

**ECS PCO Meeting**  
**1/28/13**

**Moderator's Report** - Nikki welcomed everyone, read the PCO mission statement, and gave an overview of the meeting.

**Secretary's Report** - The PCO Communications Committee met last week. We are working on improving and upgrading the PCO website and hope to have a new site launched by April. We are also working on developing an organization chart for the PCO, which will be posted on the website.

**Treasurer's Report**

EXPENSES:

November PCO Meeting Pizza:	\$33.99
Staff Appreciation:	\$55.78
Holiday Marketplace:	\$7194.73
3rd Grade Mini-Grant:	\$138.08
Gingerbread Event:	\$624.62
Gingerbread Event Pizza:	\$289.09
Holiday Coffee Sale:	\$538.25
Meet the Maestro:	\$3686.00
PayPal Transaction Fees:	\$142.90
7th Grade Teacher Gifts:	\$32.00
Compost Printing:	\$656.00
Music Mini-Grant:	\$242.42
Ice Skating Event:	\$150.00
Supplies for Movie Day Service Project:	\$42
PCO Meeting Child Care:	\$80.00
Directory Printing:	\$722.00
Heifer International Donation:	\$30
Triangle Hoagie Deposit:	\$50.00
TOTAL:	\$14707.86

INCOME:

Box Tops:	\$557.45
Viridian:	\$62.50
Meet the Maestro:	\$3186
Holiday Coffee Sale:	\$744.50
Ad Payments:	\$717.50
Donation:	\$6.00
Holiday Marketplace:	\$9663.75
Holiday Marketplace Bake Sale:	\$148.90
Heifer International Donations:	\$30
Amazon:	\$614.65 (May through Nov.)
Gingerbread Event:	\$710.75

TOTAL: \$16442.00  
BALANCE: \$20543.47  
PROFITS:  
Coffee Sale: \$206.25  
Holiday Marketplace: \$2326.12  
Holiday Marketplace Bake Sale: \$148.90  
Amazon: \$614.65  
Gingerbread Event Cost: \$202.96

**Guest Speakers: Kelsey Weisgerber and Kim Wilson**

Kelsey introduced herself as the food service director at ECS -- she will speak about current initiatives. Parent Kim Wilson will share some dairy-free cookies and share information about food allergies so that all ECS events can be safe for everyone to attend.

Springboard is a local non-profit in Pittsburgh. Their mission is to cook healthy food from scratch using local produce, as well as doing job training. They are also preparing food for a couple other small schools in Pgh and will be bidding on much larger contracts next year. Our program supports their mission as well.

Kelsey is working on some exciting educational programming. On Feb. 25, there will be a fundraiser at Bar Marco. Each month, a chef (Kelsey on Feb. 25) is invited to come in and cook for the night. All proceeds for the night go to the chef, and in this case, the ECS food program.

Fun things in the community: Food Revolution project (started by Jamie Oliver) - Kelsey is working with a high school cooking club this spring. Next year, those students will be brought to ECS as mentors for our students.

Other collaborations include: Mayor's office, UPMC, Whole Foods, and more.

Another project is Teach a Kid to Cook. Adults are taught how to cook and how to run a cooking class for children. There will be a parent and child cooking class on Feb. 23.

Kelsey initiated a project with ECS 7th graders through the Cultural Literacy program. They have connected with an orphanage in Afghanistan and will be fundraising and collecting goods to send overseas. You will see more info coming home about this. It's a great opportunity to teach students about geography, community-based projects, etc.

The school has taken a thoughtful approach to food allergies this year in providing nut-free snacks and lunches. Now we need to think about school and PCO events. Kim Wilson did a short presentation to educate parents:

Top 8 allergens: milk, egg, wheat, soy, peanut, tree nut, fish, shellfish. 8% of children and 45 of adults experience allergies. Often, milk, egg, wheat and soy allergies resolves themselves ay adulthood. Peanut, tree nut, fish and shellfish allergies are typically life-long allergies.

Up to 25% of nut allergies happen for the first time in school. School can get a prescription for epi pens which are not assigned to any specific student. Kim said the school has a good plan for students to stay safe.

Strategies to minimize risks in school: wash hands before and after handling food, plan for safe parties, avoid using foods inm classroom art/craft projects, prohibit food sharing. Allergen-free events are not hard to plan. Bake sales could have individually wrapped items with ingredients listed.

More info about allergies can be found at: [foodallergy.org](http://foodallergy.org) and [kidswithfoodallergies.com](http://kidswithfoodallergies.com).

Kelsey will accept suggestions regarding PCO events. If we are accepting reservations to an event, it's easy to ask in advance if there are any food allergies.

Question: Would school consider gluten-free liunches? Kelsey is willing to plan some gluten-free days.

Will kids be educated about epi pens (to avoid accidental use)? In May, there is Food Allergy and Awareness Week - this could be incorporated into education that week.

There are alternative products: Wow Butter, Sunbutter (sunflower butter), packaged cookie and cake mixes (for class parties). Lya suggested it would be helpful and fun for the kids to have a taste test event to try some alternatives.

Bakeries? Gluuteny (gluten-free bakery) uses eggs. Dozen has vegan nut-free options (need to call and request it).

Kelsey will compile a list of alternatives for the next issue of comPOST.

### **Administrative Update**

Steve Pellathy started with the announcement that the school did not make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress). In the past, ECS was calculated as a school district, not an individual school. As a district, PPS meets AYP, but not each school does. Our school would meet it as a district, but they can no longer calculate it that way. Our scores have not changed. Schols that have worse scores than we do can meet AYP as a school depending on their growth model (improvement matters). Steve has some charts that will be added to the website. They show ECS as compared to other districts and other individual schools. We stack up pretty well compared to other local schools. Is AYP solely judged on PSSA? We also have to meet attendance thresholds. Academic part is based on test scores. For ECS, PSSAs are one measure of students' achievements, but we

want to add many other aspects of the students' experience, like student portfolios and other classroom work. As long as PSSAs are the currency of the realm, we need to show that our students can perform, but we don't want test scores to be a trade-off for a more comprehensive education. Steve emphasized that ECS is sticking to our core ideals and curriculum, but PSSAs won't go away. ECS is not (yet) required to use a new state evaluation system for teachers which includes students' evaluations for teachers. Regulation does not require charter schools to participate in this way at this time. Not making AYP does not affect the charter. It would have an impact if it happened over multiple years. 5-year charter review has happened, but we won't get feedback on it until Feb/March. AYP should not affect it.

With enough students, there are certain subgroups. African-American/math subgroup is the one that is not making the high test scores. We can access all test data at [paayp.emetric.net](http://paayp.emetric.net). PA Dept of Education has data for all schools as well.

Co-teaching model of having 2 adults in every classroom will positively benefit all students. This is one way ECS is addressing issues. All students are being engaged daily in every classroom.

Nikki suggested that based on 3 years' data, there is software that can predict where each student will be a year from now. With this software, it encourages teachers to get every child to advance 1+ year, not only the students who need it most. Advanced students need to advance just as much each year. Allows teachers to not ignore any part of their student population.

We are currently in the enrollment period for ECS for next year. There are at least 370 applications for the lottery, which is a tremendous amount. It's exciting to be part of a school where people want to be part of it. Steve will find out the percentage of returning students, plus siblings, which will determine the number of kindergarten openings.

Will school address the "warning" status of AYP publically so potential families will not be scared away? School can give some possible cases of what could happen regarding stability of school. Will parents be willing to tell the other side of the story to the media? Steve will take this idea back to the administration.

This gives us the opportunity to develop a narrative, a story about our school, and the many ways you can judge a school. Also, we have many new teachers who have not been evaluated via last year's test scores.

Steve is confident that the entire school will continue to advance, including all African-American students, all gifted students, all subgroups. ECS strives to provide education adequately for all students.

Building safety: Officer White (from City of Pgh, Squirrel Hill location) is getting involved in emergency and safety preparedness. He is making sure that safe spaces in classrooms have been identified, developing a window signalling system, developing

new protocols. New key fobs will be used for school access instead of key codes. School would like to set up a meeting with parents with Officer White. Mandy Cribbs is the contact at the Upper School.

Upper School renovation plans will be shared soon. \$1M worth of renovations need to be done to prepare for a full 4-8 school next year.

### **PCO Board of Trustees Representative Report**

Lya reported that the Board looked at 2 or 3 different renovation options. There has been a lot of thought put into the changes. Anyone attending the board meetings can get more info. Board will be publishing an article in each comPOST for the rest of the year.

After-school art and sports programs (sports teams, theater, etc.) will be on the agenda at the next meeting - Feb. 20 at 6:30pm at the Upper School. Parents are welcome to attend.

The board meeting also included a talk by ECS Technology Director Todd Hoffman. There is a lot of flexible use of technology being incorporated into the classroom, which is exciting.

Lya highly recommends that parents show up at board meetings because you get a different point of view and it enriches your understanding of the operation of the school.

### **Review of Recent Events**

**Meet the Maestro** - Elena reported that this was a wonderfully successful event; 347 individuals attended. We hope to do it again next year.

**Holiday Marketplace** - Marla said this was also a successful event; we made over \$2300. We are starting to make plans for next year.

**Gingerbread Night** - Michelle Morrow said that approximately 40 families attended, which was enough to fill the space. About 75-80 houses were made. Saturday afternoon worked (as opposed to Friday evening). Both sessions were equally well attended. For the first year, this was an allergy-free event, which was a big undertaking. Thank you to student and parent volunteers.

**MLK Movie Day** - Marla reported from Katie Gancy that 205 people attended the movie day at Waterworks! The PCO made \$125 which will go to cover some of the cost of the next movie day. On Feb. 18, they will show a new movie, Escape from Planet Earth, which will be a little more expensive since it's a new release.

**Ice-Skating Event** - Beth Lott reported that the ice skating event happened despite the snow. It was great for the people who were able to get there.

**Lower School Movie Night** - Dave reported on the November movie night at the Lower School. There were 40 kids, 60 parents. Madagascar 3 was the movie. Dave and Deborah

prepared food and had a bake sale. If there's a need, Dave will plan another one before the end of the year.

### **Discussion of Upcoming Events**

**Excess for Recess** - Nikki reported that the all-school faculty meeting is being moved to Feb. 5, so we'll run the Excess for Recess event at that time as well. Donations are still being accepted. Beth is coordinating food and hot chocolate as a staff appreciation gesture. Nikki is looking for volunteers at 2:30 next Tuesday to set up. Last year we donated what was left over to the Hill House. Christy coordinated this and would be willing to do it again.

**ECS Group Ski Day** - Sharon Leavitt is taking RSVPs for the group ski day. People can buy tickets there at a discounted rate. She recommends renting offsite - \$10-15 for a day. Get more info at [ecspco.org](http://ecspco.org) or PCO Facebook events page. People can bring food to share; there will be ECS tables. Sharon may pick another date later this year to do it again. She also suggested that we should have a ski club next year.

**Game Night** - Marla said that Game Night is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 8. There will be board games in the auditorium and bingo in the cafeteria. We will have a` bake sale and pizza for sale too.

**Adult Social** - Beth said that the "Blooming Bash" will be raising money for arts enrichment. Save the date: April 13. School has a wish list for art materials (physical, dramatic, etc.). One goal is to have an artist in residence in each building. The committee is looking for donations for the raffle: physical items, services, company donations. Prices have increased above last year, but we do not want to raise ticket prices. The day before the event will be a day-long set-up. Lots of volunteers needed for set up and day of.

**Uniform Reuse Donations** - Marla reported that the Uniform Reuse Committee is currently collecting donations of gently used uniform clothing. We are purchasing a storage shelf to be used in the Lower School's storage room for uniforms.

### **Topics of Interest**

**Possible Fundraiser** - Nikki asked for a volunteer to organize an ECS Car Magnet fundraiser. Jess Gonzalez volunteered. Thank you Jess!

**March PCO Meeting** - The topic will be Internet Safety, presented by Stephanie Franklin and Beth Kravec. The focus will be more parent info, less business meeting in March.

**Field Trip Funding** - Tabled for next time - this is a topic that keeps coming up. How can PCO help to minimize the costs for all students?