

Dover PTO General Meeting Minutes September 18, 2009

A General Meeting of the Dover PTO was held at Chickering, commencing at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, September 18th, 2009. Ms. Betsy Ryan, President, presided at the meeting and Ms. Pam LoDato, Secretary, recorded the minutes. There were approximately 30 parents in attendance. Ms. Ryan, called the meeting to order and welcomed all of the attendees.

Special Education Director's Report

Dr. Denise O'Connell was introduced as the new Special Education (SPED) Director for Chickering. Ms. O'Connell has an impressive resume with work experience in academia and teaching at different age levels from preschool through high school.

Dr. O'Connell described the SPED as carefully planned instruction. There is much healthy controversy over what are the best approaches. Denise's focus is on figuring out the best method for each individual child. Differentiated instruction is important for SPED as well as the regular curriculum. She also stressed the importance of parent involvement in the IEP process. This has been an area of her past research.

Dr. O'Connell described SPED as being intensive, urgent, relentless and goal directed in ways that can be measured. Her approach is research based education. It provides students with disabilities with access to the free and appropriate public education which they are entitled to under both Federal and State legislation. The scope of IEPs varies from the requirement of consultation time with teachers to extensive in class services and out of district placements. The Special Education staff, while in the classroom, often help other children that may be struggling in an area via small group teaching. The PTO recently give \$1,000 to the occupation therapy staff to buy OT equipment that can be accessed by all of the teachers for general classroom use.

Approval of the Minutes

Betsy thanked Dr. O'Connell for her report. The first order of business was approval of the minutes from the last general PTO meeting on June 17, 2009. Ms. LoDato distributed the minutes. Ms. Ryan asked if there were any changes to the minutes. Given that there were no comments, Ms. Ryan motioned for the minutes to be accepted.

Vote: To approve the minutes from the June 17, 2009 General PTO meeting.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Jennifer Friesen passed out the final figures for the 2008-09 school year and the final budget for the 2009-2010 year. Ms Friesen reported that the PTO did very well

fundraising last year. Currently the PTO has \$86,000 in the bank which is enough to fund all of the expenditures for the 2009-2010 year. This conservative approach, fundraising each year for the following year's activities, ensures that the PTO always has enough money to support all budgeted expenditures. This school year the PTO plans on spending almost \$75,000 on curriculum enrichment, teacher and community support and PTO administrative functions. The PTO also hopes to fund some capital expenditures for the school and decisions will be made on this after the spring auction.

PTO President's Report

Ms. Betsy Ryan presented a powerpoint on the state of the school. This overview of the PTO activities for the 2009-2010 school year underlined the Dover PTO's mission to build the Chickering community by (1) enabling communications, (2) providing volunteer services, and (3) funding Chickering projects. The 2009-2010 budget for Chickering projects is \$74,850 and is broken down as \$32,400 or 43% for classroom/teacher support, \$30,575 or 41% for curriculum enrichment, \$9,800 or 13% for Chickering community and just \$2,075 or 3% for administrative costs.

The PTO budget includes \$250 for every teacher to spend on their choice of classroom materials. The Chickering community events include Dads & Doughnuts, speakers and family fun nights.

For 2009-10 the PTO initiatives were chosen to make an immediate difference to the Chickering community. The 5 key initiatives are (1) METCO host family programs, (2) Kid-driven community service, (3) Waste free lunches, (4) staff appreciation program expansion, and (5) Chickering apparel. In 2009-2010 there will be three primary fundraising events. First up is Innisbrook Gift Wrap in the fall. Next will be a book fair, tentatively slated for March, to replace the Books from the Heart Program. Finally there will be the Auction on April 10, 2010.

The PTO hopes to continue to fund capital projects. Over the past 8 years the PTO has funded \$184,000 in school projects. In 2008-09 the PTO funded supplemental math material for \$7,000 and spent \$23,000 on technology including the computer screen in the lobby, interactive white boards, digital music in the music rooms, 2 LCDs with sound and remote controls for the art rooms and EasiTeach software site licenses. This year the PTO hopes to spend \$10,000 to \$11,000 on capital expenditures, dependent on the success of the spring auction. This support of Chickering is all above and beyond the tax funded capital expenditures and grants by the DSEF.

The meeting concluded at 9:30 am. The next general PTO meeting will be January 15, 2010 at 9:00 in the Chickering Cafeteria.