

L'Etoile du Nord Parent Teacher Organization
Draft Meeting Minutes, Thursday, October 13th, 2022

Executive Team Members Present: Rebekah LaCasse (President), Colin Nelson-Dusek (Secretary), Breann Tierschel (Treasurer), Malia Caruso (Communications chairperson), Christophe de Campeau (Intern committee chairperson), Mike Willaford (Social chairperson), Jason Jewell (Fundraising chairperson), Regan Hall Reinerth (Marketing chairperson)

Other: Rebecca Pedersen (Interim School principal)

Absent:

Rebekah opened the meeting at 8:01pm.

Welcome and President's Update: Rebekah presented. Rebekah welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked all in attendance to introduce themselves and name their children at LNFI. Rebekah said that we are here all for the support of our children, the school, and the educational mission of LNFI. Rebekah then gave an overview of the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) and named the executive officer positions (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee Heads - Communications, Social, Intern, Fundraising). She also emphasized the welcoming nature of the PTO and called on everyone to offer whatever they could to help out the organization, be it time, talent, or funding. Rebekah also discussed the bylaws of the PTO and where to find them, and the intended goal of having the meeting agenda ready before each meeting starts.

Rebekah reviewed the positions on the executive committee and noted that the positions are all volunteer and that anyone is welcome to participate. The PTO is always looking for people to help out. She then moved on to the procedure and etiquette of the meeting and said that there will be time for questions and comments at the end of the meeting.

Rebekah then introduced Rebecca Pedersen and ceded to her.

Principal's Update: Rebecca presented. She introduced herself and said that the beginning of the school year has gone as well as it could, given the merging of the two campuses. Rebecca noted that there will be construction work on October 20th and 21st. The work will be adding new steps that go from the playground area to the bus loading area on Flandrau St. There will also be some work on the playground to prevent tripping hazards for children.

Rebecca announced that there will be two new teaching assistants starting at the end of the month. One will be focusing on special education, and the other will be primarily working in the kindergarten classes.

Rebecca asked if there were any questions. A parent asked who will be taking over the third grade class when Mme Scholl goes on parental leave. Rebecca stated that there will be

information soon on the long-term substitute teachers, probably in the family newsletter on October 14. There was discussion.

Rebekah also announced that there will be no 5th grade trip to France this academic year. This was a decision that came from the district and that no international travel will be happening for any schools in the district.

Committee Reports (Intern/Fundraising/Social/Communications/Marketing): Christophe presented first. He introduced the Intern Committee, its purpose, and the organizational structure of the committee. Christophe then updated the attendees on the activities of the interns and ways to promote outreach and networking for the interns and the LNFI community. Christophe said the next step will be to introduce the interns to their next homestays, which will happen after the winter break. He also discussed the challenges of getting the intern program operating again after two years of the Covid pandemic. He expressed a wish to create a standard operating procedure for the intern program this year. Christophe then shared that LNFI received a \$4000 grant from the FACES organization (which is affiliated with the French government), and he will apply for the grant again next year to help fund the intern program. Christophe asked if there were any questions. One parent asked if there were efforts to get interns from French-speaking countries outside of France. There was discussion.

Rebekah presented updates for the Fundraising Committee. She noted that Jason had been the committee chair, but will be stepping down in the coming weeks. Rebekah moved to the Direct Donation Campaign and discussed the structure of the campaign and incentives for donating. The PTO will also be participating in Give to the MAX Day and will be doing the fun run again this year (which will happen in the second half of January). Rebekah also stated that funds raised go toward the intern program. There was discussion.

Mike updated everyone on the Social Committee. He gave everyone information on what the Social Committee does and gave people an update on the Parent/Teacher conferences and parent potluck. He said that there will be a call for contributions to the potluck in the coming days, so keep an eye out.

Mike said that there will be a winter event and said that a tentative date will be on December 9 and talked about ideas for the event (something like a Winter Formal/elegant party feel). There was discussion about the event and potential dates.

Malia gave a brief introduction and updates on the Communications Committee. She talked about ways that the PTO tries to get information out to the community, and was open to suggestions for new ways to present information to as many people as possible. She also said that they are exploring options for translating the backpack fliers into French and Spanish, and they are currently looking for a Spanish translator.

Chelda Smith gave a brief update about the Book Fair (November 14-22). She is working with Malia to bring the Book Fair to LNFI.

Regan presented information on the Marketing Committee and gave an update. She said one of the primary goals for this year is retention and new enrollment of students and families. To this end, Regan asked for help in presenting LNFI at the School Choice Fair this year (December 10). Not only will there be teachers, but Regan would like families, former students, and interns to also be available to present at the fair.

Regan would also like to have a yard sign drive/distribution campaign to spread the word about LNFI. The date of the drive is to be determined, but the week of November 13 is possible. There was discussion about communication and promotion of school diversity. Platforms like TikTok and other venues for connecting LNFI to the wider Francophone community in the Twin Cities metro area were mentioned.

Treasurer's Update (Budget & Forecast/YTD Income Statement): Breann presented. She introduced herself and the responsibilities of the Treasurer. She presented the budget and forecast for the PTO, as well as the year-to-date income statement. July 1-June 30 is the PTO's fiscal year. We are currently in month three of the fiscal year. Breann noted that the years of the pandemic have caused irregularities in the budget in the recent past, but what is being presented now is the best estimate possible. From the current annual budget, we have a proposed shortfall of \$4000, but new programs and fundraising opportunities will, hopefully, make up the deficit.

In terms of the income statement, most of the expenses so far have come from the intern program.

New Business - Voting of Colin Nelson-Dusek as Secretary: Rebekah talked about the procedure for nominating and electing executive officers. There are still some openings available (Vice President, Committee co-chairs). Rebekah talked about the ways the PTO has been getting information out for the open positions.

Rebekah then said there has been a nominee for the Secretary position - Colin Nelson-Dusek. Colin introduced himself, briefly discussed the responsibilities of the Secretary, and detailed his qualifications for the position.

Rebekah motioned to hold a vote to approve Colin as Secretary of the PTO. Mike seconded. Colin was approved as the Secretary, with no abstentions.

Rebekah talked about other volunteer opportunities (in particular, a coordinator for National African American Parent Involvement Day, School Showcase coordinator, a Spanish translator, a Vice President, and a Fundraising Committee chair). There was discussion.

Time for Questions and Comments: Rebekah opened up the meeting for questions and comments. Some of the questions that arose from this time: what are the best ways to

communicate to the LNFI and wider community? How can people contribute without getting too “deep” into PTO activities?

Rebekah expressed her thanks to all attendees and ended the meeting at 9:44pm.

Amicalement,
Colin Nelson-Dusek, secretary