

PTO Meeting Minutes:

Date: Wednesday, October 5th, 2022

Attendance: 27 adults representing 42 students

1.) PTO Volunteer Introductions:

- a. **Michael Carrion: President**
- b. **Christina Alty: Vice President**
- c. **Melissa Klassen: Secretary**
- d. **Sarah Beener: Treasurer**
- e. **Dennis Ison: IT and Tech**
- f. **Chin Ting Ison: Facebook page administration**
- g. **Jess Bellofatto: Newsletter**
- h. **Chandra Comstock - Graphics**

2.) Anna Krughoff - Interim Director:

- a. Anna presented and talked about what they are working on for the school. She is excited about all of the talented parents here. She thanked all of the new board members, and parent volunteers.
- b. She talked about "Peaks and Valleys": She has found that the "Valley" she has found in leadership is communication; she noted that she values face to face communication and that is especially valuable during a valley situation. She encouraged everyone to please connect and come talk to her when needed. She noted that she is solution oriented, and it is important to connect.
- c. She noted some "Peaks": Big wins and big rocks: Some big wins she shared:
 - i. We are only in October and there are already 188 students registered in the school. She noted that this is the highest enrollment there has ever been at the school. She noted that she is doing 2-3 tours for new families every week and that the preschool program is currently full!
 - ii. She noted that they have hired a brand-new high school team and that they are all certified and highly educated teachers. All staff are certified and have teaching degrees.
 - iii. She noted that they launched MINED training in Fridays for all teachers for teachers' development.
 - iv. She talked about the important of languages and how they are working to improve language development for all.
 - v. Teachers are also learning about "brain learning" for reading development.
 - vi. In the Highschool: Administration is launching a "student inquiry cycle", wherein they will be asking students to drive their own learning based on what they're passionate about.
- d. Anna noted to the parents: please if you see a teacher thank a teacher – let's celebrate the individuals.
- e. "Big Rocks":
 - i. Anna noted that they will be going deeper into the science of reading and thinking about how every child has equal access to a strong reading program that starts in Kindergarten. She noted that they will have data to share in November.
 - ii. "Language Acquisition": Anna discussed "What does language acquisition look like"? Administration is looking further into that, and how language plays into the students' development. Anna also noted that they are thinking about doing a study on language acquisition.
 - iii. Anna noted that they will look to share out these "rocks" into "wins" by December.

3.) Robyn Chatten: Discussion About New Parent Committees:

- a. It was noted there is a high level of engagement right now from parents. The school administration wants to start forming small work groups through the PTO. These would be advisory groups and would be an organized way for volunteer parents to envision, then bring those visions to life.
- b. These advisory groups would be in the following categories:
 - i. Organizational/Resource Development & Sustainability
 - ii. PTO
 - iii. Scholarships
 - iv. Health & Safety

- v. Green School/Campus Development
- vi. Culture, Equity & Inclusion

4.) Michael Carrion – PTO President:

- a. **Michael discussed the PTO Mission:** “The PTO exists to support the core values and goals of the SJDS Day School. We’ll accomplish this by, complimenting student learning and fostering parent involvement in order to enrich the student education experience in four areas:
 - Facilitating communication through volunteers serving in various capacity such as PTO positions, school chairs, room parents, and class parents.
 - Cultivating community between parents, students, and faculty. Also, generating School pride via scheduled activities and events.
 - Providing support to ensure equitable access to learning and experiences for all students.
 - Enhancing our educational environment by raising funds for educational materials, field trips, innovative instructional support, technology, and scholarships.
 - We believe in compassion, truthfulness, peace & respect, responsibility, service to others, joy, gratitude, and enthusiasm. We are The SJDS Day School!
- b. **October Calendar Review:** Michael reviewed the October School Calendar including the mid-term break: See calendar here:
<https://sanjuandelsurdayschool.com/school-calendar/>
- c. **PTO Lines of Effort:**
 - i. Michael noted that we’ve been asked for a charter to be implemented (this governs the PTO).
 - ii. Michael noted that he’s found some good models from schools in Texas that he is looking into/modelling.
 - iii. Please offer insights if you have them.
 - iv. Transparency will be key
 - v. The charter would govern the PTO: voting process, fundraising (a huge part of the PTO). The school will be looking to the PTO communication of these two big areas.

5.) Sarah Beaner – Treasurer:

- a. **Sarah discussed the 2022-2023 Funds Accounting:**
 - i. **There was \$598** remaining balance from last year
 - ii. Dining out with the Day School (The Palms): \$140
 - iii. Dining out with the Day School (Dale Puess): \$114
 - iv. Total Fundraising YTD: \$852
- b. Michael discussed transparency and noted that we received feedback from last year that parents wanted better transparency with fundraising.
- c. Michael discussed that the big goals for this years’ fundraising are:
 - i. Goal: To raise \$18,000 for scholarships, with the bulk coming from casino night.
 - ii. Goal: To raise \$620 for 2 laptops for the school
 - iii. Goal: To raise \$500 for “teacher grants” (for teachers to use for classroom enhancement).

6.) Christina Alty – Vice President:

- a. **Christina discussed the upcoming** “Halloween Extravaganza” party fundraiser on October 31st.
 - i. Discussion: It’ll be from 4pm-9pm at El Dorado, with trick or treating, and the option for a haunted forest walk for the older kids (teens and older). Christina noted that we need 12-13 volunteers to hand out candy (please wear a costume). Please volunteer if you are able to for this big event.
 - ii. It’s a ticketed event: includes trick or treating, dinner, the haunted house is separate charge.

- iii. There will be 12-13 trick or treating stations; there are several doors at the (former hotel) El Dorado – it's great for trick or treating.
- iv. There was the question: "Will it be a ticketed event if you're a volunteer?". Christina indicated that we will know by the end of the week, along with more information on how to volunteer.
- v. Christina indicated that a percentage of every ticket will go to the school, AND a percentage of adult food orders will also go to the PTO so come out and support the school, have a fun Halloween night, and have dinner too!

7.) Cindi Carlson: Casino Night Chair:

- a. Cindi discussed that December 10th is the annual Casino Night. It will be at Tree Casa, in the new party area just built at the top of the property. It's a beautiful area fit for cocktail parties and the perfect location for our Casino Night. Cindi indicated that Tree Casa donated the space for our event as our key main sponsor.
- b. Tree Casa will give us a block of rooms for those that want to stay overnight.
- c. There is a need for volunteers – please reach out if you can volunteer.
- d. Cindi also indicated that there will also be an online campaign to raise funds and that this is the only child free event of the year. Come on out and support our school with our biggest fundraiser of the year!

8.) Michael Carrion: President: Additional Notes:

- a. **The Colour Run:** Micheal reported that this years' Colour Run will take place in March and will be another big fundraiser for the school. Stay tuned in the coming months for more information on the Colour Run.
- b. **Water Bottles:** We are looking for a water bottle volunteer. Someone who can be responsible for storing them and selling them.
- c. **Communication:** Michael expressed that communication will be key and a huge focus for the PTO this year, and he's pleased that there have already been so many positive strides taken to ensure that good communication is happening for everyone. Michal thanked everyone for their great efforts for communication via channels put in place like: emails, the family Facebook group, Whatsapp Chat groups, room parents, etc. Michael also announced that in addition to the minutes of the monthly PTO meetings, that there will be a regular newsletter going out to parent too.
- d. **Family/Youth Engagements:** Michael talked about the possibility of implementing "family outing days"; days like: book fairs, beach clean ups, things like creating murals on walls that need painting; general getting the schools' name out there. It was discussed that it's important that the Day School is in the community and that strides be made to improve the "perception of the school"; it's important to us that we are well-integrated into the greater SJDS community. Michael will be focusing heavily on this, this year.

9.) Open Discussion With Attendees:

- a. **Discussion:** It was brought up that we need to rethink the bussing situation. Busses get routed through town, and with very few students at the Talanguera station, and with this many busses can we rethink how the kids get to school? Talanguera adds an additional 60 min on to the ride for students in this area. Can we rethink this?
 - i. Anna: Brought up that a parent survey would be helpful to see what's possible and to get some data. Kyle and Anna to look into this.
- b. **Discussion:** The water at the school. It was discussed that the water is not the best – can we change to Aqua Roca or a water filtration system? Note: it will cost more but it's minimal. Nick from El Dorado is an expert in this – possible to bring him in to discuss options? It's a priority to get solved but it will take time. It is a big issue with several of the parents. This will go to the Health and Safety committee.
- c. **Discussion:** We need help with the "Dining Out With The Day School" fundraiser. Someone to find a location every month, and create the corresponding graphic, Christina is going this big job in addition to being the VP. Request for a new volunteer to take on this monthly fundraiser please. Chin Ting Ison volunteered to take on "Dining Out With The Day School" – thank you Chin Ting.
- d. **Discussion:** One of the Day School Nicaraguan Mothers: talked about how happy she is to see the focus on integration between the Nicaraguans and Ex pats, and the synergy between the two communities. She indicated that there *is* a perception and it would be helpful to see more students in the environment with more connection with nature – and more integration. She thanked the PTO for the steps that are already being taken this year to integrate with the local community and events more.

- i. **Michael:** “It’s important for us to bridge that gap. It’s on our radar and will be continue to strive to make improvements on that”.
 - ii. **Anna:** “It’s about service to others – it’s not just about servicing our school it’s about service to the home that we are living”. She also noted that this is being instilled in the morning meetings with students; she also encourages parents to build this into your interactions with your children at home too.
 - e. **Discussion:** It was suggested: “What about a sister school”? “An interaction between two schools (Nicaraguan and the Day School) or getting into the community; English speakers and Spanish speaking Nicaraguans.
 - i. **Anna:** we haven’t announced it yet, but administration is looking into gr 6 and 7s doing service projects in the community to address this. It’s coming and it’s on their radar.
 - f. **Michael:** Discussed the importance of parent engagement and indicated that he’s a firm believer in walking the walk and talking the talk. We all need to step up in facilitating all the things we want to implement. We all have great ideas – if we all just contribute a little bit we can move the needle much faster than just a few people running things. When a lot of people want a lot of things done – we need parental involvement.
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- o The meeting closed with announcing that the PTO meetings will continue monthly; the first Wednesday of every month. The next PTO meeting will be after the holiday break on November 9th.
 - o It was a very successful meeting with many new and exciting things discussed. Thank you to all of the speakers, board members and parents that came out to the PTO meeting. See you next month!
 - o The Meeting Closed at 9:45am.