

NPTO Meeting Minutes

October 3th, 2013

“Strengthening the Nova Community”

Our Mission

Nova Classical Academy PTO is an organization of volunteers engaging families, teachers, and staff in fostering a school community that actively supports Nova’s mission and enriches the students and the school. Any and all current Nova parents and staff are considered members. There are no dues.

Taken by Melissa Hernandez, Secretary

- I. Welcome and Roll Call (Susan Hooge)
 - a. In attendance: Susan Hooge (Chair), Melissa Hernandez (Secretary), Jennifer Marker Johnson (Treasurer), Jane Farber (Room Parent), Jane Lagerquist (Board Liaison), Robin Cerio (Co-Chair), Beth Hawley (Co-Chair), Brian Bloomfield (School Director), Michelle GranberyGranberg (Room Parent), Jennifer Bateman Grover (Great Gatherings – GG - Liaison), Marlo Corletto (Kindergarten Teacher), Kate Tetmeyer (Scrip Lead, Carnival Lead), Karen Bailey (GG Treasurer), Diane Rude (LS Math Teacher), Michelle Berg, Tam Nguyen, Bruce Coleman, Maria Gonko, Amanda Branse Granse, Stephanie Herschback, Claudia Gumbiner.
- II. Minutes Approval – Copies of the July and September Meeting Minutes were provided to all attendees Robin moved the Minutes be approved and Beth seconded the motion. The Minutes were approved.
- III. Officer Reports
 - a. Board Meeting Update (Dr. Bloomfield)
 - i. The meeting consisted of a 90 minute discussion on parenting, parental involvement at Nova and the six dimension of a school/parent partnership.
 - ii. Board isolated pros and cons and what they feel Nova needs to focus on or not.
 - iii. The open faculty position on the Board was filled by Ms. Annie Lewine (Latin/History Teacher).
 - b. Advancement Committee Update (Dr. Bloomfield)
 - i. The committee is preparing for “Give to the Max” day, the first dedicated fundraiser of the school year.
 1. Promotion for the event will begin the week of the Great Gathering kick off party November 2nd and will ramp up the following week.
 2. Jenni inquired as to whether there would be an additional e-mail reminder sent to families the day of the event. Dr. Bloomfield confirmed that would take place as well.
 - c. Executive Director Update (Dr. Bloomfield)
 - i. The NPTO ~~storage area room~~ may be moved after the Great Gatherings kick off party due to the need for additional classroom space.
 1. Room #225 is the potential alternative.
 2. The space would require additional storage units and would not allow for the presence of children due to Janitorial tools and supplies that may pose a danger to little ones.
 - ii. It was proposed that the NPTO provide for the ongoing kitchen, paper product needs of the faculty and staff.
 1. Storage, purchasing, and expense logistics were recommended and discussed.
 2. Robin moved to accept the proposal, Susan seconded and the motion was passed.

3. Melissa inquired as to whether a separate line item would need to be added to the budget.
 - a. The expense will be made under the existing Miscellaneous line item.
- d. Treasurer Update (Jennifer Johnson)
 - i. Taxes are being filed.
 - ii. As grant requests ramp up it was confirmed that only teachers are eligible for said grants.
 1. The grant amount is \$50, per teacher, per year.
 2. 12 grants have been distributed thus far this year.
 - iii. \$130 has been collected toward Great Gatherings.
 - iv. The Jostens name change request has been submitted.
 - v. \$650 has been collected on behalf of the Solar Panel program.
 1. Four gifts have been distributed this month.
 2. Susan provided a brief summary of the program.
 - vi. The current NPTO balance is \$38,000
- e. Room Parent Update (Robin Cerio)
 - i. Every class in the Lower School has, at least, one Room Parent.
 - ii. Fall Get Togethers are going "swimmingly".
- f. Scrip Update (Susan Hooge, Kate Tetmeyer)
 - i. There have been some questions as to how the fund raising program will be managed going forward.
 - ii. In the past, the NPTO has had to manage quite a large inventory of gift cards and then had some challenges with getting the inventory sold.
 1. Perhaps a better approach going forward would be to only have a limited number of gift cards, from a limited number of vendors, on hand.
 - a. B&N gift cards during the book fair event.
 - b. More frequently used vendors – i.e. Rainbow Foods, Target, Quick Casual, Fast Food Restaurants, etc.
 - c. Holiday buying – i.e. Mother's Day (Nurseries).
 2. Strictly ordering on-line would also alleviate some of the bloated inventory challenges the NPTO is having.
 3. Robin explained that the Scrip program is a fund raising mechanism in which a percentage of the face value of each gift card purchased is donated to Nova.
 - a. The amount of the donation varies from vendor to vendor.
 4. Jenni suggested that if Nova families were aware of what vendor gift cards the NPTO has in inventory they may be motivated to buy and use them.
 5. Kate informed the group that she is having some success at decreasing inventory levels by having them readily available to faculty, staff, and Nova families throughout the school day. (She sold over \$500 dollars worth of inventory just today).
 6. Beth inquired as to which vendor gift cards does the NPTO sell the most of.
 - a. Rainbow, Noodles & Company, Burger King and others of the like.
 - iii. The greatest challenge has been promoting the program given the growth the school has experienced in the last few years.
 1. Flyers were generally distributed to Nova families via student folders/binders home.
 2. The student numbers have just gotten too big to continue sending flyers and/or the Scrip form home.

- iv. Promo efforts have also slowed down as less and less support has been provided to the program.
 - 1. Melissa offered to assist in promo efforts going forward.
- g. Upper School Committee Updates
 - i. The first meeting will take place today, October 3rd, after the NPTO meeting and will continue to take place monthly, after the NPTO meeting the balance of the school year.
 - ii. Committee is made up of Upper School parents interested in supporting Ms. Morton and her team in their event planning and execution efforts.
 - iii. A few committee spots are still open for parents of 6th through 8th grade students.
 - iv. There are two parent representatives per grade.
 - v. Childcare is not provided for this meeting.
 - vi. The next event to be discussed is Comedy Sportsz.
- h. Principal Coffees Update (Robin Cerio)
 - i. Dr. Bloomfield, Ms. Kelley, and Ms. Morton will be attending the parent coffees on Fridays on a rotating, monthly schedule, through the balance of the school year.
 - ii. Schedule:
 - 1. First Friday: Ms. Kelley
 - 2. Second Friday: Ms. Morton
 - 3. Third Friday: Dr. Bloomfield
 - iii. The fourth Friday will be open.
 - iv. Additional promotion will take place to ensure Nova families are aware of the opportunity to “confer” with the school’s leadership.
- i. Nova Ambassadors Update (Robin Cerio)
 - i. A welcoming committee, of sorts, launched this school year designed to help new families feel welcome and navigate all things Nova.
 - 1. Each new family is assigned an ~~existing family, call an ambassador~~ Ambassador, from an established family.
 - 2. Jane inquired as to the success of the program thus far.
 - 3. Robin informed the attendees that it has been extremely successful with new families feeling welcomed and keyed in to the Nova culture.
 - ii. Robin proposed the Ambassador Committee be disbanded and the program comes under the oversight of the NPTO, as the committee’s work is now complete.
 - iii. Susan inquired as to what group within the NPTO would be responsible for said oversight.
 - 1. Those specifics will be worked out as planning for the next school year begins; in February and/or March of next year.
 - 2. Robin is willing to take on the lead role going forward.
 - 3. Jane suggested 2 or 3 additional volunteers be added to the planning group to ensure there is sufficient support for the program throughout.
- j. Lost and Found (L&F) Update (Jennifer Marker Johnson)
 - i. The first L&F clean out is currently scheduled for Friday, October 25th.
 - ii. All of the items in the L&F at that time will be laid out in the Great Hall for a final review by Nova families. Any items remaining on the Monday AM will be donated.
 - iii. Dr. Bloomfield complimented Jenni on her efforts to organize the L&F area.
 - 1. It looks neater and is more organized making it easier for kids to find their missing items.

IV. Events Update

- a. Great Gathering (GG), (Jennifer Bateman Grover)
 - i. Final prep is taking place.

- ii. Jennifer brought promo fans for those attending the meeting that included information regarding ticket purchase information.
- iii. Discounted tickets are available through October 25th (\$20).
 - 1. Walk up prices will be an additional \$10.00.
 - a. GG decided to increase the “at the door” price to encourage attendees to purchase tickets ahead of time. This allows them to have as accurate a number of attendees as possible providing for better planning around food, space, etc., needs.
- iv. Robin inquired as to whether Room Parents should be enlisted to distribute this information to their respective classes. Jennifer requested she wait for a GG rep to contact her with specifics.
- v. Dr. Bloomfield requested clarity around what information he should disseminate to the faculty and staff. Specifically regarding the free ticket teachers are eligible for.
 - 1. Jennifer stated that teachers could claim their free ticket through the ticket purchase site as well.
 - 2. Karen provided additional information on the staff/faculty ticket order process.
- vi. An additional food truck is being shopped in order to cut down on lines and wait times.
 - 1. Less menu options have been employed to that end as well.
- vii. Jennifer asked Dr. Bloomfield if it would be possible to have a fire pit outdoors during the event.
 - 1. This would offer another gathering spot for guests.
 - 2. Dr. Bloomfield approved the use of a fire pit
- viii. This is an adult only event.
- ix. Desserts will be served in the [Mmezzanine](#) and an NPTO Volunteer will be providing consistent coffee service.
- x. “Grapes of Math” still needs wine donations.
- xi. Silent Auction items are also still needed.
 - 1. Jennifer encouraged attendees to spread the word and have interested parties contact the GG folks.
 - 2. Claudia inquired as to what type of items, events, etc. do best – garner the highest bids.
 - a. Jennifer mentioned some of the items that were included in last year’s auction as an example or the variety this is represented.
- xii. Melissa inquired as to whether more events were needed as well.
 - 1. 30 Gatherings have been collected thus far and more are needed.
 - 2. Interested parties should contact GG to discuss and plan potential events soon.
 - 3. Beth suggested that Room Parents might contact their respective families and encourage them to create grade specific events.
 - a. The Nova building is available for use for these types of Gatherings.
 - b. A use request form must be completed and submitted for approval before a Gathering may take place.
 - 4. Ms. Rude requested further information around teacher hosted Gatherings.
 - a. When a teacher hosts more than one Gathering, their name is submitted into a drawing for an additional teacher grant.
 - 5. Jennifer mentioned some Gatherings that have already been submitted.
 - 6. Dr. Bloomfield encouraged attendees to think about and create more Gatherings for the SoL students as they are often neglected as it relates to these events.
- xiii. Jennifer mentioned that the GG group is discussing potentially inviting alumni to attend in a few years.

- xiv. The ~~kick-off~~ KickOff party will have a cash bar.
 - 1. Parent volunteers will serve wine and beer.
 - 2. A tip jar will be available for donations, in addition, and all the money collected will go toward teacher grants.
- xv. A photo booth has been added this year.
- b. Fall Conference Meals (Melissa Hernandez)
 - i. Melissa requested admin access to the NPTO volunteer sign up for the event in order to be able to contact committee members a bit more easily.
 - ii. Karen stated she would provide access to the donation Sign Up Genius documents for last year's Meals for Robin and Melissa.
- c. Parent Ed Night (Jane Lagerquist)
 - i. The next Parent Ed night is on October 15th.
 - 1. It will be a presentation on Singapore Math and will take place in the exhibition hall.
 - ii. Childcare will be provided.
 - a. Pre-registering will not be necessary.
 - iii. School of Rhetoric Information night will take place Tuesday, October 29th.
 - 1. This event is designed to provide 8th graders and their families and overview of the 9-12 grade program at Nova.
 - iv. The "Social Hour"; where families attending would have an opportunity to "confer" with Nova's leadership; has been tabled for the time being. Some logistical matters need to be worked out.
- d. Comedy Sportsz (Jane Lagerquist)
 - i. A community building event for the SoL
 - ii. Will take place Friday, October 4th.
- e. Barnes and Noble Book Fair (Beth Hawley)
 - i. The fair will take place on Saturday, October 12th at the B&N on Ford Parkway in Highland Park.
 - ii. 15% of purchases by Nova families be donated back to the school.
 - iii. Promotion effort is in "full swing".
 - iv. Kate interjected that she was promoting the Scrip program in conjunction with the Book Fair in order to maximize fund raising efforts around the event.
 - v. Teach Wish List items have compiled by the B&N people and will available and ready for purchase during the event.
 - 1. Susan added that labels will be provided to families who purchase Wish List items so that the materials carry labels letting the students know who donated said materials while simultaneously encouraging them to have their families make donations to the classroom as well.
 - a. Also helps "plug" the NPTOs efforts in support of teachers.
 - vi. Emails with e-copies of the promo materials will be forwarded to NOVA families, mid-week, as an additional convenience and final reminder.
 - vii. Melissa inquired as to whether Nova could partner with ~~Used~~ Bbook stores via a separate event to obtain some of the more obscure, difficult to get, books on the teacher's Wish Lists.
 - 1. Beth replied that B&N has been able to secure most all of the items requested and that those that were unavailable through them could be purchased by Nova families via the B&N website (using the Nova event code) or through the cashier at the store during the event.

- a. The Nova code will be active starting the day of the event through October 17th.
 - b. Susan also added that the donation to Nova is smaller with on-line purchases.
 - viii. Some families are intending “going in on” some larger ticket items from the Wish List together.
- f. Back to School Night
 - i. Both Lower and Upper school events were well attended.
 - ii. There were few logistical challenges due to the implementation of several suggestions provided to leadership via survey.
 - iii. Given the success of the events, Dr. Bloomfield and his team will be taking a look at Nova’s Open House and attempting to implement similar changes to further streamline that event.
 - 1. Some challenges will remain due to the sheer number of families we now have at the school.
 - 2. Expanding the event hours in addition to further organizing activities taking place during the event are some elements being considered to improve the overall experience.

V. Officer Assignments (Susan Hooge)

- a. In an effort to facilitate greater support and communication to and around the many NPTO Committees active throughout the school year, NPTO officers have been assigned several committees each. The officers are not, necessarily, being assigned to supervise or manage their respective committees but to simply ensure the groups have what they need to execute the committee’s intended objectives.
- b. Assignments
 - i. Susan: Friday Coffee Host, Coffee, Crew, Winter/Last Day Treats, Solar Panel
 - ii. Robin: Social Media, Graphics Group, Photographers, Ambassadors, Room Parents
 - iii. Beth: Book Fair, Staff Appreciation, Grandparent’s Day, Room Parents
 - iv. Melissa: Conference Meals, EduKit, Baking Brigade, Name Bubbles
 - v. Jenni: Lost and Found
 - vi. Jane: Spirit Wear, US Committee, Parent Ed Nights, Comedy Sportz/Opera for the Young
 - vii. Kate: Carnival, Scrip
- c. Expanded Role for the Secretary position.
 - i. NPTO Meeting Promotion
 - ii. Coordinating childcare for the NPTO meetings.
 - iii. Melissa moved that the duties be added. Susan seconded the motion and it was passed.

VI. Volunteer Hours

- a. Linda LaFrambois would like to remind Nova families to submit their volunteer hours throughout the school year. It is vital information used for grant requests and the like.
 - i. Robin distributed paper forms to aid in that effort.
 - ii. Hours may also be logged on the Nova website.

VII. Spirit Wear (Kate Tetmeyer)

- a. An alternate coordinator is interested in overseeing the sale process.
- b. Jane will meet with the contact to discuss any potential opportunities.
- c. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.

VIII. Welcome to New Families & Meeting Adjourned

- a. Jane welcomed the new parents attending the meeting this month.

b. Susan encouraged them to document the hour via the volunteer form.