

## **Downey PTO Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** January 26, 2026

**Time:** 7:00 PM – 7:55 PM

**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting

**Executive Board Members present:** Laurien Bean, Amanda Sarkis, Amanda Fairbanks, Liz Polin, Rachel Dow, Kate MacLean, Bill Bruce, and Amanda Farren

**Other Attendees:** JoAnna French, Cate Hawkins, Erica Murphy, Caron Miller, Kelly Fitzgerald, Erin Parry, Simon Yang, Jenn Kelly, Rachel Dill, and Brittany Perlis

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### **1. Welcome: Laurien Bean (7:05 PM)**

- The meeting began with introductions and a welcome to attendees.

### **2. Westwood School Committee: Presentation: Joanna French (7:07 PM)**

- Reminded attendees about Westwood Public Schools Master Plan and Facilities Study
- Discussed community forums that the School Committee has held and will continue to hold
- School Committee voted to submit Statement of Interest for Thurston with MSBA
  - Surveyed town and about 91% voted for Thurston
  - Will know in December if we get accepted
- Special education audit report- discussed at School Committee Meeting last week- what do we now do with this information? Considering findings for next year's budget
- FY27 budget- final budget that has been presented, but hasn't been voted on yet
  - Will be impacts on the schools- encouraged attendees to go watch video from School Committee meeting last week
  - School Committee is looking for feedback this Wednesday at 7pm during special office hours
  - Feb 5<sup>th</sup> School Committee Meeting will accept or reject the budget

### **3. Teacher Update – Kelly Fitzgerald and Caron Miller (7:10 PM)**

- Reports cards will be released on Friday
- Thanks for lunch on Wednesday for Downey recognition at state house
- Valentine's Day celebrations during school- teacher will be reaching out to families
- Field trips coming up- 5<sup>th</sup> grade is going to see Wonder. Thanks for the buses for that event; 5<sup>th</sup> grade also had visit to Discovery Museum; students loved it

#### **4. Finance Update – Bill Bruce and Kate MacLean (7:14 PM)**

- Fun run made about \$5000 more than budgeted
  - Increase for corporate matches compared to last year
- Holiday fair came out close to even, better than budget
- Expenses – most of the expenses get paid out in the spring
- Enrichment budget hasn't been used yet- will pay for kiln when it comes in around March; spent about \$6000 on kiln and recess equipment
- Mini course usually break-even- often pay out once courses are over so expenses haven't all hit yet
- Could end up \$5-6000 above budget for year once school year is over
- Encouraged people to continue to use form when spending to get reimbursed. QR code in PTO mailbox in main office

#### **5. Past & Upcoming PTO Events- Amanda Sarkis (7:17 PM)**

- Bowling- moved to March 8, still tickets available, might change if people who signed up for original date want refund/can't attend new date
- Skating- looking for venue
  - Maybe pivot to Family Bingo Night; PTO will discuss further and make decision about skating or bingo night
- Kids Rule the School- March 11
- Multicultural Night- March 27

#### **6. Grade Level Enrichment/ Hospitality/Mini Courses- Liz Polin ( 7:22 PM)**

- Enrichment for each grade level has been planned – reviewed program for each grade
- In December 5<sup>th</sup> grade had Physical Changes of Matter; class loved the program
- 2 authors coming in March- Josh Funk grades K-3; Jonathon Todd grades 4-5
  - Hospitality –
    - 'Elfed' teachers before winter break- could pick 3 items/supplies for classrooms
    - Starting to plan teacher appreciation week- will be in May
  - Mini- courses- start Monday
    - Looking for Tuesday help from a parent to check in students
    - Some open spots in a few classes

#### **7. Results of Fun Run Survey: Laurien Bean (7:24 PM )**

- PTO sent out survey to parents about the major fund- PTO holds 1 major fund raiser each year- what did parents think
- 42 responses-she reviewed the responses from the survey

- 50% think it is a good option as fundraiser
- 51% think it should be repeated next year
- 57% of money raised from family and friends ; 36% from parents
- Other ideas- take it in house (don't use Booster or other company to run it); PTO will reach out to other elementary schools that have run their own fundraisers
- Challenge for PTO is to have enough volunteers to run the program without outside help
- Also would need event that can raise a significant amount like the Fun Run does
- PTO open to ideas and will discuss and explore other options for next school year

#### **8. SEPAC – Amanda Fairbanks (7:42 PM)**

- SEPAC/WPS Joint Meetings tonight- discussing the findings of the special education review and the special education components of the FY27 budget
  - Proposal for some changes-
    - WABA preschool being moved to Downey from Pine Hill and will add 1 preschool class to Downey
    - PEER program will move to MJS next year- no longer at Downey
    - FOCUS program at PHS will expand into a 2<sup>nd</sup> classroom space
  - Director of Student Services search – on site visit pushed to week of February 2

#### **9. Questions and Next PTO Meeting (7:52 PM)**

- Lateefah Franck, Director of Equity, Integration, and Community Partnerships, was supposed to join meeting. Will reach out and reschedule to a future meeting
- Next meeting is March 26- time and venue will be announced
- Need Downey Girls on the Run coach- JoAnne stepping down, Downey won't have a team if someone doesn't volunteer; PTO will market on social media

#### **10. Adjournment (7:55 PM)**

- Motion to adjourn made by Laurien Bean
- Seconded by Liz Polin
- Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM

