

Lawton Elementary PTA

**Board Retreat Minutes**  
**August 30, 2011, 9:00 AM**  
**Gonzalez Residence**

**In Attendance:** Lisa Blau, Margaret Bolger, Diana Deen Thompson, Kimberlee Ely, Kelly Fulks, Neal Gerrans, Michelle Gonzalez, Christine Helm, Kathy Johnson, Kimball Mullins, Connie Olson, Cheryl Parks, Sarah Terry

**Welcome and Handbooks:** Diana welcomed the incoming Board to the meeting, and distributed PTA handbooks to Board members.

**I. Mission, Vision, Goals and Guiding Principles**

We discussed our attitudes about the coming year. The group generated lists of things we are excited about, and things we are anxious about.

Things we are excited about:

- Kids going back to school
- Moving on from past controversies (i.e. Spectrum)
- New staff members
- New families
- Christine's second year

Anxieties:

- Need art project chair
- Need more broad-based PTA and volunteer involvement
- Communications/Website changes
- Auction/primary fundraiser

**Mission:** We looked at the WSPTA mission and discussed our view of our local unit's mission:

- Engage families
- Advocate at the state level via legislative chair/communicate with membership about education issues
- Work with other community PTAs
- Supplement/enrich the school day
- Support Lawton students

**Vision:** We discussed vision as it relates to broadening family involvement. How can we give families the opportunity to express their vision/see themselves in the PTA's vision?

**Communication:** We discussed ideas for activating membership. We need to improve communications, but also create structures within PTA to tap into people's talents and passions, and to involve people who may have less availability or inclination to volunteer. Specific ideas included:

- Hold social events for new families (i.e. cocktail hours, grade band potlucks)
- Ensure that events are adequately described in promotional materials
- Co-op model; foster a culture of involvement, expectation of voluntarism
- Rename the "Lawton Needs You" document "What's your passion? What's your talent?" or similar
- Publicize an incentive or attendance goal to increase general meeting attendance
- Make work meaningful/connected to school
- Use multiple forms of communication

**Forms of Communication:** We enumerated the different possible forms of communication we can use:

- Website
- Newsletter
- Kid Mail
- Facebook
- Personal
- Reader board
- Teacher e-mails? There is an effort underway to have all teachers regularly communicate with parents. Maybe Cheryl can fill them in on PTA happenings
- Principal? Christine is hoping to continue coffee chats, and to add an evening time for working parents
- Bulletin Board? Should we revamp, so that people have something to look at in the hallway?
- Alternatives? Diana mentioned a PR-style approach, and the idea of having a PR professional come talk to us

**Guiding Principles:** We discussed guiding principles for the year.

- Listening/not talking over one another

- Who communicates with staff about what topics? Budget information should come from the principal
- Trust decisions/group process
- Confidentiality? Meetings open, but should use discretion when discussing sensitive topics
- Conflict resolution should occur between conflicting parties (i.e. directly)
- Assume positive intent

## **II: Decisions Needed for this School Year**

**Co-President:** Michelle has accepted a full-time job as Assistant Dean at the UW School of Law, and has decided to step down as Co-President. Sarah would be willing to step in for the year, unless there are objections and/or other interested parties.

➤ **VOTE:** A motion was made and seconded to appoint Sarah Terry as Co-President. This appointment is technically interim until the General Meeting. Motion passed (11 votes in favor).

**Secretary:** We will need a new secretary. We should think about potential candidates. We can recruit personally, and post in the newsletter.

**Board Meetings:** Diana has proposed a new time for Board Meetings. If we meet on the first Friday of the month from 3:30-4:30, then staff can attend. Although Fridays are difficult, most were available at this time. We decided that 2 hours might be more realistic, and settled on 3:15-5:15. Since several people will need childcare at this time, Connie will contact Marla Master about arranging sitters.

**Non-PTA Fundraisers:** A group of parents are holding a fundraiser for Islandwood and for the purchase of guitars for the music program. This is not a PTA event, but we were asked to help promote the event. We discussed whether this should concern us, given the number of fundraisers we are holding early in the year, and whether we should support fundraising that occurs outside of our budgeting process. Ultimately, we decided that all fundraising that benefits the school is desirable on some level, and we have two basic options in this case:

1. Don't advertise the event
2. Advertise the event on the website, on Facebook, and in the newsletter.

We decided to advertise the event, but clarify that it isn't PTA sponsored. Diana will talk to the parents in question about ways that we can help/collaborate in the future.

**Spring Fundraiser:** Due to time constraints, we deferred this topic. We scheduled an evening meeting on September 22 at 7:00 PM at Mulleady's to discuss.

**Budget for new teachers:** Lisa noticed an error in last year's budget that resulted in a \$10,000 overestimate in the teacher grants line item. As a result, less money is available for the new teachers than previously reported. Lisa asked Christine if she had ideas about how to distribute the money (\$2,400). She did not have a preference beyond that it be equitable.

*(Christine, Neal, and Cheryl left for work commitments after this discussion)*

**First Day Packets and New Student Orientation:** We will meet at school for packet assembly at 9:00 AM on September 6. New student orientation is from 2:00-3:00 that day. We need several people to help set up, be present at the event. We decided not to provide drinks, but we'll have cookies. Margaret offered to bring in cookies, but is not able to be at the event. Kimball will remind Christine that she should be prepared to welcome families, and answer questions.

**Items to Communicate to Families:** Some things that need clarification (Kimball will discuss with Christine):

- **School supplies:** Laura is purchasing centrally to take advantage of bulk discounts and ensure that teachers get the right supplies. Families will be asked to pay \$30 per student for supplies.
- **Slow start:** One source says A-L kindergarteners come on Wednesday; another says A-M.
- **Hours:** have a new start time, so need to inform people about the hours (8:55-3:00). Kimball will double-check with Christine.
- **Busing:** People should receive notification about their transportation. If they don't, we should advise them to contact the district's transportation department.

**Welcome Teas on 9/7 and 9/8:** These are designed to welcome kindergarten parents/get them out of the classrooms. We should try to be present. Diana can come on Thursday, but not Wednesday. Sarah can come on Wednesday.

**Welcome Back Bash, 9/16:** We do not have chairs for this event, so will handle it by committee, as we did last year. We have a couple of different options for food:

1. **Matt, Where 'Ya At?:** Food trucks. People could bring a picnic or buy from vendor. We would not need to collect money, and could use our \$2,000 budget on bouncy houses.
2. **Bucca di Beppo:** Pasta and salad catered for under \$5/plate. This includes everything but drinks.

Last year, bouncy houses were \$1,000 (for 2 modular and 1 slide). This year, we need to rent generators from Clowns, Unlimited due to safety concerns. We need a new estimate on bouncy houses.

We elected to go with option #1 (Matt, Where 'Ya At?). We divided up responsibilities as follows:

- **Food:** Kelly will get menu options and pricing from Matt, and will figure out whether there is a minimum commitment.
- **Bouncy Houses:** Connie will get a new estimate from Clowns, Unlimited.
- **Volunteers:** Kimberlee will coordinate volunteers with help from room parents. We need setup people from 5:00-5:30; cleanup people from 8:00-8:30, and people to monitor bouncy houses during the event (4 bouncers X 5 shifts).
- **Bake Sale:** Connie will contact Nancy Knoll and Lisa Bogen about a bake sale. Proceeds can go to Islandwood since it is early in the year.
- **Membership:** We should have a membership table, so will need a cash box.

**Move-a-Thon, 9/30:** Amy Crocker is chairing this event, but has no co-chair. There is a box of supplies and a flash drive that she hasn't been able to get ahold of. She is working with Maria and Joni (last year's chairs) to track it down.

**Dance Dude 10/24-28:** Deana Metteer is chairing this event. We will change the name of the 9/28 evening event to "Dance Party" to avoid confusion with the Father/Daughter Hoedown fundraiser.

**Paper Drive:** We have no chair for this. Maybe we could collect with the school supply money in the fall. Diana will check with Laura/Christine to see whether we need a fall paper drive at all.

**Other Needs:** Connie will send out a list of events so that everyone can see where we need chairpersons. The art project is a

fairly pressing need, since work needs to be in early in the year to be ready by the holidays.

**Meeting Adjourned 12:30 PM**

Minutes respectfully submitted by  
Sarah Terry  
Recording Secretary  
September 1, 2011