

L'Etoile du Nord Parent Teacher Organization  
Draft Meeting Minutes, Thursday, May 16th, 2024

Meeting Start Time 5/16 @ 5:30pm

PTO Team Members Present: Rebekah LaCasse (President), Michou Tchoffo (Vice President), Erica Scott (Fundraising chair), Malia Caruso (Communications chairperson)

Other: Sofia Bossard (Principal), Janet Collins, Moderator (CRC Minnesota)

Absent: Nicole Kelley (Social Committee chair),

**Announcements:**

(bad connection - I couldn't Hear for a moment)

BIPOC Support Group: May 17<sup>th</sup>- This is a group for those who identify as BIPOC; Black, Indigenous, Person of Color. The meeting offers a place to receive and offer support in a safe environment, centers on creating community building to help create a sense of belonging. Participants can share similar backgrounds, experiences and challenges. The group offers validation and empathy for each other, and mental health support. BIPOC group focuses on adults, meanwhile child care is available and children receive care from high school students. Dinner is provided. Please join!

Open Gym: May 21<sup>st</sup> 6-8pm in Gym. Students must wear socks or appropriate footwear and accompanied by an adult. Please join!

Soiree Gastronomique & Culturelle & Talent Show: Talent show participants have been practicing twice a week, there are a few weeks left! Students are learning music, dancing, singing and poem. The community is invited to the free celebration which features a talent show followed by a cultural dinner on Friday May 31<sup>st</sup> from 4-8pm at LNFI. Please join!

Kermesse: Tickets are currently on sale on our website and app. Special promotion for ticket pre-sale, spend \$20 and receive 4 free tickets. Event will feature games, food and a silent auction. Each classroom is putting together a themed basket- donations accepted through May 24<sup>th</sup>. Please see PTO website for more details. June 7<sup>th</sup> 4-8pm at LNFI. Please join!

Spirit Wear pre-sale will be arriving in the next week or 2. All Spirit Wear items will be sent home with students.

Playground summer meetups are scheduled for the Summer. This is an informal playground meetup at Battle Creek Playground. Playground playdates are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of June, July & August from 10am-12pm. Please wear spirit wear or school colors as an identifier!

#### **Finance Presentation by Hannah with Mahoney CPAs and Advisors:**

Mahoney CPAS and Advisors has been preparing the PTO taxes; 990 pro bono. Hannah was asked to conduct a high level review of the books to ensure everything looks reasonable; PTO is currently without a designated Treasurer. Hannah Tied out balance sheet accounts, pulled prior year 990 to confirm the balances match. Hannah presented the balance sheet through April 30<sup>th</sup> 2024. The accounts have earned over \$1,400 in interest from CD accounts. PayPal retrieves donations every month and they are flushed into the banking account. There is an estimated \$2,000 earned from the Plant Sale that has not yet been received. The PTO spendings are below anticipated budget.

Hannah said the accounts seem reasonable and made sure items were categorized the same as last year. Hannah conducted some re-classing on how to record petty cash coming in and out for events. ( I couldn't hear this well)

Looking to end the year, the budget is not in the red, and under spending schedule which shows a solid financial position.

As a reminder all reports are shareable if anyone wants more information after the meeting they can reach out. Per PTO Bylaws the accounts are available on short notice.

Question from Attendee: (bad connection, I couldn't hear for a moment)

Answer provided by Rebekah: Every 1-2 weeks a report is emailed (couldn't hear well)

Mediator wants to hold the question to the end since it is a question about the process and not the budget presented.

Intern Committee Budget Overview provided by Rebekah LaCasse:

Biggest spend in the PTO budget is the intern program, the Program is only possible with support form the entire community.

Breakdown for the intern program:

- Visa agency processes the J1 visas: \$1900 per intern
- The Intern Committee is hoping to bring 6 interns next year and we have enough host families
- There is an anticipated \$11,400 for visa processing fees
- Each intern receives a stipend of \$350/ per month
- Host family provides the Intern with boarding and meals
- The Intern Program is a huge collaboration with the school
- Mme Handley serves on the Intern Committee and receives 1k for her efforts with paperwork, etc.
- Interns receive a welcome gift around winter break and an end of the year gift
- PTO covers field trip funds; such as the ski trip with 5<sup>th</sup> graders and deep portage trip
- Fall and Winter social gatherings are budgeted at \$250. The Intern Committee organizes a potluck with families and staff attending.
- The Intern Committee focused on recruiting interns from many Francophone countries this year. Since this is the first time for the Intern Committee recruiting from Francophone countries outside of France there is uncertainty regarding tax treaties which vary by country and the Intern Committee/ PTO are budgeting extra for CPAs due to extra potential costs.

Questions about the recruitment process: The Intern Committee used to only use the French embassy to recruit Interns, and this year the committee reached out to another processing organization; Amity . Intern Committee is excited to share they have accepted an intern from Cameroon through Amity.

Intern Committee has applied for grants and received money to offset the costs- Albertine Foundation grant is specifically allocated for the intern program (\$4,000 has been granted in the past and annually applied for)

The PTO budget is still being prepared for next year. It is anticipated that a more educated budget proposal by the PTO can be calculated after the budget presentation for the school presented by Principal Mme Bossard tonight. (Bad connection- I can't hear)

Parent Comment: Listening in to Mme Tchoffo, from observation a lot of parents want to hear about the budget and what the concerns are. Moderator has provided 1-2 mins per comment

Ibilola Kougblenou: I was the last treasurer. I faced a lot of microaggressions. Ibilola explained they didn't want to train her, she didn't know why and she (bad connection- I can't hear) she resigned. If the budget is presented people should be able to ask questions.

(bad connection- I can't hear)

## **Candidate Presentation and Vote.**

### **Principal's Update by Principal Mme Bossard:**

#### **Breakdown of School Budget:**

- Sadly doesn't include air conditioning
- Share timely and accurate information about budget for net school year
- Values and goals are to strengthen French literacy and increase reading data, provide an equitable immersion education where all feel safe, valued and welcomed and stay kid focused
- Mme Bossard will send out a video from the executive chief of finance
- How the budget works for spps and how it affects our communities
- Budget is guided by --projected --enrollment a formula the district uses has to abide by contractual requirements of teachers too, special education, multiple languages.
- 268 students in the projected enrollment, not including preK
- 1 principal, 12 vs 13 teachers because 1 classroom is no longer available.
- Had 4 support staff and there are 3 (general in classrooms)+ 1 to support kids in media center with different curriculum
- Presented the projected enrollment for each grade level
- There are classroom caps for low poverty school - see chart
- Not a lot of change, most of the programming was preserved or Mme Bossard tried her best to.
- 2 MLL teachers next year
- Special education is guided by IEPs, at the moment they do not require more than 1.
- Mme Walseth is retiring- district is supporting the school by welcoming a new full time counselor. Thank you Mme Walseth!!!
- Intervention specialist supports classrooms
- WINN teachers will have a new program next year following the science of reading and targeting English support to grades 4-5. Academic Coach will remain.
- LNFI is getting a full time library TA, someone strictly for the media center, working with STIMA as well

- Currently have 4 specialists to cover blocks; physed, art, science and STIMA. STIMA is not mandatory per the district, we were allocated 2.6 and worked the budget to keep 3 full time. STIMA will be incorporated within art.
- Teachers had a prep and additional minutes that needed to be covered; there will only be 1 prep per day for classroom teachers next school year.
- Totals: 12 classroom teachers and 3 TAs
- Exciting new programming: Afoutayi Dance Residency and Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies. Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies offers free programming before school to provide equitable symphonies experience to kids that would otherwise not be able to access it. Discovery club will be coming to the building! Discovery club offers before and after school childcare at a cost.
- There is a budget for program supplies including field trips and additional supports, Mme Bossard has preserved as much as possible for next school year.
- Classroom overview; 1-5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom, 2-4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom, 2 - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms, 2- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms, 2-1<sup>st</sup> grade classrooms, 3-Kindergarden classrooms
- 1- Prek classroom only, district implemented, due to the PreK hub at the Prosperity Building.

#### Attendee Questions & Comments:

Attendee Comment: To confirm, there is no split classroom for the 2024/2025 school year?

Mme Bossard: That is correct.

Attendee Comment: What is MLL?

Mme Bossard: Multilingual.

Attendee Comment: Where is a conversation that parents/ guardians and community members with concerns can feel heard?

Mme Bossard: Please reach out, with concerns to email her and she will accommodate. Other Opportunities to speak with the community depending upon the needs include her open door, BIPOC meetings, PTO meetings, 9:30 meetings on Fridays with the principal.

Attendee Comment: Can the PTO facilitate a forum?

Attendee Comment: wondering if there will be any change in the p/u or d/o time?

Mme Bossard: No, it is the same time.

Attendee Comment: Thank you to the volunteers, I know this is not an easy process and maybe we find another forum for people to air themselves out. We are all parents and volunteers and come here to support our children, the tension is not good for anyone. Hopefully everyone will still be around next year and we hope everyone is doing this for the better of the community. Myself I am guilty of not being around and we can always do more to be around and we will work it out.

Attendee Comment: Thank you we love LNFI, all 4 children have attended LNFI and 2 are still there. Mme Bossard says downsize to 1 PK. They have 1 cousin who relocated from Africa and wants to get her into LNFI.

Mme Bossard: There is an 18 student cap and 2 reserved spots for students with IEP. Mme Bossard will send out district contact for PreK for questions.

**Adjournment by PTO President Rebekah LaCasse:** Look for community survey which will inform meeting times and programming for next year. We appreciate everyone coming, volunteering, thank you for your engagement this year and have a wonderful summer