

# Family Council MINUTES

Downtown Denver Expeditionary School

8/25/2016 5:30 PM

Attendance:

40 plus officers and chairs; 40-50 in total

Welcome and Updates:

1. Intro and presentation from Scott, Erin, and Letia (Admin at DDES)

a. Introductions from each of them.

Scott: Executive Director over Elementary and Middle School

Erin: Elementary Principal

Letia: Director of Partnerships (Letia will be attending every family council meeting at the start to present from admin and answer any questions)

b. Please email with questions, positive feedback, comments or concerns. They would like to hear from the parents. They are not on social media, so messages there are not guaranteed to reach them.

c. Scott, Erin, and Letia will hold a parent chat once a month after drop off - Emily Griffith Cafe at 8AM

- Why in the am?. Due to having such a large population from all over Denver Metro they have found that this to be the best time. It's harder for parents to get back downtown at night, so evening meetings are not attended as well as after drop off.

- Family Council will record and post notes from chats.

d. There will be an EL 101 for parents

e. Opened for questions from parents:

- Discussed one of the changes this year: recess. It was changed due to safety concerns from the past 3 years, as well as kids being overwhelmed by the noise in such a small space. In hindsight they recognize they did not get the word out on the change and have learned from that. They didn't realize it was going to be such a huge change. It was discussed at a parent chat last year. Recess change was emailed out by Scott. The transition is going well from what they have seen. Playworks method has dramatically reduced recess conflicts that carry over into classroom. DDES will continue to work on parent communication. Increased to two 20-minute recesses for all students.

- Crew Club: they wanted a before/aftercare program philosophically aligned with DDES.

- Fieldwork: Admin will never promise a certain number of fieldwork days. Fieldwork is intended to be high quality and directly connected to the curriculum; this accounts for variation in fieldwork opportunities. It is grade-specific and based on what that grade is learning. If you have suggestions, send it to your crew leader or Erin. Erin passes those suggestions off to the correct person.

f. Admin exited.

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## 2. Family Council intro presented by our presidents from 2015-17 Justine Wentworth and MC Platt

- a. Family Council has existed since the first year of DDES. Justine and MC were co-presidents last year and are committed to staying in this role for a second year.
- b. Last school year, Family Council formed a non-profit and became a separate entity from DDES, with tax-exempt status. We have bylaws (will be posted on the website once updated) and will be holding elections each September.
- c. Mission statement: We are a parent-led organization dedicated to supporting the mission of DDES by developing resources, building community, facilitating connections, and increasing investment in our school.
- d. Family Council is free and open to all DDES parents and guardians. We embrace the diversity of our school and want our organization to reflect that.
- e. Community-building focus: Our school draws families from more than 40 different zip codes, so we have to intentionally create our community. Our committees - especially Organizing, Crew Parents, and Parent Ambassadors - are all working on ways to bring people together and create connections.
- f. Fundraising focus: Financial support for the school has helped fund buses for fieldwork/adventure, TA salaries for lower teacher-student ratios, specials programs, and more. We have raised more money for the school each year, as we have grown. This most recent year, Family Council gave \$40,000 to DDES, thanks to the efforts of our fundraising team and a lot of support from parents and our community. Our signature event is the Spring Art Brew, annually in April. We also have smaller fundraisers like restaurant giveback days, Bookies, and ongoing income streams like grocery cards and Box Tops.
- g. Elections will be held in September for officer positions. Currently looking for a secretary. Also looking for a co-chair for the Organizing, Equity, and Wellness committees.

## 3. Introduced committee chairs and committees

- a. Organizing: Chair- Rachael Eichhorn. Looking for a co-chair. Filled at the Meeting.
- b. Crew Parents: Chair - Angie Brew-Glissman.
- c. Wellness: Chair - Andra Brill
- d. Communications: Chair - Rich Ashburn (Anne Wofford spoke in his place).
- e. Special Needs: Chair - Lisa McDonald.
- f. Equity: Chair - Kristen Seidel. Looking for a co-chair.
- g. Fundraising: Chair - Marissa Walters. Needs more people on committee. Also needs someone to take over Scrip and grocery cards.
- h. Parent Ambassadors: Chairs - Becky Jennings and Theresa Peoples.

## 4. Questions and Comments

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- a. Traffic and pedestrian safety at dropoff/pickup: concerns raised. Suggestion: meet with all stakeholders/decision-makers (DPS, Denver Police, DDES administration) to discuss and problem-solve. Family Council will collect a history of what has already been attempted and successes achieved.
  - b. Space and growth: the bubble of a startup school means we currently have one extra class in grades 2, 3 and 4. Eventually all grades will have two classrooms each, which will free up three classrooms compared to current situation.
5. Finished at 6:50pm. Committee meetings 6:50-7:10.