



COUNCIL OF DARIEN SCHOOL PARENTS MINUTES OF THE MAY 5, 2016 REGULAR MEETING

Shelly Skoglund opened the meeting at 9:30 am.

Tara Wurm made a motion to approve the April 7, 2016 CDSP Meeting Minutes. Ryann Pegler seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

RFP STATUS UPDATE

The district has developed the RFP for before and after school programming. The RFP has been published and distributed to current vendors, and is expected to be completed in two weeks.

SCHOOL DIRECTORY UPDATE

Dr. Da Silva (Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction) will be removing unnecessary information from 2016-17 school directories. PTO Co-Chairs are to let Shelly and Jill know which portions should continue to be included, and they will forward that information to Dr. Da Silva. Other possible school directory changes include:

- Ox Ridge - researching the possibility of an online vendor. Concerns about access to personal information on the school website are being discussed.
- Darien High School - considering adding cell phone numbers to the directory. DHS directory sales were down this year.
- Tokeneke - considering pre-selling directories before placing the order.

PROPOSED 2016-2017 CDSP BUDGET

CDSP Treasurer, Jennifer Shea, reviewed the proposed CDSP budget for 2016-17 and offered to answer any questions. With no questions, Kristen Barnard made a motion to approve the budget, and Wendy Ward seconded the motion. The budget was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

PROPOSED 2016-2017 DONATIONS

CDSP Community Chair, Ryann Pegler, provided a detailed handout and reviewed the donations proposed for 2016-17, which are the same as last year and include:

- Darien Environmental Group (DEG) - elementary schools only
- Darien Foundation
- Reiss Fund
- Parent Awareness
- Music for Youth

Jennifer Shea made a motion to approve the proposed donations, and Karen Wilber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

ENDORSEMENT POLICY DISCUSSION AND VOTE

Jennifer Shea explained the Endorsement Guidelines. Tara Ochman (Ox Ridge PTO Co-Chair) suggested amending the wording by changing “political” to “public.” Amy Zerbe moved to approve the amended Endorsement Policy, and Ryann Pegler seconded the motion. The amended Endorsement Policy was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

DONATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT POLICY DISCUSSION AND VOTE

Jennifer reviewed the purpose and requirements of Donation Acknowledgement Letters, and clarified the eligible deductions for “quid pro quo” contributions. Karen Wilber made a motion to approve the Donation Acknowledgement Policy, and Catherine Piorkowski seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

RECORDS RETENTION POLICY DISCUSSION AND VOTE

Jennifer reviewed the importance of records retention and the required period of retention for various documents. Ryann Pegler made a motion to approve the Records Retention Policy, Cathy Butcher seconded the motion, and the Records Retention Policy was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

BUDGET UPDATE

CDSP Budget Chair, Cathy Butcher, provided a budget update, which included the approval of the BoF’s recommended budget by the Education Committee and the Finance and Budget Committee of the RTM. The full RTM will vote on Monday, May 9th.

Jack Davis (RTM Finance and Budget Committee Chair) added a few informational points:

- The RTM is allowed to cut, but not add revenue
- The Finance and Budget Committee will meet immediately before the full RTM meeting on Monday, May 9th

Superintendent, Dr. Brenner, provided a recent update of the state’s potential ECS cuts. Dr. Brenner also explained a few important differences between Educational Costs and Excess Costs.

Michael Harman (Board of Education Chairperson) explained how Excess Costs directly affect the school district's budget.

REISS FUND UPDATE

Susan Vogel (DHS PTO Co-Chair) provided a brief history of the Reiss Fund and explained that the Reiss Fund Board of Directors is revisiting how to best support teachers and contribute to professional development.

A summer institute of learning is being considered, which would allow more teachers to benefit, and the Reiss Fund Board hopes for PTO support.

Dr. Brenner and Dr. Da Silva clarified that the professional development provided by the Reiss Fund would be above and beyond the professional development provided by the district to all teachers.

Next steps: further thought and discussion regarding the potential role of PTOs, particularly regarding purpose, impact and effectiveness of PTO involvement with the Reiss Fund.

RATIONALE FOR DEVELOPING CDSP FINANCIAL/TAX GUIDELINES

Jill and Shelly presented a "look back and forward" to reflect on the CDSP goals, beginning with a brief history of CDSP, which was formed as an umbrella organization over the 7 individual PTOs.

CDSP/PTOs have to overcome challenges, such as:

- Years of oral history and inefficient knowledge transition/capture
- Growth in scope and of size of PTOs
- Increasing turnover due to shorter terms of PTO chairs
- Loss of institutional history

Some concerns that have resulted from these challenges are:

- Risks to our 501(c).3 status
- Inconsistent understanding of and adherence to district and CDSP policies
- Difficulty recruiting volunteers to jobs which are perceived as difficult or cumbersome
- Variation of practice between schools not driven by conscious choice for differentiation (e.g. field trip payments)
- Risk to CDSP and PTOs due to inadequate financial guidelines
- Potential for financial loss due to error or fraud
- Loss of faith in our organizations' financial stewardship

So far, the CDSP and PTOs have searched for and documented much historical knowledge.

Additionally, communication between the CDSP and PTOs has been redefined, enabling the CDSP to be more responsive to ideas and issues.

The CDSP will continue to improve by working collaboratively to determine best practices among our PTOs and efficiently managing resources, as well as:

- Regularly reviewing the mission, values and purpose of all of our organizations
- Assessing our current programming/scope/structure, asking:
 - a. Are we doing the right work for the right reasons?
 - b. Are we applying our resources to our most high priority focus areas?
 - c. Are we seeing results from our work?
 - d. What could we do better?

In the near future, we will coordinate:

- Working sessions with PTO Treasurers and Co-Chairs to train all officers on current CDSP and District policies and to identify best practices
- Initial Work Sessions in May for outgoing and incoming PTO Chairs and Treasurers

Throughout the next school year, the CDSP will review proposed guidelines at meetings.

The CDSP will also provide annual training for all incoming PTO Treasurers in the spring, as well as an annual review for PTO Chairs in the spring and a refresher in the fall.

Jill and Shelly thanked all of the CDSP members for their hard work and commitment this year, and will contact PTO Co-Chairs to coordinate dates for the meetings listed above.

FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Catherine Piorkowski (CDSP Special Education Chair) has provided a Special Education Representative job description to PTO Co-Chairs. If anyone has questions or did not receive the job description, please contact Catherine.

A Board of Education Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, Friday, May 6th at 9:00 am.

Plants were given to Jill and Shelly by CDSP as a thank you for their hard work and excellent leadership.

Meeting adjourned at 10:58.

Respectfully submitted by Tiffany O'Connor, CDSP Secretary.