



COUNCIL OF DARIEN SCHOOL PARENTS MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 6, 2016 REGULAR MEETING

Shelly Skoglund opened the meeting at 9:32 am.

Kristen Barnard made a motion to approve the May 5, 2016 CDSP Meeting Minutes. Beth Lane seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

Changes to the 2016-17 CDSP Slate were announced. Lori Olson made a motion to approve the revised slate. Theresa Vogt seconded the motion, and the revised slate was approved (unanimously with no abstentions).

Julia Mengwall provided a brief CDSP Co-Chair update. Communication, facilities, and infrastructure are some of the topics that CDSP will focus on throughout the school year.

The CDSP is thankful to Rebecca Ashcraft for creating the new CDSP website.

COMMUNITY CHAIR UPDATE

Kristen Barnard reminded everyone of the Kaitlin Roig-DeBellis presentation, which is at the Darien Library tonight.

SPED CHAIR UPDATE

Catherine Piorkowski provided a brief update regarding the first SPED Subcommittee meeting and her follow-up meeting with the district administration. Two important points from these meetings are:

1. Parents should be guided to the Chain of Command procedures in order to escalate an issue; providing a link to the Chain of Command document on school websites is very helpful.
2. The subcommittee discussed the importance of having a dialogue with children about other people with differences. Are there any thoughts about how/if this has been supported by PTOs in the past and how it could be supported by PTOs in the future. Please direct any ideas or thoughts to Catherine.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PRESENTATION

Molly Myers, Membership Chair of the League of Women Voters of Darien (a non-partisan political organization), provided an overview of the organization and its activities, including Candidates Debates, Town Officials Breakfast, registering DHS seniors to vote, and other programming.



Molly also forwarded information from Clara Sartori (Co-President of LWV) regarding LWV issues related to our schools (i.e. Excess Cost Grants).

The LWV prints and distributes the following:

- Nonpartisan Voters Guide, including all local and state candidates
- Government Guide - to inform citizens about who represents them
- Guide to the RTM - to encourage citizen participation and knowledge.
- Know Your Town - a reference guide of town government, town services, and community and civic organizations.
- Publications at the Library and Town Hall about state government and state issues.

ONLINE DIRECTORY UPDATE

Suzanne Domenici, Bridget DeRiso, and Elena Whidden described Ox Ridge's new online directory and answered questions. Overall the process went very smoothly, but some parents still need to verify the accuracy of their contact information in the online directory with the User ID and password that were sent to them.

Contact information in the online directory will be fluid throughout the year, but changes must be made to both the online directory and Aspen (changing one will not automatically update the other).

FINANCIAL GUIDELINES UPDATE

CDSP is proposing a plan to create workgroups to research regulatory requirements and evaluate best practices in order simplify PTO Co-Chair and Treasurer transitions and to assure adequate insurance protection.

Work groups will consist of PTO Treasurers and Co-Chairs (as desired) who will meet monthly to complete the workplan. The findings will be documented in a Financial Guideline Manual for use by PTO Co-Chairs and Treasurers.

Next steps: CDSP Co-Chairs will send PTO Co-Chairs an email requesting names of those participating from each school, and a monthly meeting schedule will be established.

REISS FUND UPDATE

Reiss Fund Co-Chairs, Susan Vogel and Carolyn Langolier, provided a brief history of the Reiss Fund and explained its mission.

The Reiss Fund Board of Directors has proposed an annual Teacher Conference to allow more teachers to benefit from professional development, which is supplemental to the professional development provided by the district to all teachers.

The Reiss Fund Co-Chairs answered questions, and Dr. Brenner and Dr. Da Silva explained differences between the Reiss Fund's professional development opportunities and PD provided by the district.

The Reiss Fund is requesting financial support (a one-time contribution \$5000 from each school to launch the program) as well as some parent volunteers to help coordinate the Teacher Conference.

Next steps: Please submit further questions to Shelly and Julia (to be forwarded to the Reiss Fund Co-Chairs). Discussion of the Reiss Fund's initiative and PTO involvement will continue.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES DISCUSSION

Dr. Brenner described some of the dated features of our schools' libraries and shared his vision for reconfiguring and modernizing existing spaces to be more inviting and useful.

He answered questions and requested that parents discuss possible changes to the libraries and contribute ideas as well.

Next Steps:

- Further discussion regarding differences in the amount of work required in the schools' libraries along with possible PTO contributions
- Further questions to Shelly and Julia (to forward and/or discuss with Dr. Brenner)
- Possible follow-up discussion with Dr. Brenner and Dr. DaSilva during the next CDSP meeting

BACK TO SCHOOL COMMUNICATION DISCUSSION

Maija Judelson and Julie Best (Tokeneke PTO Co-Chairs) shared issues regarding back-to-school communication mechanisms and compared their experiences with those of other elementary school PTO Co-Chairs.



Obtaining information for class lists was very problematic at Tokeneke School, as many parents did not opt in to share information on Aspen.

Important findings from the Back-to-School Communication discussion:

- Many parents (from all schools) need to update their information on Aspen.
- Ox Ridge did not have many issues, as access to information problems were largely solved during the process of creating an online directory.

ROLE OF CDSP REP DISCUSSION

Millyn Gaaserud (CDSP Budget Chair) and Beth Lane (CDSP Communications Chair) led a discussion explaining the redefined role of CDSP Representatives, who will focus largely on issues at the district level as counterparts to PTO Co-Chairs, who must focus primarily on issues within their individual schools.

To spend volunteer time more productively and to determine which BoE meetings to attend, CDSP Reps will focus on specific topics, including:

- Facilities (need 1 CDSP rep from each school for this large topic)
- Athletics (including fundraising, fields)
- Technology
- Curriculum (including course changes, class size, transitions to 6th and 9th grades)
- SPED/ELP (Catherine Piorkowski/SPED Reps, Stacey Tie/ELP Reps)

Next Steps: Millyn and Beth will send an email to CDSP Reps requesting sign-ups for topics.

Meeting adjourned at 11:23.

Respectfully submitted by Tiffany O'Connor, CDSP Secretary.