headset as an incentive to raise more money.
* **Color Run Update (Kendra Briggs & Sara Nelson):** This year’s color run and screen-free week event was a tremendous success. The location and time was changed and proved to be more effective than in previous years. The Saugatuck-Douglas Library was an excellent partner for this week. It was suggested that the indoor game day be scheduled to coincide with this week and to also encourage kids to attend sporting events during this week for activities to keep them off screens. Due to an abundance of book donations, the budget may be lower next year since there will be no need to purchase books. The leftover books were donated to the library. To better organize this event and to log volunteer hours, it was suggested that a shared drive be created. It was also suggested that a PTO calendar be created ahead of time to avoid last-minute preparations for next year. The current leads will assist next year’s leads in the planning process.
* **Spanish Program Update (Tyler Voorhees):** The Spanish program has been thriving with a 95% attendance rate, and the students are thoroughly enjoying it. The teacher is highly capable, energetic, and available for next year. Next year, the program will consist of two 16-week sessions, and parents can choose to enroll their children in either or both sessions. A survey will be sent out to determine interest in the program for next year and potential scheduling conflicts. It was suggested that parents pay $50/child per session to cover the cost of the program to reduce the PTO’s financial load, with scholarship funds available for those who need them. It was also suggested that an app such as Duolingo be used in the classroom rather than adding it to the curriculum and hiring a Spanish teacher. The budget planning takes place during the summer, but approval is not granted until after the Walkathon. Therefore, a decision regarding the PTO’s financial contribution to the program will be made after the Walkathon.
* **Outdoor Committee Update (Dana Pecina):** The deadline for preparing the garden for visiting author week and the art show is Wednesday May 11th. As the garden is part of the art show, we need additional volunteers to ensure that it is ready by this time. Time slots for volunteering will be made available.
* **Parent Directory Update (Rebecca Parrish):** A simple spreadsheet directory will be ready to go by summer and will be listed by grade. A more comprehensive directory will be added next year and will be available on Final Forms for those who opt in and will be broken down by teacher.
* **Member Comments:** None

Meeting Adjourned At: 5:05 pm

Minutes Compiled By: Raechel Hardin, Secretary