

Chickering PTO Executive Board Meeting April 29th, 2011

The Dover PTO Executive Board met at the Chickering School, beginning at 10:00 am on Friday, April 29th, 2011. This was immediately following the April General PTO meeting. In attendance were Megan Field, Missy Gramer, Suzanne Nystrom, Amy Caffrey, Barb Dawley, Siobhan Doherty, Gina Doyle, Kristen Brophy, Jody Shue, Mary Yanke and Pam LoDato. Pam LoDato, Secretary, recorded the minutes.

Approval of the Minutes

The first order of business was to approve the minutes from the March 11th, 2011 PTO Executive Board meeting. Ms. Field suggested that the section in the minutes which described a vote on a \$200 increase for PTO education scholarships be reworded. Ms. Nystrom clarified a point in the minutes concerning the chair of the nomination committee. Ms. LoDato made the agreed upon changes. Ms. Field asked for any further revisions to the minutes. No more were offered. A motion for approval of the minutes, as amended, was proposed:

VOTE:

To approve the March 11th, 2011 Dover PTO Executive Board meeting minutes, as amended.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Missy Gramer and approved by all the board members present.

Presidents' Report

Ms. Megan Field opened the meeting discussing the end of the year plans. It was decided not to do a year end community event as there was already much planned by the school. In June the outgoing board members will need to work with the incoming board members to explain the PTO jobs and turn over any necessary information. The two groups will formally meet after the June 17th General PTO meeting. Ms. Gina Doyle will do a potluck lunch at her home so all the board members will have the opportunity to talk. Ms. LoDato volunteered to coordinate an evening out with the current board to thank all for their dedicated work over the school year.

Fifth Grade Celebration

Ms. Cathy Mitchell arrived to give an update on the 5th grade graduation activities. The PTO has allocated a \$1,200 budget for the luncheon. In addition, each student makes a \$39 contribution. Coffee Pond is doing the year book and this has significantly streamlined the production process. Parent coordinators include Amy Melican and Heather Bragdon. Cyndee Novitch is handling the class tee shirts. The luncheon will have a DJ and decorations and is being led by Kim Cone and Kristin Marken. The class will also give Chickering a small gift. Ms. Mitchell has a detailed planning

notebook to pass onto next year's event chair. She said the key is getting the parent volunteers in place early. The chair reports to the Volunteer Chair on the PTO Executive Board.

Vice Presidents' Report

Ms. Doyle said that planning is well underway for teacher appreciation week in May. The PTO will be doing something special in the teachers' lounge each day of the week. The website task force met to continue work on the specs for the new website. Once completed, this will allow the PTO to go out and get bids on doing the work. It is expected that there will be the addition of online signups for volunteer activities as well as new functionality for the auction event. DSEF has a beautiful new website that was done by the same group that did the Regional School District website. There are advantages to having a similar look and feel. The PTO will also likely add a presence on Facebook and get more tech savvy to facilitate communication with parents. The tag line for next year will be "Get Connected".

Ms. Missy Gramer and Ms. Siobhan Doherty reviewed the results from the website survey. Over 100 parents participated. Interestingly, 44% of the respondents had not used the PTO website. Most wanted more information on school happenings and events. 90% wanted e-mails directly from the PTO. 65% wanted lectures at night. 50% wanted more family nights. 37% wanted more parent social events. 70% said they knew where the PTO spends its money. Working parents wanted to be more connected. The written comments varied and some were supportive and others critical.

Curriculum Enrichment

Ms. Mary Yanke said the PTO is getting more requests from teachers for in-class programs. The goal is to get the basic programs planned this spring so an accurate budget can be approved. This year there were 2 school wide assemblies which featured the Epic Brass and the Taiko drummers. In the planning process for next year is a visit by Leon Mobley, a METCO alum from Chickering, and a world class drummer. The visit will likely include a school wide event and a special meeting with the Metco students.

Nominations Report

Ms. Suzanne Nystrom said that the committee is working hard on assembling a slate of volunteers for the next school year. All board members were asked to continue outreach to potential volunteers. Ms. Gramer and Ms. Doyle will make a special outreach to the incoming kindergarten parents.

Communications Report

Ms. Jody Shue reported that the May newsletter goes out next week. She asked that anything to be included be sent right away. For next year, Ms. Shue recommended that the PTO consider using Constant Contact and get a designer to develop a cohesive look and feel for the outgoing e-mails. This would also allow the PTO to embed pictures and videos. The program is easy to use and lets you set up smaller group mailings.

For example, a message could just go out to the fifth grade parents. It was her recommendation that the PTO standardize the look of all its communications. The PTO could use a standout color for each of its main activities such as the auction or curriculum enrichment communications. Currently, there is no uniform format so that PTO announcements look no different from any other sheet of paper that comes home.

Community Report

Ms. Kristin Brophy said the Race to Nowhere film had a good turnout and the PTO netted \$300 on the event. The next event is a Farm to the Table lecture on May 10th at 8:45 am. It will feature a representative from the Natick Organic Farm talking about sourcing more food locally for the school lunch program.

Future PTO Meeting Dates

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is on Friday the 20th of May at 8:45 am at Chickering.