



## **Discovery Community School**

<http://dcs.ourschoolpages.com/Home>

### **DCS Steering Meeting Notes**

**Date:** Dec. 5th , 2024 7pm – 8:30pm

**Location:** Zoom

*Presiding: Aditi Jain & Jaclyn Senekerimyan*

*Minutes: Robin Desilet*

*Opening: 7:05pm*

### **Welcome + Announcements - Aditi & Jaclyn**

- We have a few extra guests tonight who will provide feedback on the budget.

### **Teacher's Report - Subcleff**

- It's pink or black day tomorrow.
- The DCS Open House/Info Night has been rescheduled to be before the next community meeting in January. It will be more of an Open House than Info Night since applications will already be closed.

### **Treasurer's Report - Lindal/ Puneet**

- We had a lengthy discussion about the need to increase dues next year. The following points were discussed:
  - Aditi created an updated budget breakdown to show income vs. expenditures (spending) per year by child. Please see attachment for details. We are in the red based on income versus expenditures each year. For example, in 2022 we had an income of \$354.20 and expenditure of \$458.83 per child.
  - Our reserves have fluctuated over the years. Currently we have around \$20,000 in reserves. Part of that reserve is money that will still need to be spent throughout the year. Last year we spent \$39,151. We discussed how much should be held in reserves. Prior to COVID, it was typically spent down further. Now we are trying to keep one year worth of reserves in place. Reserves are to make sure that if less dues come in or other items come up that we haven't budgeted for we don't go insolvent.
  - We haven't increased dues in a long time and our spending is not keeping up with inflation. While it might have been better to slowly increase it over time, we

didn't want to when trying to spend down the reserves from COVID. There is now a need to increase dues so we don't continue to pull from reserves.

- We could offer the option for a partial hardship allowance. Currently that is available for families who request a hardship allowance. We may receive more hardship allowances with the increase in dues.
- Corporate matching was exceptionally high last year. We also just received a significant amount from corporate matching (\$5,750). The Treasures will send out a reminder to the DCS Community about corporate matching. While very helpful, we can't always count on corporate matching.
- The dues at the community school in Houghton are currently \$350. We are looking at doing a similar amount, increasing the dues by \$100 per child.
- The question was posed: Do we want to budget to spend in the way that we have in the past (then dues need to increase over time) or adjust what we do moving forward? We need to reevaluate our budget and decide if there are any expenses that we want to cut or reduce. We determined that it really is a separate meeting and should be discussed during the budget meeting. We want to make sure that we continue to have the programming that makes us special as a choice school.
- Another idea would be to do incremental increases instead of a bulk amount. For example, dues will increase by a certain percentage every year.
- The final decision by the Steering Committee was to have the community vote on raising the dues \$100 per child for the next two years. We will need to continue to monitor our budget closely to determine if dues will need to go up further in the future.
- **December Statements**
  - Checking : \$20,468 (including \$5,700 matching funds we just received in Dec.)
  - Saving \$13,349
  - Total: \$33,817
- An email reminder will be sent to families soon who have not paid their dues yet. A separate email will also be sent to the community to remind them about corporate matching.
- The treasurers will find out if we have any 1099's that need to be sent for vendors/independent contractors that we've paid \$600 or more.

## **Principal's Report - Bowser**

- Thank you to the DCS Community for helping with the warming/charging stations during the power outage. We were able to use some of the leftover cider and other items from the Fall event. The first day there were about 40 people who came. Thank you for pitching in and helping out.
- Due to the power outage, we did not have our Info Night. Instead we will do it before our next community meeting. It would be great to have a few parents available to talk with parents before they go down to the classrooms. A few kids are also going to talk or be in a video that is shared at the event. We believe it will be mainly incoming Kindergarten families who attend.

- We have a couple of Learning journeys coming up next week and in January. It's helpful to get the payments into the school office quickly after the learning journeys. After a Learning Journey, if someone could come in within a week to settle it up that would be helpful.
- Pink/Black day tomorrow.
- The PTSA/DCS fundraiser will be a week before break on Dec. 20th and include a pie in the face of Ms. Bowser and Ms. Kusunose. Families have not been getting the communications from the PTSA and Jaclyn is working on it.

### **Community Building Chair - Annie**

- We might have a Coordinator for the Winter event.
- In January, there will be a planning/schedulign meeting with the Winter event team.

### **Friday Specials**

- Friday Specials will be Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> and Feb 7th and 21st.

### **Community Meeting - Jaclyn**

- Jaclyn discussed that we might not need the November community meeting next year and proposed that we could replace it with the Information Night for new families and then do a Parents Night Out (PNO) after. We decided we'd cancel the Nov. community meeting next year as we still have enough meetings per our bylaws and do this instead.
- Upcoming Community meeting dates:
  - Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> – Dues
  - Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>- Guest Speaker
  - March 20<sup>th</sup>- Budget Approval
  - April 24<sup>th</sup>- Board Elections
  - May 15<sup>th</sup> – Departing Families (last community meeting of the year)

### **Master Checklist - Robin & Phoebe**

- Reviewed items on the master checklist for January.

### **Walk-on Topics - Anyone**

- Treasures asked what line item the Cedar Springs Outdoor Ed. expense should go under. We determined we'd put it under the Olders Camp Teacher expense for now.

**Next Community Meeting: Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 (Hybrid)**

**Next Steering Committee Meeting: Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Zoom)**

*Adjourned: 8:25pm*