

The Dover PTO Executive Board Meeting Minutes Friday, March 19, 2010

Attendees: Betsy Ryan, Jennifer Friesen, Georgia Dakoyannis, Anne Nolen, Judy Schulz, Suzanne Nystrom, Michele Mandel, Meg Field, Pam LoDato, Vicki Hadar, Mary Yanke, and Carolyn Ringel.

Foreign Language Team Presentation

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Ryan at 9:05 am. Ms. Pam LoDato recorded the minutes. Leslie Cutler, Jennifer DaSilva and Tammy Goldfisher were introduced to give an overview of a task force to study options for adding foreign language study to the Chickering curriculum. The Foreign Language Team was assembled in November 2009 by the Chickering School Committee (SAC). The group interviewed (1) area elementary schools that included foreign language study in their curriculum and (2) Regional administrators, including Valerie Spriggs.

Ms. Cutler presented studies that show children who learn a second language in the elementary school have lifetime benefits. These include cognitive flexibility, and divergent thinking/problem solving skills in addition to the exposure to different cultures. Studies show that learning languages early actually opens additional synapses in the brain. Ms. Cutler reported that foreign language study has been shown to enhance english language and math skills for students of all levels.

The Foreign Language Team reviewed three language program delivery methods which were (1) Full Immersion, (2) International Baccalaureate (IB), and (3) Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES). In Holliston, 20% of the students participate in a french language immersion program. This language program starts with 100% of daily classroom instruction in the target language. This method was not considered practical at a school of Chickering's size. The IB targets a minimum of 80 minutes of language instruction a week. This is a rigorous program and there is only one school participating in Mass. The FLES program requires 30-40 minutes of content enriched curriculum, 3-5 times a week. The goal is to acquire proficiency in the target language as well as cultural knowledge. This program has been recently rolled out in 8 Brookline elementary school.

Beyond these programs there are also smaller ways to enrich any program including celebrating other cultural holidays, singing songs, and foreign vocabulary exposure. This is an area where the PTO could help fund classroom enrichment.

The next step is to roll these ideas out to the community, school administration and staff. The biggest hurdle is fitting the additional content into the school week and funding the additional 1-2 staff required. The Language Team will also approach Pine Hill with program information. Currently 92% of students at the DSMS take a foreign language. Three years of foreign language is required to graduate the from the high school. When

asked about which language would be suggested, Ms. Cutler responded that the language is one of the last decisions.

Ms. Cutler was asked how the PTO could help. She suggested adding the Foreign Language Team on the volunteer form for next year and talking up the idea in the community. The Language Team hopes to put up a website where parents could educate themselves on the benefits of the language initiative. Ideas for the team to do included reaching out to the parents of preschoolers through groups like Dover Moms, participating in the PTO speaker series, and addressing the upcoming State of the School community session.

Curriculum Enrichment Report

Ms. Michele Mandel said that planning for the 5th grade graduation is well underway. The main event is scheduled for June 9th, which is a half day of school. The cost will be about \$1,000. Each student will be charged \$40 and will get a t-shirt, yearbook and food. There will be a Hollywood theme and things will be kept simple and fun. This year the yearbook format has been streamlined in cooperation with CoffeePond. The contract for the yearbook publishing for next year will need to be signed this spring.

Ms. Yanke reported that there are many good programs scheduled for March and April. Currently the committee is \$5,000 under budget. There may be a request to fund the Audubon walks which have been done in prior years. This cost would be \$1,200. Next year, the CE budget request will not increase over the current year.

Approval of the Minutes

Ms. Betsy Ryan presented the minutes for the February 26th, 2010 Executive Board meeting and asked for final revisions. One change was incorporated into the minutes. It was then moved that the minutes be accepted with the one amendment.

VOTE:

To approve the February 26th, 2010 Dover PTO Executive Board meeting minutes, as amended.

The motion was seconded and accepted unanimously by the board.

President's Report

Ms. Betsy Ryan reported that the principal search has been successfully completed. She thanked the search committee for their hard work. Three great choices were presented to the community. All had good experience and could hit the ground running. Dr. Nugent was hired and she will come to the State of the School. Ms. Ryan said that this meeting will last 1 1/2 to 2 hours so we may want to do the PTO business at another time.

The Chickering School budget for 2010-11 has a 2.8% increase over this year due primarily to mandated teacher raises and the new school bus contracts. At the Regional level, Sherborn is being required to come up with additional money due to an increased number of town students. While this year has been a tough budget year, next year could even be more difficult.

The PTO's nomination committee needs to begin the process of finding candidates for next year. The committee needs a minimum of 4 members. The VPs can not serve. There must be one member from last year's committee. The information asking for volunteers and nominations should be out around the end of March. The vice presidents automatically move up to the position of president and the secretary usually serves a 2 year term. Ms. Jennifer Friesen will be stepping down after 3 years as treasurer and Barbara Dawley will move up into this position. This year's nomination committee will be Betsy Ryan, Suzanne Nystrom, Vicki Hadar and Michele Mandel.

Vice President's Report

Ms. Meg Field reported that the hospitality committee has three upcoming events. The first is on March 30th and it is dinner on parent conference night. In April, there will be a teacher luncheon on the 14th and a bus driver appreciation event at the April 16th community share. The committee will also do something for the office staff during Secretary's week and for the custodial staff at a date to be determined. Next year, the committee may do monthly events by grade level.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Jennifer Friesen reported that the PTO continues to be on track with its budget. The PTO has \$60,000 to spend for the rest of the school year. The auction account is currently in the red as some expenses have needed to be paid. The PTO has received \$6,000 in underwriting. Jennifer wants all checks to be promptly deposited.

The PTO committee chairs will need to be starting the zero based budget process soon. It will be a topic of discussion at the April board meeting. Each committee needs to make its plan for next year and then budget the funds to meet this plan. We will also know in April how much money was raised at the auction which affects the budget spending in the next school year. The budget will be approved in May but there is flexibility and changes can be made in September.

Ms. Ryan and Ms. Field reported that the school administration was requesting money from DSEF for additional white boards for the classrooms. Another identified capital need by Mr. Downing is a projection system for the gym. It was suggested that this could be an item for the raise the paddle during the live auction. The decision of what the PTO buys for the school should be based both on school staff requests as well as

needs gauged by the members of the PTO. With curriculum enrichment, the PTO funds the teachers' specific program ideas.

The PTO has led initiatives for improving the playground in the past. Ms. Kelly Norby is doing legwork on the playground maintenance needs. There was general concern that some of the injuries and other playground issues could be reduced with more teacher supervision. It is spelled out in the teacher contracts that they do not need to be out on the playground. The guidance counselors do spend time on the playground during recess. Some felt that even getting the teachers out on the playground once a week could be part of excellence initiatives in the Chickering community.

Fundraising Chair Report

Ms. Georgia Dakoyannis announced that the online auction is live. Most of the auction items have been listed online but some have been excluded due to donor preferences. Some items will be closed out online while others will roll over to the auction event. There will be 12 live auction items. The auction books are being printed and will be distributed via backpack. Some of the class projects will be on display.

The committee is also selling auction t-shirts at school events. There is a banner up in the middle of town. Flyers have been sent home on the event as well as the raffle packages. Information should go out explaining how the night of the auction works, the timing and the types of food. Single attendance should also be encouraged. It was suggested that the room parents be asked to rally parents to attend the event. The auction usually gets around 200 attendees but the space can accommodate up to 300.

There is a need for volunteers the day of the event for set-up and take-down. Ms. Meg Fields is handling the operations for the auction event. The committee is still looking for an auctioneer.

Easy money continues to come in slowly from Shaw's and Amazon. Shaw's will be discontinued in April.

Community Outreach Report

Ms. Vicki Hadar reported that Family Fun Night was a big success. The new format really worked well. Ms. Hadar extended a heartfelt thanks to the event coordinators, Nicole Scannell and Barbara Dawley. The Simon Sez caller was a hit and cost much less than the DJ used in the past. Dr. Rineman, Mr. Hart and Mr. Downing all participated in setting up family activities.

The speaker series is finishing up with one final speaker in April. Current community outreach includes the PMC ride and a drop off box for raincoats for Haiti.

Communications Report

Ms. Judy Schulz said the deadline for the April 9th newsletter is March 26th. She will include information on PTO board and committee chair nominations.

Upcoming Meetings Dates

The annual state of the school meeting was originally scheduled for April 7th. This has turned out to be a very busy week with Dr. Stember speaking April 6th in the evening, the library internet safety event for April 7th, and the auction on April 10th. It was decided to move the State of the School meeting to Tuesday, April 27th. The change of date would be contingent on the School Committee schedule as well as the schedules of Ms. Valerie Spriggs and the incoming principal, Dr. Nugent.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 14th at 9:00 at Chickering.