



COUNCIL OF DARIEN SCHOOL PARENTS MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 1, 2016 REGULAR MEETING

Julia Mengwall opened the meeting at 9:31 am.

Kristen Barnard made a motion to approve the November 3, 2016 CDSP Meeting Minutes. Antionette Cowles seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

CDSP CO-CHAIR UPDATE

Shelly and Julia provided a brief update on the following:

- Field Trip and Enrichment Contracts - contact Susie da Silva and/or CDSP Co-Chairs if having difficulties with approval process
- Financial Guidelines - please read the document and note the Conference Programs addition (to begin next year)
- Thriving Youth Campaign - new launch date in January; CDSP Co-Chairs will forward new images and updated press release to all CDSP members before January meeting
- Library Project - hoping for volunteers who will be involved this year and next year

REISS FUND'S PROPOSED TEACHER CONFERENCE UPDATE

Susan Vogel (Reiss Fund Co-Chair) thanked the five PTOs that have already agreed to support the Reiss Fund Annual Teacher Conference, and offered to attend any PTO Executive Board meetings to discuss the conference and answer questions.

The Reiss Fund's community-wide fundraising will begin in mid-January; Susan requested promotion of the fundraising in PTO newsletters/blasts.

Susan provided an update regarding the planning, promotion and logistics of the Teacher Conference, as well as a description of Logistics Team responsibilities (two volunteers from each school requested for Logistics Team)

PTO INCORPORATION DISCUSSION

Lillian Raben (Hindley CDSP Rep) explained the benefits of PTO incorporation, which would provide additional protection to PTO officers and members, especially to PTO Executive Board members.

Lillian and the CDSP Co-Chairs have researched the legal costs, which seem reasonable, and additional accounting costs, which are minimal.

Lillian answered questions regarding the formalities of being incorporated (i.e. by-law changes), the impact on PTOs' insurance rates, and exposure to personal liability.

BUDGET PROCESS UPDATE

Millyn Gaaserud provided the following budget process key dates:

Jan 5 (7:30 pm): BoE meeting - budget books distributed and budget formally presented

Jan 7 (8:30 am): Special BoE meeting - detailed review of budget by cost center

Jan 19 (9:30 am) CDSP meeting - discussion of speech themes and speech writing begins

Jan 24 (7:30 pm) BoE meeting - discussion of budget modifications under consideration

Jan 31 (7:00 pm) BOE Public Hearing - speeches delivered

Feb 14 (7:30 pm) Board of Education meeting - budget approved

March 14 (7:30 pm) Board of Finance Public Hearing

Millyn briefly described three of Dr. Brenner's top-priority budget initiatives, which include:

1. Technology initiative - Chromebooks for 8th graders, ipads for DHS students (rollout information coming soon)
2. Changes to the current teacher supervision model
3. Creation of an alternative high school - same curriculum but different teaching methods (note: a new building is *not* part of the plan)

Millyn asked for volunteers to be involved with the alternative high school initiative. Kristen Barnard will help, and other volunteers are welcome.



Council of Darien School Parents P.O. Box 2643, Darien, CT 06820

Jack Davis (RTM Finance & Budget Committee Chairman) provided additional information regarding the school and town budgets from the perspective of the RTM's Finance & Budget Committee.

TREASURER UPDATE

Amy Zerbe explained the increase in dues from \$480 to \$530 per school PTO (due to website posting fee and accounting Quickbooks). Beth Lane made a motion to approve the increase, Theresa Vogt seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

PTO WEBSITE PRIVACY AND SECURITY DISCUSSION

Leila Buckjune (Hindley PTO Co-Chair) described a hacking incident involving the emails of Hindley Executive Board officers. Email addresses of the PTO slate were removed from the website.

Beth Lane (CDSP Communications Chair) made two recommendations:

1. Do not include contact information on PTO websites or in school newsletters; it can be found in the directory.
2. Password protect the PTO websites. Do not disclose passwords in school newsletters.

Amy Zerbe (CDSP Treasurer) asked PTO Co-Chairs to instruct PTO Treasurers to create complex PayPal passwords to increase protection.

NOMINATING UPDATE

Suzanne Domenici asked CDSP members to let her know if interested in any CDSP Executive Board positions for the 2017-18 school year. Recommendations are welcome as well.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTO CO-SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Tokeneke PTO is interested in showing the movie Screenagers (which was well-attended at MPA meeting last month). Other PTOs welcome to co-sponsor. The license fee for the movie is \$650.

SOCIAL MEDIA PROPOSAL

Catherine Piorkowski's sister owns and runs a marketing firm and has offered free online training throughout the month of January to:

1. Teach set up of a PTO Facebook page
2. Provide strategies to increase parent engagement and other beneficial activities

The training forum will be a private Facebook group, and will be open to any Darien Public School Parent/PTO member, as well as the administration.



NEW BUSINESS

Brief discussion regarding PTO officers' lack of access to school copy machines and possible solutions, such as a PTO card allowing a limited number of copies.

Note: there is no limit to the number of copies made at the Copy Center.

Meeting adjourned at 10:43.

Respectfully submitted by Tiffany O'Connor, CDSP Secretary.