

Sonoma Charter School PTO Meeting
Minutes 10/12/11

Board members present: Kathy Pine, Julanne Lorimer, Nona Gamble, Gloria Reiter, Darice Dekker, Jennifer Hagen, Lesley Cannariato

Absent: Tim Wetzel, Katie Giller

Others present: Sharon Johnston, Sanna Range, Courteney Morgan, Jade Filippi, Lee Brown, Nadine Harmon, Joanne & Mike Coleman, Jeni Spencer, Stacie Hedley, Paula Hunter, Ally May, Amy Alper, Jennifer Blackwood, Darcy McNairy

Announcements:

Paula:

1. At the last governing board meeting last week, 2% raise for teachers and support staff was approved.
2. Will be scheduling a parent forum on empathy - date TBA.

Presentation: Student Reporters: Nona presenting for Kathleen McCauley Anast

The student reporter program will share with parents the great developments that happen within SCS classrooms such as morning ceremony highlights, sports, and also alumni news, SCS family interviews. This will also provide cluster 3 students with a great learning opportunity in producing and disseminating information. PTO/communications committee will foster the project initially, and a parent volunteer will be sought to work with cluster 3 students and staff. The goal is to have it up and running by the end of November.

Hot Topic Discussion: How do we ensure the success of the Charter Your Course Challenge?

A lengthy discussion followed, centering around the following questions:

What questions do you have about CYC?

Current challenges? Current successes?

Improvements? Ideas? What can we put into action from today's discussion?

Some specific questions that were asked included (answers included if the questions were answered):

- How can we provide a more supportive environment for families that may need to lean on other families in order to make their pledge happen?
- Do you have a plan in place in case we do not reach the \$100K goal by the end of the year? More worried about getting 100% participation at this point and very open to all suggestions and ideas for additional fundraising opportunities.
- How many families have participated to date? There are 168 families at SCS, and so far, 68 families have not participated in CYC.
- What is the goal of the classroom rep and how is participation being tracked? The goal is for each family to be active in CYC by Thanksgiving break. The classroom rep is learning about the needs of each family by reaching out to them. If any classroom rep feels uncomfortable with their role, Paula can help with the process.
- Do we need a fundraiser for January/February? Yes, that would be great – something indoors. March is also available.
- Idea – Father(special person)/daughter dance around valentines day
- Parents don't understand the connection between participating in the big events and reducing their pledge amount. How can we better communicate to them that they can

reach their individual goal by working at big events? Use a variety of media in sending the message, and give specific examples, eg coffee cart sales. Call it a CYC earning opportunity, not a volunteer opportunity. Use the classroom reps.

- Baile/block party Oct 21st – Darice – announced that 16 families are organizing and sharing the cost. They will share the profits as their CYC pledge. They might need help with decoration and security – these volunteers would not be part of the CYC opportunity, but volunteering. She will let the volunteer committee know next week what the group needs. Suggestion to offer take-away food from the window in addition to the dance.
- CYC classroom rep requested notification when a parent in their class signed up to work on a CYC event, so she knew that they were active in fulfilling their CYC pledge and she did not need to continue contacting them.
- Can CYC fundraisers be incorporated into spaghetti feed or jagathon? Need to ask Holli (Spaghetti Feed), Jeni (Jagathon) – will discuss.
- Suggestion – hold monthly live meetings for people who want to bring up ideas, questions re CYC, issues to a live person and not an email. Will schedule, and hold at different times of day to fit multiple schedules.
- Can CYC sell food during student dances? Will ask Lynda Allen to ask student government how they feel about this.
- Are there any fundraising events that are open to the community? This is the intention, but has not yet happened to a large extent. The book fair does have a craft fair that uses vendors from the community.
- Is there an opportunity to partner with other schools in holding a massive fundraiser? There could be.
- Have you come across people who are angry that they are being asked for money? We cannot require participation. Paula talks to them about the reality of the current budget situation. No one leaves her office angry.

Budgeting Issues:

1. Finance committee request: Paula

Paula requests \$5000 for professional development activities for faculty. The school currently has zero funds. Motion: Jen Hagen. Second: Lesley Cannariato. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Student lunches: Jeni Spencer

Revolution Foods is the current vendor, and we are operating at a deficit of approximately \$4,000 – 6,000 annually (last year's estimates). A number of issues need to be looked at long term, including how to make this a sustainable program, and this will be a topic for discussion at a future PTO meeting. Today, Jeni requested to increase the price of lunches effective January 1st from \$3.85 to \$4.00. Motion: Darice Dekker. Second: Julanne Lorimer. Motion passed unanimously.

Process for Issues: Paula

Paula announced a new process for parents who want to schedule time with SCS front office staff. Molly or Laurie – call and make an appointment, or come in the last 30 minutes of your child's school day (12-12:30 or 2:30 – 3). For Paula, best to send an email, call if urgent. Paula will release this new policy to the larger parent group shortly.

PTO committee updates

1. Treasurer: If you need to have something reimbursed, you will need PTO approval. See Nona for details.
2. Fundraising committee: Need volunteers for the Halloween Carnival Oct 28th. Next fundraising committee meeting is Tuesday Nov 15th, 6pm.
3. Parent Involvement: Movie night was a success; candy booth raised \$125 to a CYC pledge. Baked good booth raised \$73.

Update on PTO main goals

1. Support the teachers: Joanne has volunteered to be the teacher wishlist coordinator. Kathy Pine will be heading a committee to improve the computer lab at SCS. Paula volunteered Dylan, Ed Bell. Jen Hagen volunteered Jimmi Hagen.
2. Increase parent involvement: \$50 has been set aside for each classroom to hold social events for the purpose of having the class families get to know one another better.

Meeting adjourned.