

**COUNCIL OF DARIEN SCHOOL PARENTS  
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 5, 2018 GENERAL MEETING**

Beth Lane opened the meeting at 9:32 am.

Shelly Skoglund moved to approve the March CDSP General Meeting Minutes. Julie Best seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously with no abstentions.

**REISS FUND UPDATE**

Reiss Fund Co-Chairs, Susan Vogel and Carolyn Langelier, thanked CDSP for the PTOs' generous monetary contributions and volunteers for last year's conference.

Susan provided a recap of the conference, along with positive feedback from teachers.

Susan and Carolyn explained that they are currently searching for their replacements on the Reiss Fund Board and described how rewarding the experience has been for them.

Susan and Carolyn shared three requests for CDSP:

1. Help in finding new volunteers to lead the Reiss Fund
2. Help with the Reiss Fund fundraising appeal, specifically by including two blasts in school wires (Reiss Fund Co-Chairs will provide the content)
3. An annual contribution of \$250 per PTO

Reiss Fund future plans include fall 2018 and spring 2019 events, and Reiss Co-Chairs are pursuing a speaker who will focus on social and emotional health.

Carolyn and Susan answered CDSP members' questions and further explained the roles of the teacher committee and the logistics team.

**DARIEN ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP (DEG)**

DEG Co-Chairs, Paola Sordoni and Laura Pesce-Gray, introduced themselves, reviewed DEG's 2017-18 programs, and presented detailed plans (by elementary school grade) for DEG's proposed 2018-19 programming.

The DEG will focus on one theme (reducing the use of plastic) in the programming for all elementary school grades in 2018-19.

The DEG requested an increase in funding from the PTOs, totaling \$3,700 (\$740 per elementary school), for more hands-on activities and supplies.

Fundraising specifics and potential curricular issues were discussed, as the monetary request was increased significantly from previous years, and CDSP members questioned whether in-classroom activities would be permitted by the administration in 2018-19.

CDSP members encouraged the DEG Chairs to research the DEG organization's means of fundraising in prior years, and discussed the possibility of working with CDSP through enrichment activities.

Next steps: conversations with PTO Enrichment Chairs and with Susie Da Silva (to clarify in-classroom restrictions)

### **DARIEN HUMAN SERVICES**

The Darien Human Services has inquired whether other school PTOs are interested in providing a donation opportunity similar to the Tokeneke PTO's backpack drive.

PTO Chairs expressed interest in adding a direct-donation option to the online school supplies purchase form, and requested the name of the school supplies company that Tokeneke used, which was School Supplies to Please.

Julie Best (Community Outreach Chair) will discuss plans further with the Darien Human Services director at the next Human Services Planning Council (HSPC) meeting.

### **OX RIDGE / DOMUS**

Ox Ridge PTO Chairs, Elizabeth Hole and Cecilia Matulo, shared their experience in collaborating with Domus, a non-profit organization for at-risk youth, which organized enrichment activities that Ox Ridge and KT Murphy 4th-graders participated in together.

### **WORKING PARENT ENGAGEMENT**

Royle PTO Chairs updated CDSP regarding the continuing success of its working parent group. The PTO Chairs will provide the working parents with descriptions of PTO positions that fit well with work schedules. The PTO is reviewing the effectiveness of the PTO structure as well.

### **SEL UPDATE**

Wendy Ward read an update from Susie Da Silva regarding rigor and social/emotional health in the curriculum.

### **BUDGET UPDATE**

Budget Chair, Shelly Skoglund, informed CDSP that the BoF will vote on the proposed budget on Monday, April 16 (the Monday after spring break).

### **TREASURER UPDATE**



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

Amy Zerbe provided a CDSP budget update, which includes an increase from \$535 to \$634 because of increasing accounting costs.

### **BOE PUBLIC HEARING FOR OX RIDGE SCHOOL**

Ox Ridge PTO Chairs and CDSP Reps reviewed the three renovation/replacement options for Ox Ridge being considered by the BoE

The district administration is recommending option #3, in which the existing building would be replaced except for the 1996 addition, which would be renovated for ELP use. All portables would be removed, ELP would be consolidated into one space, and a new gym and cafeteria commons building would allow separate, secured community access.

Parents from *all* schools are encouraged to attend the hearing at 7:00pm on April 24 at the BoE building (35 Leroy Ave), as the facilities options for the Ox Ridge project affect the entire district.

Dr. Brenner and Tara Ochmann provided additional information regarding the hearing and answered CDSP members' questions.

Catherine Piorkowski added information specific to the proposal to consolidate ELP, and encouraged parents to talk to their SE Reps if they have any questions.

### **RECESS UPDATE**

Improving the quality of recess and other periods of free time continues to be a topic among elementary school parents.

Dr. Brenner will meet with parents to discuss the topic further. Details TBD.

Julie Best made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Theresa Vogt seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:17.

Respectfully submitted by Tiffany O'Connor, CDSP Secretary.