



Steller Parent Group 5/14/2024
Meeting Minutes - FINAL

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

6:00--7:30 pm

Location: Steller and via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81880952031?pwd=bVdaaEJQbzU5bGo5VXU1QnE5eU8wUT09>

Meeting ID: 818 8095 2031 / Passcode: 793010

Click [here](#) to view Meeting Presentation.

Call to Order at 6:04 pm.

1) Introductions from all in attendance

In person:

Dee Dee Zobian (Chair, parent of 11th grader)
Lea Mckenna (Secretary, parent of 9th grader)
Kylara Hollingsworth (parent/50th anniversary chair/alumnus)
KirstenTschofen (treasurer/communications chair, parent of 11th grader)
Monica Perez-Verdia (fundraising chair, parent of 9th grader)
Sarah Burke (incoming parent) - wants to volunteer
Dakotah Fujan (incoming parent)- wants to volunteer
Julie Kentch and child Bridget (incoming parent/7th grader)
Charity Bengertter (incoming parent) - wants to volunteer
Joclyn Reilly (parent)
Kate Hopewell (parent of 11th grader) - wants to volunteer
Lisa Wells (parent of 9th grader, fundraising committee member)

Maria Hernandez (principal)
Allison Reed and son (teacher)

On Zoom

Laura Schue (parent)

Ryan Buchholdt (parent of incoming 6th grader) - wants to volunteer
Sarah Bernhardt (co-secretary, parent of 11th grader)

2) Approval of agenda - VOTE

Click [here](#) to view 5/14/2024 Agenda.

MOTION: Approve 5/14/2024 agenda as distributed

Motion By: Kylara Hollingsworth

Second By: Kate Hopewell

All in favor. Motion approved.

3) Approval of April meeting minutes - VOTE

Approval of Minutes.

Click [here](#) to view 4/9/2024 Minutes.

MOTION: Approve 04/2024 minutes as posted/as amended.

Motion By: Kirsten Tschofen

Second By: Lisa Wells

All in favor. Motion approved.

4) Reports

a. Principal Report - Maria Hernandez reporting

Pupil to Student Ratio and Staffing: \$98K deficit. ASD increased pupil to teacher ratio to 32.5 pupils per teacher. Our ideal ratio is 20-25. We are at about 25-27 with the new staff approved. E.g. calculus class will be 20-22. Trying to keep 6th grade and 7th grade at 22 (if we have 43-45 total new 6th graders). We normally take 60 7th graders and some move away or leave. Romig is 37-38. We will have 53 8th graders. Goal is to always have a wait list so we can get FTE up.

Question from parent about how to maintain balance with high schoolers with such a large number of middle schoolers. Answer: Allison started a leadership class and wants to do mentoring and make Steller 101 mandated so they understand Steller philosophy with older students co-teaching and interacting as mentors to younger students. Also during academy hour, older students can help younger ones with clubs and tutoring. Other HSs will likely have 7-8 periods starting in 2025-2026. We will need to decide how/whether to integrate with that change.

Hard to advocate for more full time equivalent (FTE) staff and better ratio. Some other schools have 39 students per teacher and only one pot of money. With a lot of work Steller was able to get the FTE needed to keep it to the standard we wanted. With 6th graders, got 6 more staff and just got a Special Ed position approved this AM. Now need to fill positions. Have done 55 interviews. Getting hard - people don't want to move to AK due to lack of funding and lack of pensions so have declined offers. Currently most positions are filled but not Special Ed. Will use that position for helping with social skills - 33% of students have 504s and IEPs. Language arts/social studies position still open - spread the word if you know anyone - permanent or long term sub. Took a lot of time away from Steller to advocate for more positions. We have a new counselor and nurse Chloe Briggs.

Lottery was successful. Second lottery in July. 7th, 8th, and 9th have wait lists. No wait list for 6th grade - have 10-15 more spots so spread the word. Estimating 300-315 students next year. Will be getting 3 relocatables ("relos" - temporary structure in the field). 6th graders will remain in the building.

Scheduling is mostly done. Only 2 students could not be accommodated. Goal to get all schedules done so talk to your students to make sure the schedule is turned in.

Time change: Steller voted to align with high school start changes. We had 8:30 to 2:05 and HS is 8:45 to 3:15. So that is the closest schedule and allows HS students to do sports at other high schools. We also gained that extra 7th hour. New schedule does not interrupt students' ability to do sports. Still hard for those with kids in elementary, middle, and high school. ASD is still looking at alternatives for child care.

Implementing the Academy Model: Goal for Steller is to have fewer changes for next year. ASD is already implementing many changes, e.g. academy model. We at Steller will implement aspects of the academy model but we will be in control of that. So in 2024-2025 we will have information sessions on CCL and on what aspects we want here. Parents will be invited. Students, teachers, and parents will vote. Hoping SPG will help in the way SPG helped this year in facilitating discussions. During Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) staff are exploring options.

Graduation is on May 20 at 3 PM at Wendy Williamson auditorium at UAA. Only 15 graduates so will be short. Each grad gets 3 minutes to do what they want on stage - speech, or whatever they want. It will start on time so arrive on time!

b. Staff Report - Allison Reed reporting

Intensives: Group in Costa Rica and Kenai, DND

Olympics a success. SPG funded pizza.

Johanna is working on schedules for everyone for next year.

c. Op Group Report - Luree unavailable so chair Dee Dee Zobian reporting

- They elected officers
- Intensives going well

d. Parent Group Reports**i. Chair - by Dee Dee Zobian**

- Welcome new families
- Rebuilding SPG since COVID
- Have cards for everyone to sign for staff who are leaving (circulated at meeting)
- Kirsten and Joclyn handling audit at end of month
- This year Steller Parent Group - see website for all we did this year - disseminating info on academies and move of 6th graders to Steller; fundraising; 50th anniversary are some highlights.
- Recruiting SPG officers and committee positions. See slides.

ii. Fundraising - Monica Perez-Verdia reporting

- Movie Event/Auction update - great year of fundraising with Cups for Kids, Bear Tooth Movie.
- Early October 2024 (possibly Oct. 8) will be Cups For Kids. Cups For Kids is our biggest fundraiser. Kids deliver coffee and ask for donations during drop off and pickup
- Recruiting Fundraising Committee members - tasks great and small
- Next Fundraising Meeting: July 22, 2024 at 5:30 by Zoom and at Monica's. Email stellerparentgroup@gmail.com for the address/Zoom link.

iii. Treasurer Report: Kirsten Tschofen reporting.

- May Report (See Slide) - VOTE to approve May Report (for April transactions)
Motion by: Kylara Hollingsworth
Seconded by: Sarah Bernhardt
All in favor. Motion approved.
- Year end review - 6/1/23 to 5/31/24 (See Slides)

- a. This is first time doing year end for fiscal year. Fiscal year will be dates above from now on.
 - b. We exceeded our fundraising goal by \$5,144.77. We raised over \$43,000.
 - c. Expenses: \$2608 less than proposed in budget, partly because we thought we would do 50th anniversary celebration this year but will be next year. We spent \$21,000.
 - d. About \$21,000 to roll over for next year.
- Budget approval - VOTE
- a. [See Understanding the Steller Budget Slide](#)
 - i. Expect to raise \$39,000. \$20,000 carryover from this year. \$42,000 for general funds plus \$8,000 for 50th anniversary.
 - ii. Our fixed expenses are less than 10% as a non-profit.
 - iii. 75% of funds go to requests from students, staff, and parents/guardians through requests for funding.
 - iv. [Request for funding forms on Website](#) Anyone can make a request. Due the 1st of the month. Finance committee reviews. Presented and voted at the next meeting.
 - v. In the past we presented a budget in Fall but decided to do it at year end because we get funding requests in the Fall and want to have funds for intensives, BBQ, and other needs in August.
 - vi. MOTION: Approve Budget for 2024-2025 school year
Motion By: Sarah Bernhardt
Second By: Lea McKenna
Discussion: Thank you to Kirsten for putting together the summary.
All approved.
- Distributed Treasurer Report with Statement of Financial Position as of 5/1/2024.

5) Old Business

- a. Gift card donations reminder - Lisa Wells presenting
 - Gift cards that you may not use or if you want to purchase- put them in the box in the office and can use for staff appreciation
 - Maria states: ASD cannot buy gifts for staff. So it only comes out of the pocket of Maria or staff so this is very helpful. Can be used for contests -

e.g. who is most spirited, or teachers who go the extra mile for work they are not really paid for.

- b. Fall BBQ - August 13, 2024 - 6 PM to 8 PM
- Annual tradition to welcome new families and welcome back old families.
 - Need lots of volunteer help. Go to SPG website to sign up on Signup Genius.

6) New Business

- a. Officer Recruitment and Confirmations
- Openings in fundraising committee (largest need - Monica is chair), finance committee and advocacy committee (established last year and put together a letter that member presented to school board to counter negative testimony at school board meetings about Steller staff)
 - Openings for co-chair, co-treasurer after 9/30/24, Co-Communications chair or committee member, and Co-fundraising chair.
 - Dee Dee has a student who will graduate next year so need a co-chair. Kirsten is co-treasurer and communications. Comms is an at-home anytime job. Officer positions are 2 year terms with overlaps with current co-officer so the new person can train/assist and work out with their co-officer what duties each will do. Any volunteers?
 - Charity Bengenter offered to be co-fundraising chair and already spoke with Monica. She confirmed she wants to do it.
 - Also Laura Schue volunteered for the fundraising committee and was interested in the advocacy committee as issues arise.
 - Ryan Bucholdt is interested in volunteering. (See also others interested in volunteering in the list of attendees, above).
- b. Fundraising Committee. Monday July 22 at 5:30 PM is the next **fundraising committee meeting** with excellent snacks at Monica's house and by Zoom. Email stellerparentgroup@gmail.com for address or Zoom information. Lisa Wells and Joclyn Reilly are on the fundraising committee with chair Monica Perez-Verdia (and new incoming co-chair Charity Bengenter and new committee member Laura Schue).

MOTION to reconfirm all current officers (Dee Dee Zobian as Chair, Lea McKenna as Co-Secretary, Kylara Hollingsworth as Co-Treasurer and 50th Anniversary committee chair, Kirsten Tschofen as Co-Treasurer and Communications Chair), approve Lisa Wells as Co-Secretary, Charity Bengenter as Co-Fundraising chair, and Laura Shue for fundraising committee.

- Joclyn Reilly moved
- Kate Hopewell seconded
- All voted in favor

- c. **Funding Requests:** Recommended by the finance committee, who reviewed requests.
- i. Fall Travel Intensive - Europe - \$5000 requested and recommended
 - Charity Bengenter moved
 - Allison Reed seconded
 - All voted in favor. Approved.

 - ii. Steller 50th Anniversary - Kylara Hollingsworth presenting (Chair of alumni committee and Co-Treasurer)
 - About 700 members of Facebook Steller alumni. People flying in from around the world.
 - An alumni has donated significant funds so all can participate.
 - Heather Hanook (parent and alum) on committee. If other alumni want to join, let Kylara know.
 - Capital fund drive to raise \$3000 to provide funds to the school. Expect will exceed that amount.
 - Need SPG support for the alumni dance on Saturday to rent the building, set up, clean up, volunteers at donation desk, registration desk, setting up rooms, e.g. in memoriam room, DND room, library with yearbooks and games. Photo booth. Temple of the Bean (student run cafe) will serve food. Technical (student) group will help.
 - Saturday night September 14, 2024 6:30-10 PM for alumni, retired teachers, and their kids (not other students or their parents). Discussion about whether SPG insurance requires most volunteers to be SPG members. Kirsten says not required by insurance. So we decided we need 10 parent volunteers.
 - Budget is \$4500 to rent the building
 - Skye Nevada from the Bridge Co. is reducing cost. Alumni Brendan Babb is DJing and Kyle and Molly Bates donated a significant amount to subsidize the events.
 - Will ask alumni to mentor, donate, and share stories about what Steller meant to them. Goal is to foster community and bring back some traditions.
 - **MOTION** to have SPG sponsor the alumni dance and provide support by recruiting volunteers, accepting donations, and advertising, with net zero expenses.
Motion by Lea McKenna
Seconded by Kirsten Tschofen
All voted to approve.
 - Next 50th anniversary planning meeting TBD. 907-250-5891 is Kylara's number. Text her if you want to get involved or email stellerparentgroup@gmail.com

7) Next general SPG meeting- **Tuesday, September 10, 2024, 6-7:30 PM** in person (usually in Joe's room) and by Zoom. Same Zoom link used every month.

8) General Discussion:

- Question about what happens at Sophomore Day -
 - SPG pays for lunch. Includes nutrition, sexual health. Off campus, organized by a school nurse.
- Senior camping trip - happening for the first time in the fall. \$40 was the fee this year for camping at Eklutna. They have not requested funding from SPG.

Adjourn @ 7:44 PM

Minutes recorded by Lea McKenna, Co-Secretary.

Minutes approved at meeting on 9/10/24.

Co-Secretary: Lea McKenna

Lea McKenna
Signature