

Final

Devon Elementary School PTO Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2009

In attendance: Evelyn Shreve, Kelly Lee, Dr. Tobin, Brenda Hess, Heather Fitzgerald, Coleen Hillman, Jill Cutler, Erika Yablonovitz, Suzanne Emerson, Stephanie Thibault, Nanette Chappellear, Pattie Littlewood, Francie Rosato, Lauren Baran, Barbara Sredenschek

Welcome

- Evelyn brought meeting to order and noted attendance. She circulated Audit Report of the PTO Treasurer completed by Kim Pittman and the Suburban Article about the Devon Camp Fair. January's meeting minutes were not available to be reviewed and approved, but will be available at the March meeting.

Principal's Report: Dr. Tom Tobin

Dr. Tobin spoke of facility planning for next year. The School District and Devon has seen increasing enrollment. 91 Kindergarten students have registered at Devon for the 2009-2010 school year. There will be a formal presentation at the School Board meeting next week regarding facility plan. The School Board has said they are committed to no redistricting of the elementary schools.

Facility Plan – Devon is in need of 3 additional classrooms. Classroom placement of grades within the school has not been determined yet. An overhead map of construction was presented, but is purposely not included in these minutes due to security issues related to web posting. Hard copies may be obtained from the administration.

1st Classroom will be taken back from the Chester Country Intermediate Unit for Early Intervention. This program will move to Valley Forge Elementary School for the fall.

2nd Classroom will be taken from Reading Support/Mrs.Cappelletti's room in the 1st grade hallway. This was a classroom space and Mrs. Cappelletti's room will be removed to open up the full classroom space. Reading Support will be moved to the 1st/2nd grade Team room (1st grade hallway) with the goal to keep the 3 staff members that support this area together.

3rd Classroom to be created from the PE storage area combined with the 3rd/4th grade team room (3rd grade hallway). PE storage will be moved to the current instrument storage room. Instrument storage will move to the Stage area. Instrument lesson room will be used for 1st/2nd grade Team Room/Small Group Space.

Additional changes to include walling in alcove area of library next to Mr. Stever's office to make small group meeting/instructional space. Also, custodial closet next to Applied Tech classroom has a window and will be converted to small group/instructional space for planning and special education.

Publishing Center will move, potentially to new Library small group room that is to be created.

The plan outlined was estimated to cost between \$400-500K and is a sufficient plan to take Devon out for the next 5 years based on current enrollment projections.

Questions were asked by those in attendance:

Q. How do the teachers feel?

R. They understand and we are trying to create new areas for their support. Devon first met with an architect that proposed plans to build 2 new classrooms either lengthening the 1/2 grade hallway or across from science room. Both were priced out at over \$1 million. With current economy, real estate tax transfer down, etc. District is moving away from anything that could raise taxes. Current projects price tag of \$400-500K was deemed more prudent.

Q. Will class sizes increase?

R. Class sizes will not increase at Devon unless the District increases class sizes district-wide across all the schools.

Q. Look beyond next year, will we need to add on eventually?

R. Right now based on 5 year projections, this should suffice.

Q. Will Child's Place continue within the building?

R. Yes, Child's Place will stay within Devon.

Q. Where will music instrument lessons take place?

R. Right now music lessons take place within the music room, unless 2 teachers are teaching at the same time, in which case one will use the stage area for lessons. We will have to make scheduling allowances, knowing that the stage area could not be used during lunch time.

Q. How will this construction impact the Devon Dragons Summer Camp run by Ms. Sammler?

R. Devon will be able to host the summer camp this year. Care will have to be taken where the construction vehicles are located. Rainy Days will probably have the large group room space instead of the gym and barriers will have to be set up to keep children from wandering into construction areas.

Q. Has anyone addressed the parking situation at Devon? With increased enrollment and staff, parking is becoming more and more difficult.

R. There was a parking study done last summer (drainage, impervious ground cover, etc). However, the District has decided to take no action at this time. It is an economic decision. TE Middle has similar problems and had been approved, but that has been pulled back. Patti Littlewood commented the District feels it's more important to "do for the kids" and live with little inconveniences like parking. More comments were made about the parking at Devon. Suggested that a parking policy/map be developed that could be communicated via Dispatch and Website. All are encourage to ride share. Nanette Chappellear suggested that perhaps the PTO and school could consider the purchase of temporary concrete parking spot barriers to better designate spots in the grassy, overflow area.

Faculty Report: Nicole Sammler

Gym classes for 3rd/4th grade will have a chance to use a Wii in gym class. Nicole received a \$500 stipend from the district in a proposal to incorporate technology into gym class. She sees it being utilized by children that have physical restrictions from active gym class.

Nicole reported several grade level purchases (PTO gives each grade \$300/year) and that the Paper Cutter assembly was enjoyed by 2nd grade.

Summer Camp Flyers will be reviewed by Nanette Chappellear and Stephanie Thibault to clarify the refund policy on the form. Nanette explained difficulties with trying to accommodate refunds is that what amount is promised to teachers is already determined once the spot is filled also, the PTO doesn't have the resources to manage and staff volunteers to process refunds once school has ended. For those reasons, not inflexibility, there will be a no refund policy. Price is expected to stay the same as next year, and \$500 from camp registrations will go to PE equipment fund for school. Camp will continue to run just mornings (cooler) for 4 weeks in July. Camp can not expand into August due to School District restrictions. Therefore, it will continue to conflict with Summer Reading Camp. Registration forms will be distributed via Dispatch and Website. All current Devon K-4 students are eligible to sign up. Nicole will investigate adding Summer Camp page to current web site.

Treasurer's Report: Stephanie Thibault

Highlighted Camp Fair success, Escript funds are increasing due to more publicization of Escript program. Skating party was over budget slightly. 1099 and Sales/Use Taxes are done. Pizza Bingo went OK. Stephanie emphasized that we needed to make clear on the school clubs form that scholarships are available. The Budget process is starting and all VPs and Chairs should receive a request for next year's budgets. Budget is presented in May and approved in June.

President's Report: Evelyn Shreve

Every year at the start of school, the PTO gives teachers and certain staff \$50 checks for classroom supplies. These are often used for seasonal décor or welcome packages for students. Most teachers spend much in excess of this amount for their classrooms out of

their own pockets. PTO had discussed the possibility of increasing this amount next fall as several elementary schools give their teachers more (though commented that Devon also gives \$300 per grade and it is not known if other schools do the same). In the Fall 40 checks were issued for \$2000. Given the PTO's cash availability and current economy, would it be something we could consider to give the teachers an additional \$25 as a mid-year bonus? Discussion followed regarding HR mom budgets of \$30 per classroom, it was clear that this would not impact that amount. A motion was made by Kelly Lee and seconded by Francie Rosato and Barbara Sredenschek that the "PTO pay \$25 as a one time bonus payment to those staff members who received checks in the fall, not to be repeated in the future without Board Approval." The motion carried unanimously.

Evelyn also announced the solicitation of ideas for school gifts. Prior gifts include smart boards, installation, sign, playground equipment, ice maker. Gift ideas can come from Faculty, parents and students. Our philosophy has been to spend money on that which benefits the most students. Gift ideas will be needed for the budget process.

School Services: Francie Rosato

Francie announced the Dental Clinic Yankee Candle fundraiser. The fundraiser is strictly for the Dental Clinic and is separate from the PTO. The dental clinic is a non-profit entity that provides dental services to children in need. Devon's had 3 students attend in the past 3 months. All schools that use the clinic's services are asked to participate in the fundraiser and 40% of proceeds go to the Dental Clinic. Donations may be made directly to the Dental Clinic.

Publishing Center is a service provided by the PTO to all 1st graders. Each child will produce 2 books via the publishing center – one for the child and one for the library which is kept until the child graduates from CHS. The computers used now by the Publishing Center have reached the end of useful life and though once provided by the District, now other schools Publishing Center computers are supplied by PTOs. A new Dell computer with Microsoft software will cost between \$800-1000. Publishing Center has a budget of \$750 of which they expect to spend \$250. Could approve to purchase new computer? Discussion was had. Nanette Chappelle made a motion that the budget be increased \$1500 to purchase 2 computers for Publishing Center so that people trained on one could move back and forth between the computers. Stephanie Thibault seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Patti Littlewood, District Volunteer Coordinator, thanked all the volunteers through the PTO. She is in charge of CHS Senior intern programs and confirmed that we could use Senior Interns for Arts Express Week.

Cultural Arts: Lauren Baran

Arts Express Week will feature percussionist Jo Sallins (www.josallins.com) to go with this year's theme of Music. The artist in residence will feature percussion, particularly drums in all types of music with special attention to American Jazz. Plans are for additional musical performances from parents, teachers (as role models) for the students.

Grades will make different types of percussion instruments. Next committee working meeting is on Thursday March 12 at 9:15 in the Large Group Room.

Fundraising: Nanette Chappellear and Shelia Czepiel reporting for Elaine Klinger

Evelyn gave thanks to the Camp Fair Volunteers and turned floor over to Nanette Chappellear to provide a wrap up on Camp Fair. Nanette reported that Devon made \$17,080 in camp registrations with over 100 camps registered this year. Final expenses aren't know but it estimated the fair will net \$13,800 to \$14,000, making it one of our largest fundraisers and as the camp pay the fees, the money is not coming from Devon parents. Nanette recognized her co-chair Jane Scilovati and Karen Rodio who did Hospitality and the number of parent volunteer and CHS students who helped the night of the fair. Camps found the fair via the Camp Fair website this year so the PTO investment in the website paid dividends. Roughly 620 people attended the fair, up from previous year. Camps were pleased with the turnout. Campfair is a "mini-business" within the PTO and next year Jane and Nanette will have children leaving Devon and new parents will need to take on the Camp Fair.

Shelia Czepiel provided and update on the Friendraiser scheduled for April 25. Solicitation letters are out for donations and many businesses are saying its difficult this year. New this year are neighborhood baskets – Devon families have been grouped by neighborhood, looking for neighborhood captains to coordinate donations to neighborhood baskets. Chance for friendly competition, get to know your neighbors and amend auction for items not being sent by businesses. Letter to be included in Dispatch looking for parent donations – emphasis on providing a service such as cooking, babysitting, handyman hours, etc. Invitations are done, looking for gratis printing. Theme is "Feel the Beat". Comment was made about TE Middle Parent Social fundraiser held this past weekend. Middle school fundraiser is very different format from ours. Their attendance was about 80 parents, had very few auction items. Feeling was that they made \$14,000 which is significantly less than Devon's. Many feel that the time of year impacts the crowd draw and should be remembered as sometime it is suggested that Devon move the Friendraiser to February.

Social: Evelyn Shreve reporting for Karen Friedman

Pizza Bingo went well. Had an overage in Pizza this year (versus not enough last year). Leftovers were provided to teachers/faculty for lunch. Also thanks to many who donated Bingo prizes. Leftover prizes were donated to teachers for classroom incentatives.

IAP: No report

