

# **DOUGLASS PTO/SIT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

## **November 12, 2003**

### MEMBERS PRESENT:

Traci Hoops, Chair  
Christa Tourault, Co-Chair  
Carole Carroll, Secretary  
Vicky Mayfield, Treasurer  
Laura Burke, Volunteer Coordinator  
Lorraine Trezek, Volunteer Coordinator

Kelley King, Principal  
Nancy Chiu, Faculty Member  
Elaine Schwenker, Faculty Member  
Lisa Sobieniak, Faculty Member  
Lynn Twietmeyer, Faculty Member

### ABSENT:

None

### GUESTS:

Sue Inslee, DPC Rep.; Joe Swenson, Auction Committee; Suzanne Bartlett, parent; Cheri Merriman, 5<sup>th</sup> Gr. Teacher, Chitra Seshan, parent; Kathy Ransom, K Teacher; Peggy Gosin, parent; Molly Waterman, Auction Committee; Penny Tompkins, Auction Committee; Paul Francisco, Administrative Intern; Natalie Portman-Marsh, parent; Lisa Pellman, grocery script.

### WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS:

Traci opened the meeting by having board members introduce themselves with a brief description of their position on the board. Guests then introduced themselves.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Traci motioned to approve last month's meeting minutes. Carole seconded. All approved.

### TREASURER'S REPORT:

Vicky passed out the current Profit & Loss vs. Actual and Balance sheets. She reported that:

- We still haven't paid Innisbrook because there are some mistakes to fix before we make final payment.
- We have started the grocery script program. We made about \$900 this first month according to Lisa Pellman. Because we pre-purchase the scripts the program won't show as making money in the budget for quite awhile.
- Mini-grants have been put into the budget. Only one has been paid out. It's the one for Smith/Unrau. Vicky is waiting to receive receipts from them.

### DPC REPORT:

Sue Inslee introduced herself to the guests. She explained that the District Parent Council is a forum for representatives from each school to get together with Dr. Garcia and some board members (though usually only 1 or 2 show up). The first hour is a roundtable. Dr. Garcia spends about 15-20 minutes relaying important information. Then a specific predetermined topic is addressed. The first meeting's the topic was board candidates. Last month's topic was the financial climate within the State of CO as well as within the BVSD. The speaker was a woman named Vicky Newell. She publishes an email newsletter called Capital Quips, which Sue has subscribed to. Vicky knows all about what's happening in the legislature. Sue said she feels it's critical to stay informed on these legislative issues. Anyone can subscribe to Vicky's newsletter. The CFO for BVSD also presented. The next meeting's topic will focus on charter schools. Sue shared that BVSD currently has a moratorium on new charter schools, but the issue of Flagstaff Charter School will be discussed because they will most likely appeal (at the state level) St. Vrain's decision to deny them. One of the speakers at that meeting will be Chris King. The meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wed. of the month at the Education Center on Arapahoe Road.

Sue shared that her contact information is on the school's website. She also added that new this year, the DPC has added an Advisement component to the meetings. This is to address issues which parents feel have not been resolved. One topic, which came up, was the need for a long term facilities management plan. The goal is to get the dialogue to be more productive.

Sue then addressed the board regarding another issue not related to DPC meetings. At previous DPC and PTO meetings, Sue heard Christina Suarez present on available grants through the Boulder Valley Foundation for Schools. Several parents she knows wanted to see a grant written for parents on adolescent issues. Sue shared that she and Maureen West have been putting together a grant proposal with the Caring Pregnancy Center (CPC) to hold a parent education night next spring. The program would be open to all Douglass parents but the target audience would be parents of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. The proposed grant program would help parents learn about the sexual culture of today's youth and provide them with the information and tools to be proactively involved with the education of their children regarding sexual issues. The CPC focuses on promoting abstinence as a way to avoid STDs, pregnancy, and emotional issues. Sue and Maureen are planning to submit this grant proposal to BVFS under their Connect Grant Program, the deadline for which is Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>. They are requesting minimal grant funding for program materials (handouts) and promotion. Sue requested approval from the board for the PTO to endorse, support, and host the event if they gain grant approval. Traci shared that she heard a presentation from CPC at Sue's house last spring and found it very helpful and informative. Kelley felt it would be a helpful topic. She verified with Sue that there is no religious connection. Joe Swenson added that he would like the board to consider funding the grant if the BVFS grant was denied. Sue said that grant funding decision would be made in mid December so we would still have time to pursue that option with the PTO/SIT at a later meeting if the proposal did not receive BVFS funding. Laura motioned to approve PTO's endorsement, support, and hosting of this event once the grant is approved from BVFS. Vicky seconded. All approved. Traci recommended that Sue speak with Vicki Hankey if she needs any assistance with the grant writing process.

#### CHILE PRESENTATION:

Cheri Merriman, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, shared a slide show presentation with the board and discussed her exchange trip to La Serena, Chile. She went in June with her daughter and they stayed for ten days. Cheri reminded us that the Chile teacher exchange program began about 4 years ago after a Douglass parent, who had moved here from La Serena, suggested it. The school is a private, K-12 facility. Cheri taught each day. She said all the families were warm, generous, amazing hosts. She thanked the board for the opportunity to experience this different culture. The Chile committee is now discussing the possibility of an exchange program for 4<sup>th</sup> &/or 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. A survey was sent out about this with favorable response given, both for sending students and hosting students. Elaine commented that she is amazed at how different each teacher's experience has been. Traci asked how Cheri's experience would be incorporated or shared with the general student body. Elaine and Cheri both said that the committee is working on this. Cheri's feelings were that it is difficult to bring the experience of the Chile culture into our school. She thinks that the best way is to do the student exchanges. One idea the committee had was to try pen pals. Kelley said another idea was to use weather as a connection, especially in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and to use email. The committee is talking about hosting some Chilean adults and students in late Feb. of this school year. Molly Waterman suggested trying to videotape more of the experience. Cheri thought this might be difficult since she's teaching every day. Sue Inslee suggested taking videos of our kids to bring to Chile. Lisa S. suggested the visiting teacher could ask for one day off of teaching specifically to videotape. Laura and Traci both shared that they would like to see more school-wide involvement in this program. Laura asked once again if we are limited to Chile for an exchange program. Kelley shared that there are other options out there, but a benefit of staying with Chile, especially if we send students, is that it is a known entity. We won't be sending our kids to an unknown environment or host families. Cheri concurred that it was very helpful to have friends in Chile for support. Chitra Seshan asked if the school was typical of one that our kids would go to. Elaine answered yes. Even though it is a private school, most families in Chile don't use public schools. Chitra then asked what our primary goal is with this program. Kelley answered that the goal is to help our students understand diversity and another culture. It gives our students exposure to the greater world. One of the greatest benefits of the program is that the Chilean teachers come here and share with our kids. This program is a piece of multicultural education. Joe Swenson asked what about exposing the kids to the diversity in our own culture. Kelley agreed this is important and feels that teachers try to do that using families from our student body. Chitra added that since Douglass' community is not very diverse, perhaps we should connect more with our sister school, Lafayette Elem., which is very diverse. Laura agreed with this idea. Chitra suggested field trips to other schools to observe classrooms, followed by discussion. Lisa S. & Lynn both said they have tried pen pal situations in 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grades, but in the end, it still ends up being "our

school” vs. “your school”. Kelley wrapped up discussion by suggesting we put the topic of multicultural experiences/education back on the agenda for discussion at a later date. Clearly, there is no one experience or field trip that will work. There needs to be a variety of activities. Lisa S. invited parents to join the environmental committee, which has been focusing on the goal of improving multicultural education. Email Lisa if interested.

#### AUCTION SOFTWARE FUNDING:

Penny Tompkins introduced herself as a Douglass parent on the Spring Auction Committee. She handed out a typed proposal requesting purchase of a software program, which will streamline all the paperwork needed for all phases of the auction. The committee met last week and realized this year’s auction is going to be bigger and better. They recognized a need to centralize all the information needed for a successful auction. They researched the various computer programs to do this. They are asking for approval for \$1200 to purchase the program outlined in the handout, then \$300 yearly to cover the yearly maintenance fee. By using this program, all the auction information will remain at Douglass, yet committee members can access it from their home computers. By having the information at Douglass, future committees will no longer have to start from scratch when planning an auction. This will improve the likelihood of getting future volunteers. Chitra asked who would be responsible for training people how to use the software. Traci responded that she has spoken with their Customer Support line and found them very responsive. Penny said that the program has many built in training wizards and that the committee would take responsibility for training the next person from year to year. Traci offered the idea of finding a parent volunteer who would take on the job of learning the program and training committee members how to use it. Joe shared his opinion that even if we only used the program for one year, the money spent would be a good value. Lisa S. questioned how the program would work given that the school is Mac based and most home computers are PCs. She also has some concerns about the transfer of data with the firewall that the school has in place. She would like to be sure the technical aspect of the program is feasible with our school system. Penny replied that she has heard that Kelley has a laptop, which could be used to receive all the information. Her understanding is that program information is downloaded to the software’s server, then we retrieve it from them as needed. Lynn T. shared that she has a PC, which could be used if the laptop isn’t available. Laura asked if this is the best price. Penny replied yes. The maintenance fee covers tech support and free upgrades. Molly W. commented that the program would improve accuracy. Penny and several others committee members have demo’d the product and found it very user friendly. Lisa S. motioned to approve purchase of this program contingent upon discussion with the tech people to make sure it will work with our system. Carole seconded. All approved.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- Joe Swenson related a conversation he had with Traci at an Auction Committee meeting regarding the \$40,000 raised last year. He recognized that a large portion of the money was used to help with literacy and special ed. issues, which is important, but he also feels we need to use some money towards a large, physical focus such as a shade structure. This led to a discussion about total playground revitalization. Joe feels that this tangible project would be a motivator for parents to spend money at the auction. Traci then shared that a parent has come forward offering architectural and landscape contacts that could come up with a three to five year plan. Chitra expressed concern that educational spending cuts will continue to happen and if so, how will they be funded. Traci replied that we need to have concrete goals in order to be able to ask for donations each year. Kelley said that having a 3-5 year plan is helpful because it keeps things flexible. Laura B. asked if there’s a chance that the school board would tell us we can’t go forward with whatever plans we come up with. Kelley responded that we do have to work with District Operations because we are dealing with school property. Several parents present supported the idea of a shade structure. As a teacher, Lynn felt the shade structure space would be used. Kelley said that what we would be voting on today is simply continued meetings with the architect to develop plans. The board would be presented with the plans to approve before any money is spent. Carole motioned to approve developing plans for playground revitalization. Laura seconded. All approved.
- Traci shared a Wish List binder, which she would like teachers/staff to use. She would like them to put both large and small wishes in the book. This information would be helpful for fundraising chairs to use the wishes as goal items and also for parents to use as a reference when thinking of teacher gift ideas. Lisa S. cautioned that we make sure

to look at the whole picture and prioritize the wish list. Traci responded that if things get put in the book, then we **could** prioritize them. The binder will be kept in the office. Lynn said that years ago teachers did come up with a holiday wish list, which was published in the newsletter. Perhaps we could go back to that practice. Traci said she would really like the book to be a central spot for all wishes that come up any time of the year. As long as we know what is needed/wished for, the board can then prioritize and work to get things paid for.

- Discussion on fundraising survey results, college planning seminars, and spring auction update was postponed to due time constraints.

#### FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY:

Lisa S. presented a fundraising opportunity. It is a Read-A-Thon. The students get pledges for the amount of books that they will read in a given amount of time. The appeal of this fundraiser is that the company does all the work. All we do is hand out pledge papers to the students. The students get a sponsor note, which they send to relatives and friends. All the checks are sent to the company, then they send the school a check for 75% of the money collected. There are also different levels of reimbursement, with some % coming back in books. We don't have a choice in what books. Sue Inslee shared that at the DPC meeting it was mentioned that both jog-a-thon and read-a-thon fundraisers tend to be successful. Penny Thomkins felt it was a great idea, but thought that 25 cents/dollar to administer it was a lot of money and she didn't like the idea that we couldn't choose our own books. She felt we could find a volunteer to manage it on our own. Traci asked Christa to evaluate this fundraiser and email the board with the information. We can then vote on it in Dec.

#### ADDITIONAL MINIGRANT APPLICATIONS:

- Alicia Cohen, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, requested \$500 to purchase books to be used by her students in a take home bag literacy program. Laura motioned to approve. Carole seconded. All approved.
- The second grade teachers, Lisa S., and Nicky K. requested \$600 to purchase nonfiction books that will be used by 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students during their studies of Australia. Lynn motioned to approve. Carole seconded. All approved.
- Lisa S. shared that she has investigated digital cameras and it will be less expensive than she thought.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion postponed due to time constraints.

#### PRINCIPAL ACTION ITEMS:

Discussion postponed due to time constraints. Kelley will email board members with information if necessary. Kelley handed out the Site Review Report Form for board members to read at home.

Carole motioned to adjourn the meeting. Lorraine seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.