

ECS PCO Meeting 11/26/12

Moderator's Report: Nikki welcomed everyone and read the PCO's mission statement. She reiterated a question from a parent - do we have two PCOs? one for each building? No, we have one combined. This meeting will be a combined business/town hall meeting. Jon McCann can't attend tonight, but Nikki will bring the notes from the town hall to a meeting with Jon on Wednesday, so if you have feedback for the administration, be sure to make a note of it during the town hall section.

There have been some instances when parents haven't felt that they are getting the response they expect from the school or are not sure where to turn concerning a particular issue. The PCO Exec committee met and discussed this issue. We came up with the idea to create a committee within the PCO that can act as a place to go to bring the issue to the administration. Some PCO volunteers will be working on the development of this committee. Our hope is that we can prevent parents from feeling lost in the system. We are in the beginning stages of creating this committee, so we can't answer questions about it, but you should hear more about it by January. Kate, Kristan, Molly, Joe and a few others will be working on this.

Secretary's Report: No report

Treasurer's Report

EXPENSES:

PCO Child Care: \$80.00
Fall Festival Bounce House: \$150.00
Fall Festival Pizza: \$308.57
Box Tops Mailing: \$12.85
Election Day Bake Sale Coffee: \$13.00
Crossing Guard Gift: \$33.30
October PCO Meeting Pizza: \$44.94
Teacher Appreciation: \$43.18
Party Kits: \$92.80
Fall Festival Supplies: \$254.97
Total: \$1033.61

INCOME:

Fall Festival: \$971.75
Election Day Bake Sale: \$304.00
Rand Study Donation: \$400.00
Total: \$1675.75

Balance: \$18809.33

PROFITS:

Donation: \$400.00

Election Day Bake Sale: \$291.00
Fall Festival: \$258.21

Kids of Steel Presentation: Megan Gregory

Megan Gregory introduced herself as the PE teacher at the Lower School. She is heading up the Kids of Steel program for ECS students. She will be running a one-month club at the lower school in the winter/spring. A representative from the Pittsburgh Marathon Kids of Steel program also spoke. She explained that participating students will run a marathon over the course of 17 weeks. At school and at home, they will keep track of their walking/running every week from January to April, for a total of 25.2 miles. On May 4 at the Pgh marathon, the kids will actually run 1 mile of the course (untimed) to finish their marathon (not required, but encouraged). The program is free, but there is a \$15 charge to run the last mile. Participants will receive a goodie bag, t-shirt, a race number and a medal for finishing. Parents are permitted to run with them and will be given a race number as well. The school gets benefits: for every 25 race registrations, school will receive 5 for free. With 50 kids participating, there is a chance to get one of 5 grants for the PE program at the school. Recommended for K-6. Older children are also welcome and can sign up for the 1-mile run or the 5K (all upper and lower school students are eligible). There's a nutrition aspect as well - students are encouraged to try 2-3 new fruits/veggies a week. March 31 is the deadline to sign up for the Kids Marathon at pittsburghmarathon.com.

Playground Update: Betsy Gianakas

At the beginning of the year, some parents and staff had been observing recess at the lower school to see what needs there are. The Amrusko family had been planning a treehouse project to honor and remember their children, Kate and Peter Amrusko. At this time, that project is intended to be developed at the lower school, in conjunction with a natural playscape. Landscape architects are collaborating with the school and the Amrusko family to make plans. More details will be released as plans are made and an article will be in the Jan/Feb comPOST.

PCO Board of Trustees Representative Report: Lya Laberge

Thanks to all of the parents who showed up at the last board meeting. The board recently heard from a charter school which successfully expanded their charter to include a high school. This is one of the options that the board will be exploring at the Board retreat on Dec. 9. At the last meeting, discipline concerns were brought up by parents. Lya wonders which parents have seen the 3-column flow chart explaining the discipline system - if you haven't seen it, mention it during town hall. The board will start posting information on the governing board section of the ECS website. It should include the agenda and minutes of each meeting. Week to week tracking of finances is in place; auditors have given thumbs up to finances.

Joe: Who is paying for high school expansion? Lya: Up until now, it's been exploratory only. School will be seeking grants to help pay future costs.

Dave: Jon mentioned at the board meeting that the PCO will be charged with reviewing the disciplinary system of the school. Nikki clarified that she will be discussing this issue with Jon and there may be a task force created to help with this. Parents (as PCO members) could sit on the task force and be involved in the conversation in some way.

One final concern that a parent brought up is the nurse issue. Having the nurse on duty for only a half day at each school is problematic for students. Parents want to know where to go with this issue - are there any records of children who get injured at school? If they visit the office with an injury, someone should be required to record this information. Nikki suggested that we take note in the town hall - as a first step - we will go from there. Sonia said the nurse offered to collect letters from concerned parents and report the demands from parents to the school.

Discussion of Upcoming Events

Meet the Maestro: Elena Hilf - Sunday, December 2, 2012

Elena said that tickets are available tonight at the \$6 price, the \$15/\$20 price will start tomorrow. Over 300 tickets have been sold through ECS; the Pgh Symphony is thrilled with the turnout. Intention for the sliding scale/donation system was in place, but there were confidentiality issues and the tickets ended up being \$6 for everyone at Jon McCann's request. Several people did give some extra money to cover some of the extra costs. ECS will have to cover the rest. Molly said the classroom programs were successful, and children came home talking about it. Only a few teachers participated, but there will probably be more classroom participation next year.

Holiday Marketplace: Marla Ferrency - December 7-9, 2012 with "Mini-Markets" during holiday concerts

The Holiday Marketplace is a gift shop at ECS with fair trade, local, very affordable gifts for the ECS community and the public. The main marketplace will take place in the auditorium over the weekend of Dec. 7-9. Dec. 7 is a half day and we'll be open from noon until 2pm that day for families and staff only. On Dec. 8-9, we will open to the public as well. During the four holiday concerts, we will also open a mini marketplace in the teachers' lounge. We will need many volunteers to help run the sale, to set up, to clean up on Sunday, and to help children shop in the Chickadee's Nest.

Gingerbread Event: Michelle Morrow - Saturday, December 15, 2012

Michelle explained that this is a family event where each participating family makes a gingerbread house. There will be lots of frosting and candy available. Planning is in progress. Two shifts - 10-noon and 2-4pm. Milk cartons and boxes will be collected - it was suggested that the committee ask the office staff if a collection box can be placed in the teachers' lounge. Nikki suggested asking the lunch staff to save half pint milk cartons. Deadline was listed as Nov. 28, but they can take reservations after that as long as space is available. Nikki suggested publicizing how many spaces are left. Enough space for 24 families in each shift (with last year's cafeteria set-up). Michelle will include "extended deadline" in the Wed Word this week.

Town Hall Discussion

Small groups discussed and took notes about the following questions. Nikki intends to share feedback from this town hall discussion with Jon McCann.

- o Take a moment to think about the things that draw you to ECS. What have you loved about this new school year? What's working? Do you have a special moment or a positive experience that you can share with the group?
- o How can home/school communication be improved? Have there been times when you felt that communication was handled just right? What did you like about the way it was handled? In situations where communication could have been improved, what changes could have been made to make the communication process easier?
- o What frustrations or concerns have you encountered this year? What suggestions do you have for dealing with those concerns?
- o What do you see for the future of ECS? Think about both short term and long term. What would you like to see happening in the next few months? What do you see for ECS in five years? Ten?