Meeting Minutes

Douglas Elementary PTO

November 14, 2022 Douglas Elementary 6:30pm

**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: 13

Board Members not present: Jeni Groenewoud, Chris Bowman

Minutes: Minutes from 10/19/2022 meeting accepted via email.

**Officer Updates**

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

* The workshop on How To Talk To Your Kids About Their Bodies, Puberty, and Sex was cancelled last month due to one of the physicians having Covid. This has been rescheduled for November 19 from 5:00 – 7:00 pm. It will be held at Isabel’s and refreshments/appetizers will be offered. Due to the date change, the attendance is somewhat lower than before.
* The First Aid Workshop will be planned for March 2023. There will be two classes offered during the school day and two classes offered in the evening. This will be free to parents. More information to follow.
* It was proposed that long, warm, winter jackets with the Saugatuck logo be given to teachers this year for teacher appreciation. This was thought to be a good idea since the cold weather has arrived and most teachers are outside for long periods of time at recess and pick up/drop off. Gift cards have been given in the past. Teachers will be asked which they prefer and gifts will be given before Christmas. The money used for teacher appreciation is from the parking lot shifts over the summer.
* Volunteer of the Month: Anna Gregg. Anna has helped with Welcome Night, Bye Bye Breakfast, Walkathon prizes, and the Healthy Snack Program for teachers.

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

* Chris was not in attendance. The working budget is attached to these minutes.

**Meeting Information**

* The student council was not ready with a presentation on their budget.
* Dana Pecina met with Whitney and Scotty from the SCA to help envision the DES garden space. Goals for the courtyard would be sensory based, play oriented, observational, and experiential. There would be edible components, a passageway, a place for relaxation/de-escalation, and classrooms would be able to incorporate the garden into their lessons. Students would be involved in the entire process, from designing to creating the space.
  + Plants would be native to Michigan and need to be able to survive during the summer when students are on break. Plants/flowers would fill most of the space so there will be little need for weeding.
  + Students will be able to learn how to garden, grow food, and make food with what they have grown.
  + The garden would be incorporated into the curriculum in science, art, and literacy.
  + After school garden clubs are a possibility.
  + The garden will instill pride, confidence building in students.
  + Students will be able to add personal touches such as totem poles, murals, or painted rocks.
  + Also suggested using the space between the 3rd and 5th grades as a wild flower garden.
  + Timeline Sample:
    - Winter 2022: lay down paper and mulch (or rototill in spring)
    - End of April 2023: planting to occur during school time
    - May 2023: “Visiting Artist Program” whimsy and workshops
    - Summer 2023: Summer camps
    - Fall 2023: Bulb planting, fall clean up, seed harvesting
    - Winter: Bird seed, bird houses, bird watching
  + Budget:
    - Basics (2022-2023): $6650
      * Labor $850
      * Plants, soil, mulch $2600
      * Coordination and consultation $2000
      * Tools, maintenance, and planting $1200
    - Forward Planning: $2000/$3000 yearly
    - A LA CART:
      * Guided gardening: $100/hr
      * Consultation from Scotty: $100/hr
      * Outreach Programming from SCA: $2000 for school year
        + Artists, horticulturists, visiting professionals, gardeners, culinary, summer camps, materials
  + PTO on board with this program. Details need to be worked out with Michaelle for approval.
* Tyler and Ashley Voorhees have expressed interest in having a Spanish program at DES. A survey was sent out to parents to gauge interest in the program and the results were as follows:
  + Very Likely to utilize the program: 91
  + Somewhat Likely: 15
  + On The Fence: 10
  + Somewhat Unlikely: 1
  + Very Unlikely: 6
    - The numbers were much higher than anticipated. Tyler and Ashley suggested putting the program into the curriculum instead of just an after school club. This would have to be discussed further at a future time.
    - They are looking to start the club in January 2023 and are working on the logistics of how to include all students that were interested in the program.
    - Timing/scheduling is the biggest obstacle at this point.
    - Suggestions were to start with the younger (TK-1st grade) kids and work to add more kids as time goes on.
    - Students waiting for their class could utilize the Boys and Girls Club.
    - Ed Connect is a company out of Grand Rapids who is assisting with this program. Amanda from Ed Connect would be able to help with adding Spanish to the curriculum in the future if necessary.
    - It was decided to start with a pilot program to see the success and move on from there.
  + Principal Update from Michaelle Gust.
    - Parent/Teacher Conferences are November 15th, 16th, and 17th. Zoom meetings are taking place on Thursday the 17th. Zoom meetings may continue to happen since a lot of parents like that option.
      * A survey will be coming out during conferences regarding behavior techniques.
    - Thanksgiving Break is November 23rd – 25th.
    - Third grade through fifth grade will have a Holiday Concert on December 13th at 6:30 at DES.
    - There will be an all school sing-a-long on December 16th that parents are allowed to attend. We may need volunteers during the sing-a-long. More information to follow.
    - The younger kids will have a music concert in the spring.
    - Holiday Break is from December 19th – January 2nd.
* Raechel Hardin is in charge of holiday lights. There were some snags in the planning, such as no outlets on the outside of the school, but lights will go up on November 16th.
* Teacher update: Nicole Robb stated that Mrs. Kerber was hoping to get a weather-proof whiteboard put up outside near the science center. This would allow teachers to teach their lessons there and could be used by everyone.
  + It was decided this could come out of the science budget.
* It was also stated that the pre-school does not received funds from the PTO and there was interest in adding them to the budget. This has been discussed in the past and since the pre-school is a private entity and does not fundraise for the walk-a-thon, they are not included in the budget.
  + It was suggested that the teachers make an Amazon Wishlist so parents can help out with expenses.
* Healthy Snack for Teachers update. Anna Gregg heads this committee and she stated via email that the lunches have changed from Friday to Monday to accommodate teachers. The program has many volunteers and is going well. It was suggested to add more variety to the list of healthy foods to be brought in.
* The Holiday Workshop update from Julie Barman stated that most of the volunteer spots have been filled. We still need some volunteers for Mrs. Goering and the make-up day.
* John Tolley is in charge of providing and cooking the parent/teacher conference meals. The menu consists of chili for Tuesday and pulled pork for Wednesday. He will set up in the teacher’s lounge around 2:00. There will also be some vegetarian options.
  + Grab and go snacks and drinks will also be provided by volunteers.
* There will be no December PTO meeting.

Meeting Adjourned At: 7:53 pm

Minutes Compiled By: Raechel Hardin, Secretary